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PhD Title: <u>Urban Utopias in Havana's Representations.</u>
<u>An Interdisciplinary Analysis</u>

A thesis submitted-to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Thesis Abstract:

This investigation consists of an interdisciplinary analysis of photographic, cinematographic, architectural and literary documents representing the city of Havana in Cuba during different periods of the twentieth century. These periods are: the decade of the Great Depression; the 1950s during the rapid growth of the tourist industry in the island; the first fifteen years following the 1959 Cuban Revolution; and the so-called 'Special Period' during the 1990s, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was during these periods that the city went through very important transformations due to historical and cultural contingencies. These contingencies refer to the beginnings of the development of the city as a tourist centre, the first debates and cultural manifestations related to the Afro-Cuban traditions in the island, the post-1959 revolutionary processes and the effects of the end of the Cold War on the city. The documents analysed have been drawn firstly from cultural productions made by Cubans: Cuban filmography and photography pre- and post-1959. Secondly, there are also those documents produced by non-Cubans, mainly Hollywood productions and other types of representation, which have also contributed greatly to create a particular image of Havana. An important part of this analysis also includes the architectural particularities of the city, with an emphasis on the symbology of some of its main buildings, such as the Capitolio and the National Hotel.

This analysis relates the dominant visual tropes of the Cuban capital with more generic discourses regarding the tradition of utopian thought in the West and their embodiment in the image of the modern city. The diverse archival documents discussed throughout this thesis reflect recurrent themes that have characterised this tradition: the contemporary ideal of a harmonious multicultural society; the romanticisation of the 'old city' as a visual reminder of our 'non-capitalist' past and the utopianism associated with the dichotomy between work and leisure and between the diurnal and the nocturnal. Most of these themes can be found as forming part of the discourse on the national in Cuba, also characterised by a deep utopianism.

The thesis examines the social and cultural history of Havana in order to analyse how the different documents have reflected, or even contributed, to the construction and problematisation of a Cuban national identity, while at the same time making testimony of the existence in the city of different cultural traditions. This has necessarily involved a reflection

on the dynamics between the two main cultural traditions present in Havana: the Euro-Cuban and the Afro-Cuban. This thesis proposes that the cultural battles between the African, European and North American traditions in the city have been decisive in the modern re-fashioning of Havana as a museum-city, facilitating the predominantly nostalgic character of its most recent representations. This investigation also takes into account the crucial role of the city's spatial gendrification – the position of women within the urban space – when describing Havana's utopian representations.

Finally, the interdisciplinary character of this thesis contributes to the analyses of the cultural history of cities as well as the relevance of the visual in the recreations of modern urban life and its relations to the narratives of the national.

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Introduction

When in 1999 the documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* by Wim Wenders was released, I rushed to the cinema in anticipation. Throughout the 1990s, the European media had been already showing images from Havana, making of its 'otherness' a familiar cliché: a city that had experienced a very different development to the others in the 'capitalist block' and now left in supposed isolation. However, this film was advertised as offering something else: it was the cinematographic account of a group of musicians who, during the years preceding the 1959 Revolution, collaborated in the development of a musical tradition now considered very influential to many contemporary music and dance forms, such as salsa or latin-jazz. Those among us who already knew Wenders' filmography expected another nostalgic take on a dying old city, as he had done with Lisbon in *Lisbon Story*, Tokyo in *Tokyo Ga* and Berlin in *Wings of Desire*. However, my own expectations relied also on my previous personal experience with the history of Havana. I was born and grew up in the City of Las Palmas, the biggest city in the Canary Islands. The many cultural connections now existent between Cuba and Canary Islands were the result of emigration waves since the beginning of the Spanish colonisation of both places, that had seen thousands of Canarians moved, in most cases permanently, to Cuba, fleeing poverty and isolation[1]. This emigration greatly intensified during the second half of the nineteenth century due to the 'whitening' policies then practised by the Spanish (and later Cuban) authorities in the island. It continued until the years of the deep economic crisis that followed the Spanish Civil War. Most Canarian emigrants settled down in the western parts of the island, concentrating in the populations of Havana and Pinar del Rio. Within the Canarians' collective memory, most of whom by the 1970s had some kind of family connection to Cuba, a whole informal set of narrations, through oral and musical traditions on the Caribbean island, became part of the national heritage in which we grew up. However, it was mainly through cinema that many of us came to experience directly the significance of this connection.

During the mid-1990s, two Cuban films by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea were shown in Las Palmas' main cinemas: *Strawberry and Chocolate* and *Guantanamera*. Both films represented mainly Euro-Cubans from Havana during the first years of the decade, at the peak of the economic crisis brought about by the end of the Soviet Block. We sat and

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watched in puzzlement: they spoke nearly our same dialect and expressed it in practically the same way, from body language to repetitions of expressions. The realisation was that because of the lack of a Canarian filmography, Canarians had never experienced before such close cultural identification with a film. Of course, the geographical, social and cultural differences between both places could not be greater. It was when I later watched *Buena Vista Social Club* that I came to rethink the uncanniness of my first experience with Cuban films. Much of the music performed in *Buena Vista Social Club* has also been an important part of the tradition in which I was acculturated, through what was played on radio and what was also directly sung and played by the older generations in the Canary Islands. However, I did not identify in the same way as I had done previously with Alea's films. Wenders' representations of Havana relied heavily on Havana's difference to other cities in the West: its 'look' as a non-capitalist city, together with the explicit representation of the strong Afro-Cuban component in the city's cultural productions. Both things were missing in *Strawberry and Chocolate* and *Guantanamera*.

It was from this simultaneous experience of Havana's otherness and sameness in *Buena Vista Social Club* that I later came to rethink the particular role of the visual, mainly film and photography, in the formation and, more importantly, the unsettling and unravelling of our different cultural identifications. What animated this thesis from the beginning was the task of identifying what this particular urban space, Havana, has culturally produced - and been produced by – as its own image, as the utopian projection of itself.

This analysis has as its scope the description of the particular discourses found in those documents that have contributed to Havana's modern visuality. Following Hal Foster's and W.J.T. Mitchell's definitions of the concept of 'visuality'[2], in my analysis this term refers to those visual aspects of the city – including not only the city's architecture and its urban cultures but also the city as an image in its cinematographic, literary and photographic representations - that have been socially constituted and have produced statements on the city as a space for utopian realisations. There is an extensive archive of documents showing what have become Havana's 'symbolic markers',[3] and traditionally used to describe the city's identity 'in a flash'. Each of these documents has appeared in very particular social and cultural contexts and has served different functions. For example, a promotional flyer from a travel agency will show the colonial architecture and the

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particularity of its people – normally and in tune with its reputation, Afro-Cubans dancing or just standing in the street. However, it is not my intention to visit such an archive in order to simply determine what particular example of architecture, urban landscape or type of citizen are regularly shown and where. This study also focuses on the more important question of their historicity: how documents analysed came to represent visually Havana's diversity and how they fitted with the more generic discourses on the city and its role in the formation of cultural identities

There are several contingencies that have made Havana a prolific site of political metaphors. The most evident is its location in an island that has undergone forty-eight years of social engineering and remains one of the last bastions of the socialist experiment. To this factor, I would add the following: the particularity of its architecture; its geographical proximity to the United States; and its apparent cultural mixing, as the legacy of both the African slave trade and Spanish colonialism. This analysis is an attempt to describe the metaphors insinuated into those representations of the city of Havana that from approximately the beginning of the 1930s have either colluded with or differed from predominant contemporary ways of imagining the modern city. This has meant a re-examination of the concept of the 'utopian' in modernism and its postmodern critique, and how it applies to the particularities of the Cuban example, specifically in relation to theorisations dealing with the modern city and urban utopia. Overall, I have tried to argue that there are links and continuities between the history of the representation of Havana during the period considered and parallel changes in contemporary political and philosophical debates. More precisely, I have tried to identify the connections between the concepts of the 'other' and the 'utopian' expressed in Havana's visual representations.

This aspect of my enquiry requires the analysis of both internal and external constructions of Cuba's national identities and how these constructions are embodied and performed in the representations of Havana's urbanity. After years of political and cultural struggle for independence (from Spain and the United States), the city has now become the signifier of *lo cubano*[4]. Although I constantly allude in this analysis to the formation of a Cuban national identity, I do not pretend to decipher what defines and constitutes it or to trace back the historical conditions that permitted its contemporary connotations. Regarding this issue there is already an extensive literature[5]. However, as the city is generally represented

– particularly during the period analysed – as the space where the formation of a national identity and the possibilities of its deconstruction have taken place (simultaneously), I am unable to avoid these questions without severing a very influential discursive aspect of the visual recreations of the city: the western discourses on national formations and their particular constructions in Cuba, with the representations of Havana as their embodiment.

Throughout my research I have tried to relate the represented Havana with the more generic discourses regarding the visuality of the modern city in the western world and, particularly, its association with the utopianism of the 'American city'. In this respect, I have kept the distinction made by Henri Lefebvre between 'the city' as the urban space's actual physicality (buildings, roads, parks); and 'the urban', as the social space, made up of the relations, the networks and productions coming from or 'produced' by the city (its inhabitants, its imaginary, its cultural manifestations)[6]. In the case of Havana, such a distinction is highly relevant, as the spatial divisions within the city, as well as their characterisations in the city's representations, have been markedly influenced by questions of class, gender, race and cultural differences. I have focused on the visuality coming from the city as much as that coming from its urbanity, giving to the analysis of films a privileged status in the identification of utopian discourses on the urban. Contrary to seeing film just as the 'analytical tool of urban discourse'[7] par excellence, I have considered the cinematographic as a crucial part of Havana's urbanity, as urbanity in itself, and not only what it represents. In this sense, I do not defend the existence of a 'represented' Havana as opposed to a 'real' or 'original' one. It is precisely this imagined unity and singularity of the city to which cinema has greatly contributed. It is a very similar process to that described by Benedict Anderson during the formations of the American and European nations as 'imagined communities', thanks to the invention of print technology[8]. The city is another 'imagined community', though very different in nature to that of the 'national community', which has been given 'unity', and therefore 'reality' mainly through the technology of film[9].

This analysis consists of the establishment of discursive links – based mainly in contemporary constructions of a modern utopian urbanism – between documents belonging to different fields of practice, and across periods and geographical areas, where Havana has been (visually) represented as a political and social unity. In the search for and analysis of

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primary sources and documents, I have mainly focused on historically relevant periods when the city of Havana experienced important political and cultural shifts. The documents or primary sources selected belong or refer to these turning-point periods. They have helped to define and/or mystify them, through recreations of Havana as a metaphorical site – either as a metaphor for national identity and unity, or of cosmopolitism and cultural diversity, or (as happened at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s) as a sign of dystopian capitalist exploitation and decadence. I have tried to establish the connections between the ways in which the city has been visually represented with the political and philosophical debates going on at the time, not only in Cuba but also in Europe and the United States. These periods are: (1) the beginning of the 1930s or the period of the Great Depression, in relation to the cultural changes and social tensions that culminated with the 1933 political deadlock and the establishment of a four month 'revolutionary' government; (2) the 1950s, when Havana's urban centre underwent its most important urban regeneration and economic specialization mainly as a service city, thanks to massive investments from the United States; (3) the period from approximately 1961 to the end of the 1970s, characterised by the tensions experienced within the Cuban intelligentsia, once the new authorities after the 1959 Revolution defined their cultural policy and (4) the so-called 'Special Period' during the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and their withdrawal of economic and cultural support.

Although each of these periods are covered in every chapter - each of which is mainly organised thematically - some of the chapters draw more heavily from one period, due to the high relevance that a particular theme had during those years. For example, in the chapter entitled The American City: Havana 1933, where I discuss hegemonic representations of western urban modernity and the role of photography, the emphasis is on the era of the skyscraper in New York and the beginning of the Great Depression in the United States and Cuba – approximately from 1927 to 1938.

This investigation seeks to establish that during the period considered, 1930-2000, many of the representations of Havana in film, photography and literature corresponded with a system of visual repetitions, associated with dominant political discourses on urban utopianism in Europe, the United States and Cuba. The purpose of this investigation is not so much to establish the extent to which these representations correspond with the 'real'

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state of things in Havana today, but to contribute to the understanding of the 'creative' power of the visual, as not only effect but also cause of contemporary urban life. My analysis will try to describe how these representations are a result of the interplay between: a) the visuality of the city, as defined at the beginning of this introduction; b) the historical events within the period considered (inside and outside Cuba) and c) the expectations and/or projections onto the city from inside and outside the island.

Although I shall try to establish the extent to which the outsider's gaze has contributed to the formation of Havana's identity, I do not expect this analysis to show a unified picture of the city as represented by the western imaginary. Rather, the identity associated with the Cuban city is a fluid and discontinuous set of presumptions of what Havana represents for non-Cubans and Cubans alike. There is the question of whether Cuba should be considered as part of the western cultural tradition. Many Cuban and non-Cuban authors have distinguished within the island the existence of two parallel traditions, the European and the African, with the first as the dominant and the second as the latent and repressed[10]. These authors identify these two traditions respectively with the white majority and the black minority, although according to the statistics, nearly half of the population in Cuba is defined as mixed-race. On the other hand, there are other authors, mainly within Cuba, who defend Cuban cultural identity as a *mestizo* culture, a product of the synthesis between the two traditions and therefore a non-western culture[11]. In Chapter II I have analysed this question in depth. However, it is important to clarify at this point that, even though I am not trying to give an answer to the polemic described above, I have not made a distinction between a Cuban and a 'western' representation of the city, or between those 'represented' (the Cubans as the 'other') and those who represent (the westerners). What I have done is to take into account the role that the mystifications of black Africans as the West's 'primitive' others[12] had at the beginning of the twentieth century in order to assess Europeans', North Americans' and Cubans' perceptions of poor Afro-Cubans and their cultural manifestations.

Although this analysis has taken into account the shifts in discourse brought about by the 1959 Revolution with regard to the city's symbolic recreations, I have also focused on those cases when such shifts did not always result in the replacement of one representation by another. In other words, there are fundamental continuities in representations between

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the city as a post-colonial 'other' prior to the Revolution and post-revolutionary visual identifications with western ideas of social utopia and dystopia. These continuities are associated to ideas of cultural syncretism, the ideological dichotomies between work and leisure and between the 'rural' and the 'urban'. The post-1959 political events in the island added those utopian constructions more commonly associated to the Marxist tradition of thought and related to the possibilities of a classless society.

Finally and more importantly, I have found myself putting the emphasis on those aspects of the documents analysed where what is at stake, what is being challenged or problematised, are the social dynamics in the city resulting from the encounters and tensions between the two main racially defined groups on the island: those of European ancestry and those of African ancestry. Needless to say, I consider the concept of race as historically and spatially determined. As C. Loring Brace explains in the introduction to his recent essay '... there is not a coherent biological entity that corresponds to what most people assume is meant by the term'[13] and that 'the concept of 'race,' then, is a product of colonization and, as such, is a social construct'[14]. That is, the term 'race' is here understood as an ideological construct with historical origins and defined differently according to the spaces and places in which it plays a determinant role, in this case, the particularities of the concept in Cuba. In this sense I completely coincide with Alejandra Bronfman's analysis of race in Cuba.

> The presumption that race can be made suggests that race is neither a fixed biological category, nor a primordial attachment, nor a transhistorical phenomenon removed from space and time. Rather, it is a changing, flexible category that emerges out of particular places and times.[15]

This has forced me to define my own position, within this discourse, as a white European woman, taking also into account the historicity in the concept of 'white' as a racial category. When I say 'racial relations' I intend to emphasise 'white' and 'black' as predominantly relational concepts, similar to the concepts of 'man' and 'woman'. The categories of race and gender are here understood as ideological constructs constituted by relational dichotomies that are at the same time defined along formative axes (such as sexuality). For example, in the dichotomy black woman/white woman the former has been culturally situated in the sexuality axis at the point of 'sexually excessive', while the latter at the 'sexually restrained'[16]. The premises of this thesis are not based on the analysis of

black Cubans' cultural specificities, neither on those of white Cubans and their specific role within the whole of the city's cultural life. It is more accurate to say that this thesis has the intention of identifying, from the documents analysed, determining aspects in the city's racial relations that, on the one hand, contribute to or problematise the discourses surrounding Cuban national mythologies and, on the other hand, speak of a particular type of urban modernity, shared with many other cities in the American and European continent. Hence the significance of Havana's nightlife and its representations as the space/time where and when fixed identities, determined by the state of the racial relations at one particular time in the history of the city, might be more easily disturbed. I will go so far as to say that this thesis, far from being an account of the racial relations in Havana as represented in the different documents analysed, is an account of how such relations are constitutive of a different type of urbanity, an unplanned and, therefore, conflictual one. Again, when I say 'racial relations' I refer to those relations established by the reality of two separate cultures on the island caused by the ideological discourse on 'race' coming from Europe and the United States, which, after the abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1886, continued with factual discrimination and segregation. That writing on Cuba is still entangled with distinctions between 'white' and 'black' Cubans is a product of the lasting legacy of these ideologies based on the idea that blacks and whites are two different types of human beings, and, therefore, differently characterised. This takes me to the difficult question of the relations between cultural differences and ideologies of 'race'. Paul Gilroy has written on these relations as, at the least, problematic:

> Once the course of the mainstream is diverted through marginal, underexploited cultural territory, an emphasis on culture can readily displace previous attention to the receding certainties of 'race.' In these conditions, the relationship between cultural differences and racial particularity gets complex and fraught...
> The emphasis on culture as a form of property to be owned rather than lived characterizes the anxieties of the moment. It compounds rather than resolves the problems arising from associating 'race' with embodied or somatic variation. Indeed, we must be alert to circumstances in which the body is reinvested with the power to arbitrate in the assignment of cultures to peoples. The bodies of a culture's practitioners can be called upon to supply the proof of where that culture fits in the inevitable hierarchy of value. The body may also provide the pre-eminent basis on which that culture is to be ethnically assigned. The body circulates uneasily through contemporary discussions of how one knows the group to which one belongs and of what it takes to be recognized as belonging to such a collectivity.[17]

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In the case of Cuba, the discourses behind the construction and transformations of its national mythologies have reached a point where this relation between the ideologies of 'race' and the reality of cultural difference is now expressed as a desire for the Cuban culture to be *one*, once perceptions of differences between 'blacks' and 'whites' are finally erased. Statements on national identity and 'racial' difference are in Cuba part of the same discourse. The problem with this is that, as Paul Gilroy argues 'The emphasis is being put on culture as a form of property to be owned rather than lived' and it is precisely in the *lived* cultures, not the *owned* ones, where the differences appear over and over again. In his definition of the term 'culture' and its relation to that of 'race', Robert Young explains how this term was in its origins intimately associated with the idea of the city, as that permanent settlement created by those who started 'cultivating' the land and in opposition to hunters and nomads. Therefore, Young continues, at the base of the modern usages of the term 'culture' lies the old division between the 'civilized', those who belong to the city, and the 'savages'[18]. What this fact implies is that it was the city that would produce the 'civilized' or 'cultured' subject and not the other way round. However, once concepts of 'race' and later 'ethnicity', entered the discourses on culture in the western world[19], this perception of the 'racialized' body as bearer and sign of a certain culture explained above by Gilroy, has in many occasions problematised the uses of the term culture to the point of rendering it meaningless. The concept of culture I have tried to use throughout my investigation should be understood as a set of practices that are not owned by particular individuals but are instead performed by them. Therefore, it is not that they can be found within the individual so she or he is able to express them. The cultural practices of the city, including the subjects who perform them, are disclosed by the archival documents I have used to describe the discourses on Havana, and they are to be found in the city – that is, in its actual physicality and its representations.

As I explained above, the slave trade and the legacies of nineteenth century racial ideologies in Europe and America created in Cuba systems of discrimination, segregation and exclusion still functioning today. This has resulted in the development of at least two separated lived cultures in Havana. Of course, it is not that we find in Havana only two cultures, that of the blacks and that of the whites. As any other big city (Havana now has a population of approximately two million), Havana is characterised by overlapping cultural diversities responding to the city's spatial and ideological divisions based mainly on

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differences in race, gender, sexuality and class. In each document analysed, I have tried to discern how such differences – and their inter-relations – have constructed Havana's particular visuality.

Methodology:

Methodologically, the first step in my investigation has been the building of an archive of visual and textual documents (mainly fictional and documentary film, photography and literary fiction) in connection with the City of Havana and its visual and performative particularities, for the period of 1930-2000. These documents have come from North American, European, Latin American and Cuban sources. Such an archive contains textual and visual statements on Havana's visuality where the city has been symbolically charged with present identifications - the constructions of discourses around the Cuban nation - and future projections. The latter would be those expectations put on Havana as a project in relation to these discourses on nationality and the more general western discourses on the city.

This thesis is as much visual as it is textual. The group of images I have chosen are not here to illustrate the textual documents, so as to reinforce them. On many occasions, the visual representations contest what is being said through language, whether oral or written. Correspondences between textual and visual documents are at the level of the discursive. They must be related in their interdependence as statements conforming the discourse on the national in Cuba and on the role that the city and its utopian recreations, plays within this discourse.

To realise this project I made two separate trips to Havana, lasting a total of five months. I also made two other research trips to Spain and the United States. During these visits I consulted several archives, libraries and cultural institutions, searching mainly for visual documents that had during different periods become representative of the city.

During my first trip, I was for several weeks based at the Instituto Cubano de las Artes e Industrias Cinematográficas (ICAIC), going through the film files and documentation and viewing film material at the ICAIC Film Archives.

During this first trip I additionally consulted the Cuban National Archives where I went through Cuban magazines published in Havana such as *Carteles* and *Bohemia*. I also consulted their photographic archives. Finally, I spent a week at the Museum of the City Archives, also in Havana, where I examined their collections of photographs and postcards of Havana for the period 1930 to 1970.

During my second trip to Havana I was mainly based at the Department of History of the University of Havana, focusing on the documentation related to the contemporary history of Cuba, and the *Fototeca* (Cuban Photographic Archives). In this latter institution I consulted the collections of different Cuban photographers, particularly Constantino Arias. I also conducted interviews with filmmakers, academics and personnel at the cultural institutions. One of these interviews was with Julio García Espinosa, a key figure in the post-1959 development of the Cuban filmography [Appendix 1]. The significance of this interview in the thesis relies on García Espinosa's positioning not only as a cultural producer but also as participant of the post-1959 debates regarding the role and nature of the new cultural productions within the processes of social change then taking place.

In my trip to Madrid I visited two institutions, the Spanish Cinemateque and the collections at Casa de las Américas. I viewed several films produced in Havana, particularly co-productions and other rare documents.

Finally, I made a final research trip to the Walker Evans Archive, at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, where I consulted the documentation and images related to Evans' trip to Havana in 1933.

When inserting a quotation from a Spanish text not yet translated into English, I have added underneath a translation of my own. I have tried to be as faithful as possible to the original's intentions, though this has not always been easy due to the difficulty sometimes of finding the right English word or expression that would match the particularities of Spanish-Cubanisms. Overall, however, I feel my translations are as close as possible to the Spanish originals.

Interdisciplinarity as methodology:

I have developed an interdisciplinary methodology, which includes different practices and their corresponding theoretical discussions: Film and Media Studies, Art History, Critical Theory, Urbanism. Such a methodology has been very useful in making possible a comparative analysis of the different visual and literary representations of Havana. Therefore, this analysis carries the methodological problem of comparing very different fields of practice (film, photography and architecture) that add their own historical developments to my interpretation. On several occasions, as in the case of documents of architecture and film, I have found it necessary to take into account the particular theorisations related to them as artistic and social practices. However, it has been possible to move easily among different disciplines when the criteria followed has been the identification of statements on the utopian projections on to the city, either visual or textual. I have tried to treat this material as visual allegories, where these statements describing the utopian projections onto the city are constructed through association and reference.

Interdisciplinarity characterises many contemporary works in the field of Cultural Studies. For example, Petrine Archer-Straw's work *Negrophilia: Black Culture and Avant-Garde Paris* (2001), is a good example when applied to the study of a city's cultural practices – during the 1920s in Paris - and their relation to western racial ideologies. Archer-Straw uses examples of popular culture, such as newspapers' comic tirades or minstrel theatre, and of music, literature, together with biographical descriptions of some of the city's cultural practitioners to describe a dominant discourse among the intellectual and bohemian groups in Paris on the existence of a black culture essentially different to that practised by the whites and defined by her as negrophiliac: the romantisation and obsession with those of African descent (even though they were mainly North American born) and their cultural practices.

The methodological perspective in this study has been partly influenced by Michel Foucault's historical archeology, such as the history of sexuality, criminality or madness within the western world. I say 'partly influenced' because, being inserted within the field of Cultural Studies, apart from description, this analysis also has an interpretative intention: it searches for meanings and intentions, concepts that are normally alien to a Foucauldian methodology[20]. Foucault's main influence in this analysis is his definition of his method as

'archaeology', 'which describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive'[21], and the archive as 'the general system of the formation and transformation of statements'[22]. Discourses are understood within this investigation as corpuses of statements, not only of what is 'sayable' (in this case, theories on social utopianism and discourses on national formations) but also of what is 'visible' (buildings, the 'racialised' body and the cinematographic recreations of the city). Therefore, statements arising from discourses are as much 'things' as they are language or 'words'. This investigation focuses on this relation between the sayable and the visible[23], on how they produce each other, creating a particular discourse on the Cuban city. Following Foucault's approach to the analysis of statements, I have tried to look for repetitions, continuities, transformations and differences among statements, trying to avoid their insertion within a teleology or total history.

Another aspect of Foucault's methodology influencing this analysis is his concept of the 'subject' within the discourse, not as an 'author'[24] of statements, but as a 'subject position', as those positions occupied by individuals within a discourse. According to Foucault, subjects are produced through discourses and they can be defined as 'subject-positions'[25]. In my investigation, I have taken into account the positions occupied by the individuals who have reproduced the different statements on the city. Whether they are responsible for reproducing a narrative of the national or the dichotomies between work and leisure within the urban, their statements – in the literary, cinematographic, photographic or even dance forms – relate to each other within the general discourses on the city, as repetitions, differences, continuities or ruptures.

In summary, this investigation's methodology is characterised by: (1) an interdisciplinary approach: The relevance of the different documents from different fields of practice that I have used in my investigation is exclusively dependent on their role in the construction of discourses regarding the Cuban city and how they relate to ideas of 'otherness' and utopia. Another interdisciplinary aspect of this project is the analysis of the history of Havana in relation to its contemporary visuality and visibility[26]. (2) A comparative approach, conducted at three different levels: across disciplines, across periods (mainly pre and post-revolutionary)[27] and across geographical regions (the geographical context of the primary sources: Europe, Cuba, the United States or other). (3) An archaeological approach in the

Foucauldian sense: my project has been guided by the search for continuities, repetitions, transformations and differences of statements (the sayable and the visible) in the discourses on the city of Havana and how they relate to the general discourses on urban utopianism and national formations during the period considered. However, I should also distinguish within this analysis an interpretative intention, as the search for intentions and meanings in statements, instead of just limiting my analysis to their description.

Building an archive:

The analysis of primary sources takes into account two different areas of enquiry. First of all, the field relating to authorship and audiences (by whom are the primary sources made and to whom are they addressed). It is not a question of who is speaking, but the position from which they speak. For example, the film by the Cuban director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) was shot during a period when the role of the intellectual and artist in the revolution was under question. This field will also take into account the debate regarding audiences as producers of meaning. In this respect, this analysis tries to avoid the simplistic dichotomy between the Cuban and the outsider when comparing differences in meaning and interpretation and, therefore, draw similarities and differences beyond geographical boundaries. Secondly there is the area of usage, which relates to the purposes to which the documents were put. For example, Walker Evan's photographs of Havana from 1933 were created to illustrate the essay *The Crime of Cuba* by North American political writer Carleton Beals. This essay was an attempt to denounce the state of poverty and repression in the island under Machado's regime. However, some of these images were later re-used in a very different context, within an art gallery and as having an 'author'. The relevance of this area resides in identifying the initial intended perceptions when the documents are put at the service of a specific objective.

As a short review of the literature dealing with the analysis of documents representing and defining Havana, I need to mention two books published in Spanish: Enma Álvarez Tabío's *La invención de La Habana* (2001)[28] and Yolanda Izquierdo's *Acoso y ocaso de una ciudad. La Habana de Alejo Carpentier y Guillermo Cabrera Infante* (2002)[29]. These two texts deal exclusively with literary works produced by well-known Cuban writers, such as Alejo Carpentier, Lezama Lima, Reinaldo Arenas or Guillermo Cabrera Infante. Álvarez Tabío's book is concerned with the poetic description of the different 'Havanas' found in

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each of the authors' literary recreations of the city. She presents these recreations not as documents fulfilling a discursive function, but as products of the authors' own imaginary and, therefore, disconnected from the general discourses on the city during the periods in which the works were produced, though in some cases, she concedes historical parallelisms. Izquierdo's work focused exclusively on Carpentier's and Cabrera Infante's cases, alluding to the connections between the literary and other examples of the city's cultural productions, particularly its music. There is also a recent text published in English by British historian Antoni Kapcia and entitled *Havana. The Making of Cuban Culture* (2005)[30]. This work deals with the question of the historical formation of a Cuban national identity through the analysis of its capital's cultural life. However, in this book, Kapcia focuses his analysis on the post-1959 effects of cultural policies, for example the creation of *casas de cultura* (cultural centres), without looking in detail at the specific cultural productions and their contributions to the formation of the city's identity. Overall it is a very comprehensive historical survey of post-1959 cultural life in the city.

I have divided this thesis into seven chapters, according to thematic criteria. I have avoided ordering chapters following chronological criteria so as not to give the impression that there has been a logical causation between documents, with one set of representations originating the next. Each chapter remains independent, linking with the preceding and following chapters through the synchronicities and discontinuities between the different statements belonging to the general discourses on the national and the city's role in reflecting them. This thesis begins with an analysis of Havana's representations during the 1990s and finishes with a particular case study from the beginning of the 1930s, the decade of the Great Depression in the United States and Cuba. The reason to end my analysis focusing on the 1930s has been precisely to put an emphasis on this lack of causation and on the synchronicity between statements.

The first chapter is an introductory analysis of those concepts and ideas that, particularly during and after the decade of the 1990s, have been most commonly associated with the city of Havana. These concepts, frequently found in the numerous 'statements' on the city produced at the end of that decade, are related to the tradition of western utopian thought and the function the anachronic has within this tradition. I have taken into account the 1980s and 1990s theorisations that focused on what has been called the 'return to tradition'

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in the 'postmodern era'[31], and how they relate to the theoretical discussions around the concept of the 'other' in post-colonial theory[32]. Both sets of theorisations have much to say on the sudden interest in the city of Havana that arose mainly in Europe and the United States during the 1990s. I also relate this discourse on the Cuban city to the concept of hetereotopia as theorised by Michel Foucault[33]. This introductory chapter conceptualises those utopian elements related to the representation of modern cities in the West, which will be present in the documents analysed in the following six chapters in relation to Havana.

The second chapter looks at the literature dealing with the question of the formation of Cuban national identity. This chapter identifies those concepts that have been traditionally used to describe the processes of cultural transformation through the encounter between different traditions. These concepts come from the fields of ethnography and anthropology and they are: hybridity, creolization, syncretism, transculturation, *mestizaje*, and translation. I have looked at specific cases in the Cuban bibliography to identify how some of these concepts have been applied and in reference to which cultural traditions. I have also identified those aspects in Havana's representations from the nineteenth century where these discourses on national identity became relevant.

The third chapter focuses mainly on Havana's architectural and urban peculiarities. I have investigated those buildings that have defined its skyline from the beginning of the 1930s until after the political events of 1959. They are also the buildings used in most of the cinematographic productions based in Havana, in order to function as signs of the city, or, as MacCannell has called them, its 'symbolic markers'[34]. I discuss the new approaches to the visuality of the old colonial city after the 1950s and 1960s urban developments in most of the world cities, which meant the disappearance of many parts of the old architectures and spaces and their replacement with examples of North American-inspired modern architecture: mainly high-rise buildings designed under the premises of functionalism and formal purism that characterised the modern style in western architecture. This chapter relates the concepts of the 'baroque', as theorised and used by different authors, as being at the core of this contemporary look at the colonial city of Havana. As in the other six chapters, I have analysed each case in relation to their political and cultural contexts, taking into account shifts in meanings brought about by political and social changes. This chapter

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deals with the dichotomies between the old colonial city or the 'baroque city' and the more 'North American' city of El Vedado – a subject already extensively written about, particularly by the architect and urbanist Roberto Segre. Another important section of this chapter is the description of the 'hotel' as an architectural category, which, having adopted the aesthetic premises of western modern architecture, transformed Havana's skyline during the 1950s, adding new layers of meaning to its visuality. I have analysed the romantisation of the old city by Cuban intellectuals - particularly Alejo Carpentier - and the new Cuban authorities before and after the 1959 revolution in the light of the new architecture and its meanings.

Chapter IV is dedicated to the representation of Havana's urban space in cinema, continuing the discussions of Chapter III regarding the aesthetics of the old city and the political metaphors derived from them. In relation to the spatial politics in the city, I discuss the theme of urban spatial segregation as markers for the city's racial relations at the time of each document, a subject that is followed through subsequent chapters.

Chapter V explores what I suggest is the present mystification of pre-1959 Havana, particularly during the 1950s, when the United States entertainment industry invested heavily in the Cuban capital. In this chapter I discuss the dominant representations of the city, mainly in Hollywood musicals, such as *Weekend in Havana* (1948) and *Guys and Dolls* (1955). These cinematographic productions, used in part to promote Havana as an ideal holiday destination[35], had a decisive impact on future recreations of the city during the 1950s, particularly among dissident groups in the United States and more recently in Cuba, as in the case of Enrique Cirules' books *El Imperio de La Habana* and *La Vida Secreta de Meyer Lansky in Havana*[36], and in post-1959 Hollywood productions such as *The Godfather II* (1974) by Francis Ford Coppola. This chapter discusses the dichotomy established between work and leisure and its visibility in most of Havana's representations during that decade (as well as in many later recreations of the city during the 1950s). The concept of Havana as a city designed for the use and enjoyment of the North American tourist was, then, first positively encouraged by the Cuban and United States culture-makers, and later represented by the post-1959 Cuban authorities as a sign of cultural decadence and the United States' dominance over the island. In both cases, it was a

statement constitutive of the discourses on the relations between the dichotomy work/leisure and utopian projections onto the Cuban city.

Chapter VI analyses those documents where the earlier chapter's discussions on Havana's nightlife is represented outside the simplistic 'good versus evil' polarity established by the new Cuban authorities and the mainly Miami-based dissident groups. The first is the novel *Three Trapped Tigers* (1964) by the Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante. The other documents are the films *Cuba baila* (1963) and *Son o no son* (1977) by Cuban filmmaker Julio García Espinosa. In both cases Havana's nightlife appears neither 'decadent' nor 'paradisiacal', neither 'luxurious' nor 'exploitative', but the site of counterculture and artistic renewal, thanks to the dynamics caused by the reality of cultural difference in the city and their apparent reconciliation at night. This chapter describes the associations between this mystification of Havana's nightlife and the statements on the 'otherness' of Afro-Cubans, in order to describe their function within the discourse on the formations of a Cuban national identity.

The last chapter focuses on the year 1933, a year that, as proposed by many Cubans and non-Cubans, represented a turning point in the cultural and political history of the island[37]. In this year the North American photographer Walker Evans was commissioned to illustrate Carleton Beals's essay *The Crime of Cuba* (1933). The analysis focuses on how Evans represented urban modernity in Havana, in relation to those other images from the United States' urban centers he selected for his exhibition *American Photographs* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the year 1938. Havana's representations have been inserted within the discourses on the 'American City', emergent during those years and of which Walker Evans' photographs are a paradigmatic example. In this last chapter, I have focused on one particular image, *Citizen Downtown Havana*, which, after its inclusion in the exhibition *American Photographs,* immediately became one of the most popular images from the Havana series. My analysis relates the perceived 'Americanism' of this image to the new status African Americans acquired after the 1920s renaissance of African American culture in the United States and its popularisation in Europe, mainly Paris. In relation to earlier chapters, this chapter serves to link - historically and ideologically - the Cuban and the United States' national projects, through the particularities of their represented urbanities and as part of the same utopian discourse.

Chapter I: <u>Utopian Anachronisms and the Contemporary Nostalgia for the Lost City: Havana in Cinema and Photography During the 'Special Period'</u>

This chapter discusses those concepts now most associated with the contemporary visuality of Havana and widely used in contemporary writings and recreations of the Cuban capital. Utopia, dystopia and heterotopia are the three most common terms applied to Havana during the ten years of the 'Special Period', that is, the decade that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, when the island went through one of its most acute economic crises[38]. Together with these three concepts, I will discuss the idea of the anachronic image and its utopian character in Havana's contemporary representations. Methodologically, this chapter consists of the analysis of the most representative photographic and cinematographic representations of Havana during the 1990s, using Wim Wenders' music documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* as exemplary of this trend. This discussion attempts to elucidate how the pairing of different concepts, the anachronic and the utopian, and the utopian and the heterotopian, finds a modern visual analogon in these most recent images of Havana. Within the general context of the thesis, this chapter serves to define the particular utopianisms found in the most commonly represented aspects of Havana's visuality, which will be analysed in depth in the following chapters. This has required a precise definition of the utopian, a concept that in this thesis has an eminently visual character.

During the 1990s[39], Cuban cultural manifestations became a strong focus of attention in the European and North American cultural contexts. There was a sharp growth in the consumption of traditional Cuban music and, within the art world, the island's visual arts. One of the main reasons for such a promotion of anything Cuban in the West has been based on the island's political particularities: the fact that after the dismantling of the Soviet Union, Cuba remained the only communist country in the western hemisphere. Taking into account that Cuba was considered a social experiment still in progress within the western world, its appeal after the events of 1989 in Europe would be mainly related to this perception of the island as a relevant political rarity on its way to extinction. Many of the art exhibitions held in Europe, Canada and the United States, grouped the work of contemporary Cuban visual artists during the 1990s and mostly showed art works

commenting on or drawing from the political and economic isolation of the island. It is enough to list the titles chosen for many of the exhibitions on Cuban contemporary art during the 1990s to account for this striking unanimity regarding the political metaphors associated to the island's artistic productions:

Contemporary Art From Cuba: Irony and Survival on the Utopian Island (New York: DGE, 1999); *Utopian Territories: New Art From Cuba* (Vancouver: Contemporary Art Gallery, 1997); *Cuba: Maps of Desire* (Vienna: Folio Verlag Wien-Bozen, 1998); *Cuba: The Possible Island* (Barcelona: Centre de Cultura Contemporania de Barcelona, 1995); *The Future Island: Young Art From Cuba* (Gijón, 1998)

In the different catalogue texts accompanying these exhibitions the Cuban space, and more particularly, the City of Havana, was constructed as an 'other' to the western city, as a metaphorical space standing for the end of utopian thought in the western world and a nostalgic look backwards at a decaying utopian project. After the second half of the 1990s, references to the status of utopian thought in the western world became the necessary theoretical background when introducing the island's artistic productions. These theorisations were in some instances just rhetorical comments on the associations between the image of the island and that of utopia, as imagined in literature by Thomas More, the founder of the utopian literary genre in the West (Utopia was the actual name of an island)[40]. In More's text the ideal society was placed on an island, very conveniently separated from other realities that could influence it and divert it from its state of perfection. In the catalogue to the exhibition *Utopian Territories: New Art from Cuba*, held at the Contemporary and Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery in Vancouver, the curators explain the constant references to the subject of migration in many of the works exhibited as a sign of the utopianism permeating the island's cultural productions: 'It is not surprising that many of the works deal with the theme of migration. A utopia always exists at the end or at the beginning of a journey. The island is actually the pretext to show the individual confronting the uncertainties of infinity and the unreachable...'[41].

However, on other occasions, there was a much more direct and less rhetorical association between the Cuban reality during the 1990s and the failure of the rationalist and, more importantly, emancipatory project initiated during the Enlightenment in America and

Europe, including the utopianism at the centre of the Marxist tradition[42]. This reference to Marxism echoed Jean-François Lyotard's earlier theorisations regarding the 'breaking up of the grand narratives' in his text *The Postmodern Condition* (1979)[43]. In his discussion he included Marxism as one of the most influential totalising models during the twentieth century. The Marxist narrative was based on the division and conflict between social classes in order to explain social change. In Lyotard's analysis, this model had ended up helping in the self-regulation of liberal political systems (via trade unionism and negotiation in conflict resolution) or in the perpetuation of the totalitarian tendencies in those systems classified as communist (where social struggles were 'disappeared' once class divisions were apparently removed)[44]. Lyotard argued that once Marxism had lost its theoretical ground as a critical model of society it was finally 'reduced to the status of a 'utopia' or 'hope''[45].

The perceived utopianism of the socialist narratives was highly influential in the above associations between Cuba and this renewed western political scepticism described by Lyotard. However, I would like to argue that it was not only the fact that Cuba was a self-defined socialist country that created this discourse on the utopian around its social and cultural manifestations, including its visual arts. It was also a result of Havana's visual particularities, partly a product of the different historical developments experienced by the city after the 1959 revolution, but also reminiscent of social and cultural contingencies which go further back in the city's history.

The over-exposure of Havana's visual particularities during the 1990s was mainly a photographic phenomena. Together with this promotion of the island's visual arts in Europe and North America, the decade of the 1990s saw the proliferation of photography books of the city taken by European and North American photographers. Among the most representative were: Tony Mendoza's *Going Back* (1997); David Alan Harvey's *Cuba* (1999); Gianfranco Gorgoni's *Cubano 100%* (1997); Claudio Edinger's *Old Havana* (1998); René Burri's *Cuba y Cuba* (1997); Tria Giovan's *Cuba. The Elusive Island* (1996); Michel Renaudeau's *Cuba* (1998); Vincenzo Pietropaolo's *Making Home in Havana* (2002); Nicholas Sapieha, Engels, Hans. *Havana* (1999) and Francesco Venturi's *Old Havana. Cuba* (1991).

These books, using the photographic traditions and codes of the documentary in artistic photography, visually contributed to the discourses then surrounding the island's status within the international sphere as a space of difference and otherness. In most of them Havana appears to the European and North American as a visual anachronism. The term 'anachronic', literally meaning something wrongly brought to a time to which it does not belong, whether a past or a future, refers within this analysis to those aspects in the city's visual peculiarities, that, through representation, have contributed to the formation of an image of Havana as a-temporal, as a city 'frozen in time'. The primacy of the anachronic in these images is in part a product of each of the photographers' choices when selecting from the very diverse visual material commonly found in the city. In order to represent it as a different urban space, contrasted to the visual particularities of cities such as New York, London or Tokyo[46], these choices have more often than not been associated with what would be perceived as an anachronism to the European and North American viewer. For example, one of the most commonly recognised anachronisms from Havana is the image of the North American car from the 1950s, still widely used in the Cuban city [illustration 1].

Illustration 1. The 1950s American car. My own photograph (2006)

What is interesting about this anachronism is not its ability to tell us anything new about reality in Cuba, but more its ability to reminisce about the United States' cultural past, now seen as a national project intimately linked from the beginning of the twentieth century to the technological invention of the car and its contribution to the development of a particular type of culture. The 1950s American car is nowadays, to the North American and European spectator, a relic, a museum-object. As Benedict Anderson discussed in *Imagined*

Communities, the museum has traditionally fulfilled a particular function: to be the space where the individuals from a particular tradition identify themselves in the present as members of the same political and cultural project through the re-invention of a common past[47]. Relics or antiquities such as the car from the 1950s in Havana are objects that have traditionally contributed to such recreations of the past and the construction of national narrations in the present.

There are other less widely recognised uses of the anachronistic in the photographic representations of Havana mentioned above, accomplishing, however, a very similar function. In Tria Giovan's book of photographs entitled *Cuba. The Elusive Island*[48], there is an image of typical 1950s hotel furniture still existent in the interiors of many of Havana's hotels [illustration 2]. Formally, this furniture's style is also recognisable as belonging to the decade of the 1950s, though, in reality as a style, it follows the aesthetic premises of modern design, developed nearly in its entirety in Europe during the 1920s. We could compare this image to the one above of the American car from the 1950s, and see it again as not only the representation of objects designed under a style now considered out of fashion, but also, as the American car, as an image of museum- objects, relics from the historical past of Europe and North America, representative of an era now perceived as ended. These are furniture pieces of modern design, which follow the same architectural style of the very hotel housing them, the Hotel Habana Libre [illustration 3]. They are again museum-objects to those who have stopped looking at them as 'modern', that is, as designed in a style believed to be universal.
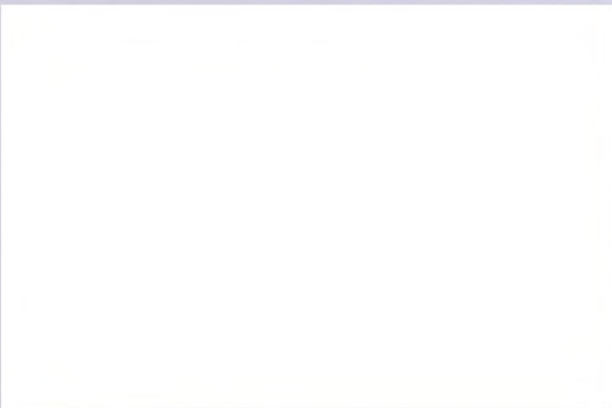
Illustration 2. Tria Giovan. Photograph of hotel furniture at the Hotel Habana Libre in Havana (1996)
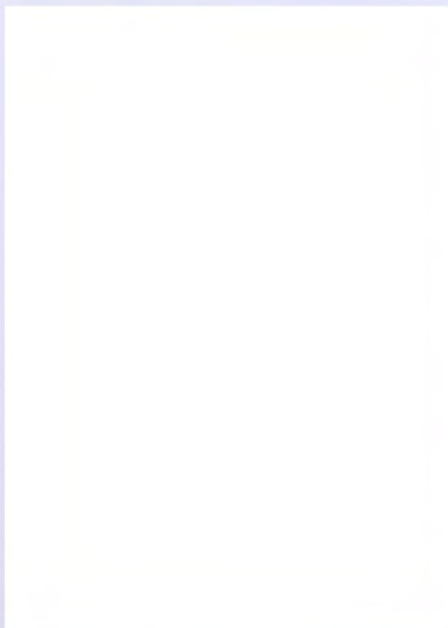
Illustration 3. Hotel Habana Libre, Havana, showing mural by Cuban artist Amelia Peláez.

Due to its contemporary representation as a city-museum, Havana has already been described as a heterotopical space by several authors – among them, Gerald Matt in 1998[49] and Ana Maria Dopicos in 2002[50]. In fact, when Michel Foucault defined the concept of 'Heterotopia' in his essay 'Different Spaces', he included the museum, together with cemeteries, old colonies and vacation villages:

> … [They are] real places, actual places, places that are designated into the very institution of society, which are sorts of actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable. Because they are utterly different from all the emplacement that they reflect or refer to, I shall call these places 'heterotopias'.[51]

Each heterotopia, in Foucault's theorisation, has a specific function within the society that has constituted it. Old Christian colonies in North America, founded as recreations of ideal communal societies, for example, are described as heterotopias that fulfil a function of compensation[52], functioning as an 'other' to the society that surrounds them. Such compensation is possible thanks to the fact that they are normally spatially constrained, and on occasion, as I will explain in a later chapter, also temporally constrained. Heterotopias also allow within themselves the juxtaposition and links to other times (heterochronies) and other spaces. In order to enter them, still following Foucault, you must

go through 'a system of opening and closing', which keeps them separated from the other spaces of society while allowing for them to be 'penetrable'[53].

By following Foucault's theorisations of the heterotopical, I am not trying to describe these contemporary representations of Havana as the representations of an existing heterotopia. Excepting its particularities, Havana is, first of all, a city in many ways very similar to other world cities. However, as visual representations of a space perceived as an 'other', they might be accomplishing a heterotopical function that is normally associated with the national museums within Europe and North America. Going back to Tria Giovani's images of hotel furniture from the 1950s in Havana, the question still remains why this image is so attractive to the European and North American visitor in the Cuban city during the 1990s and why it is so relevant that it was taken in Havana. This fascination for Havana's anachronisms, including its architecture, is in many ways related to the transformation of the modern utopian projections onto the city that characterised the first half of the twentieth century in Europe and America. It was during the 1960s and 1970s that the development and later crisis of modern architecture and urban planning started to be theorised by authors and architects such as Jane Jacobs, Charles Jencks and Robert Venturi.

In his now classic text *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* from 1977, Charles Jencks characterised modern architecture as a style based on the principles of rationalism and functionalism – principles then thought of as universal and therefore applicable to any culture. Jencks' criticism mainly addressed the architects Mies Van der Rohe and his introduction of the 'univalent form'[54] and also Le Corbusier, ideologue of the 'International Style', who argued that an architecture and urbanism based on the principles of rationalism and functionalism would create a type of society characterised by its urbanity where the conflicts between different social groups, due to chaotic economic growth, would be mitigated, at least in part[55]. According to Jencks, this deep social utopianism, which characterized the beginnings of the modern style in the new urban plans for the European and North American cities, disappeared gradually after the Second World War. In fact what disappeared were the aspirations of liberal architects and urban planners to transform society through the rational planning of cities[56]. However, according to Jencks, modern architecture as a style became hegemonic and was, once Europe recovered from the Second

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World War, extensively applied to the majority of public constructions in the West: not only factories, but also schools, hospitals and social housing.

> No doubt in terms of expression the architecture of Mies van der Rohe and his followers is the most univalent formal system we have, because it makes use of few materials and a single, right-angled geometry. Characteristically this reduced style was justified as rational (when it was uneconomic), and universal (when it fitted only a few functions)[57]

> Modern architecture took every culture as its province, it claimed to be universal; and under the pressure of fashion, technology and specious argument, these claims have led to its indiscriminate practice around the world. [58]

In this text, Jencks describes modern architecture's paradox: an architecture that was conceived in its beginning to precipitate human emancipation soon came to represent the exploitation of men by men, with the aesthetic model of the factory applied to all social functions: education, health, recreation and housing. Among this last category, there was not only the typical social housing dedicated to manual workers, but also those from the growing tourist industry, the hotels. In fact, the boom in the construction of hotels that brought about the development of the tourist industry was directly connected to the expansion of the modern style in architecture to all those regions where Europe and North America exercised an important political and economic influence, regardless of lifestyles and cultural differences.

Jencks' critique of the modern style would later help to define what he identified as a post-modern[59] architecture, an architecture no longer aspiring to universality and, therefore, based on a non-hierarchical approach to the reality of cultural differences and the different types of architecture this attention to the local should produce[60]. As a kind of programmatic manifesto to post-modern architecture in the United States, Robert Venturi, Denise Scott-Brown, and Steven Izenour published in 1972 the book *Learning from Las Vegas*[61], describing this city's use of pastiche and overlapping of styles – though excessive – as an aesthetic alternative to modern architecture's 'purist style'. Las Vegas represented to the authors the possibilities of non-hierarchical appropriations in architecture of styles coming from different times, different cultures and different social groups.

Nearly ten years after Jencks' essay, Andreas Huyssen published *After the Great Divide* (1986), where he characterised the new aesthetics of the post-modern developed in Europe and the United States during the 1960s and 1970s[62]. His central argument, hence the title of his book, was that modernism's main ideological trait was the hierarchical division of culture, with mass culture or kitsch at the bottom and high culture at the top, then being challenged by new tendencies in the arts and theoretical studies of culture:

> But one thing seems clear: the great divide that separated high modernism from mass culture and that was codified in the various classical accounts of modernism no longer seems relevant to postmodern artistic or critical sensibilities.[63]

Huyssen associates this breaking up of the modern divisions between high and low culture with the general climate of crisis exacerbated at the end of the 1980s, which he identifies as a cultural and political identity crisis in Europe and North America (also recognized in 1984 by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition*). One of the many answers to such a crisis, following Huyssen, had been a 'multifaceted and diverse search for the past (often for an alternative past)'[64], initiated during the 1970s, when many artists in North America and Europe had been looking to the beginning of the twentieth century's artistic avant-gardes as their traditional past. Therefore, the 'newness' of the artistic tendencies during the 1970s and 1980s were based on the visuality of the very old. The multiplication of photography books portraying the ruinous state of Havana's old architecture during the 1990s formed part of this same trend. Havana's visuality at the time, fitted with these new aesthetics based on the non-hierarchical quotations of an 'alternative past', in the same way that Las Vegas' visuality had done in 1972. However, it was precisely the fact that such quotations were non-hierarchical and, therefore, implied the recovery of any 'past' among the many, as well as any culture among the many, that they ended up blurring the apparent division between the modern and the postmodern. Bruno Latour, for example, did not think that such separation really existed because, as the title of his book declared, *We Have Never Been Modern*:

> They [the post-moderns] feel that they come 'after' the moderns, but with the disagreeable sentiment that there is no more 'after'. 'No future': this is the slogan added to the moderns' motto 'No past'.[65]

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Havana's newly discovered peculiar visualities, as represented during the 1990s, came to visually illustrate this motto, 'No future', or what a possible 'non-future' to our present might 'look like'. The images of an 'out-dated' modernist furniture in the interior of Havana's also modern hotels unravel this paradox: they present a city still submerged in the modern mythologies of social change and historical progress. Because they have been taken in Havana and not in any other city, their evocative power resides in a prior knowledge of the role that this particular urban space plays among modern projections of the ideal city in Europe and America. It is in this new look of westerners towards their own cities, Havana being one of them, where we must situate the sudden interest for the ruinous state of much of Havana's old architecture in Europe and North America. The Cuban capital's visual particularities made it a model of the 'non-modern' city. The utopianism from the beginning of the twentieth century, particularly among the European artistic avant-gardes, had created an image of the future city based in its entirety on technological innovation, with the universalist and rationalist aesthetics of modern architecture[66]. At the end of the 1980s, the future city, that is, the desired or utopic city, started to become much more associated with the aesthetics of the very old, and the City of Havana became an exemplary case of this new image. It could be that the utopic image of the city, and therefore, of the future society as a whole, has been transformed. According to Bruno Latour, this was not only the consequence of the end of the Cold War:

> All dates are conventional, but 1989 is a little less so than some. For everyone today, the fall of the Berlin Wall symbolizes the fall of socialism. ... The liberal West can hardly contain itself for joy. It has won the Cold War.
> But the triumph is short-lived. In Paris, London and Amsterdam, this same glorious year 1989 witnesses the first conferences on the global state of the planet: for some observers they symbolize the end of capitalism and its vain hopes of unlimited conquest and total dominion over nature.[67]

To be able to establish how the concept of 'Utopia' (in relation to the possibilities of imagining the future) relates to Havana's visuality, it is necessary to frame and contextualise within this analysis this concept's many definitions.

Ruth Levitas has explained in her text *The Concept of Utopia*[68], that within the theoretical field of utopian studies, the definition of the concept of 'utopia' has traditionally depended on the position from which the different authors have looked at the utopian: that is, whether

they have prioritised its form, content or function. For example, basing his definition on the formal, Krishan Kumar has defined utopia as a literary genre, in the form of the novel, where the narration takes place in an 'imagined' ideal society, characterised by the goodness of its institutions, peoples and values[69]. Etymologically this is strictly the origin of the concept as invented by Thomas More in his fictional account *Utopia* (1516). However, such a definition would limit the utopian to literary fiction, excluding from its analysis the visual representations of the 'ideal' or 'desired' now present in photography and film, but also with a historical past in the more traditional visual arts. The extensive work by Ernst Bloch on this subject identifies pictorial representations of imagined architectures as fulfilling visually what he understands as the utopian function. In Bloch the utopian is defined as the expression of desire, the desire for a better life[70]. Lyman Sargent, though writing on utopianism in literature, has seconded the idea that the utopian cannot be limited to textual analysis:

> We must recognise that in no time were all social aspirations of a people expressed in a form that fits within the boundaries of a literary genre no matter how elastic those boundaries are to be made ... Therefore, if we are to fully understand the utopian vision of a people we must step beyond [texts] ... to other forms of expression such as religion, architecture and music ... the social dreaming that we call utopianism exists in every form of human expression.[71]

Coming back to the concept's etymology, in Frank and Fritzie Manuel's historical account of the utopian in European thought, Thomas More's concept has a conclusive meaning: the 'no-place': 'Thomas More ... combined the Greek *ou*, used to express a general negative and transliterated into the latin *u*, with the Greek *topos*, place or region, to build Utopia. ...'[72].

However, Ruth Levitas denies such definitive etymology, defending utopia's meaning in Thomas More as intentionally ambiguous. According to Levitas, the prefix added to the Greek word *topos* (place) could have either been *eu* (good) or *ou* (no), or, as Levitas argues, both at the same time: 'The title, ... is a joke. It contains deliberate ambiguity: is this eutopia, the good place, or outopia, no place – and are these necessarily the same thing?'[73]. What is more, there is the relation of the utopian with the time-constructs of 'past', 'present' and 'future'. In the socialist utopia, as derived from Marx's writings, particularly the *Communist Manifest* and *The German Ideology*, the ideal state of things belonged to an

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imminent future. The socialist utopia is only an 'inevitable' and necessary result of historical progress, though Marx and Engels considered their theorisations non-utopian[74]. As Fredric Jameson explains, the link between the 'utopian' and the 'future' in Marx and Engels' writings on social change refers to the existence of utopian elements in each of the different types of society or 'mode of production' along history, that would give to every present the capacity to imagine its future[75]. However, Jameson also explains that since Marx and Engels' criticism of what they termed 'utopian socialism', many have rejected this link between Marxian socialism, the political movements associated with it and the tradition of utopian thought in the West[76].

For example, Judith Shklar discusses in her essay 'The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia', that the idea of 'utopia' was originally a construct for contemplation of the ideal that was in no time or space and did not imply any kind of action for its realisation. Also important in her argument is the fact that in the prehistory of utopian thought, in classical Greece, 'the ideal' was not linked to a state of rationality, as in the socialist utopia, but to a 'state of innocence'. In relation to this last definition of the utopian, she emphasises its ahistorical character:

> Utopia is nowhere, not only geographically, but historically as well. It exists neither in the past nor in the future. ...
> Of course, the political utopia, with its rational city-planning, eugenics, education, and institutions, is by no means the only vision of a perfect life. The golden age of popular imagination has always been known, its main joy being food - ... - without any work. Its refined poetic counterpart, the age of innocence, in which men are good without conscious virtue, has an equally long history. ...[77]

With Ernst Bloch and Ruth Levitas, the concept of utopia I will be using in this thesis refers mostly to its functions, which according to Levitas are those of 'compensation, criticism and change'[78]. Therefore, utopian expressions of 'desire for a better life'[79] would normally be reflections on the reality in which they are produced: what is there that we desire to change or achieve. Even when it might sound contradictory, these expressions of desire acquire sometimes the form of nostalgia for a lost past, whether a 'real' or an 'imagined' one. As Levitas finally states: '... we learn a lot about the experience of living under any set of conditions by reflecting upon the desires which those conditions generate and yet leave unfulfilled. For that is the space which utopia occupies.'[80]

In this last quote it is interesting that Levitas speaks of utopia in terms of occupied space, the space of the utopian. The utopian elements I will be identifying in this analysis of Havana's visual representations do not always necessarily refer to projections into the future. There is also a timeless or even anachronistic aspect in the idea of Utopia, especially when it is originated by or related to nostalgia. Precisely the arguments put forward by J. Skhlar in her essay are an attempt to explain the permanence of utopian thought in the west as in the nostalgic character of our contemporaneity. What is more, this idea of the utopian as the desire for a return to a 'state of innocence' has traditionally been linked to western perceptions of other cultures (or 'nature-cultures', as described by Latour), particularly in those romantisations of other cultures seen as 'primitive' by the West. This has been the result of the West's recreations of itself as 'historically modern', having left behind the state of innocence now desired and applied to those who are 'not modern', that is, the non-westerners. James Clifford analysed this relation between the West and what was perceived as 'primitive' in *The Predicament of Culture*[81] when interpreting the Museum of Modern Art 1984 exhibition 'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern'. Clifford criticised this exhibition's intention to '... locate 'tribal' peoples in a nonhistorical time and ourselves in a different, historical time.'[82] In assigning unchangeable time to those who are 'non-modern', there is an identifiable utopian dimension that is not linked to the idea of a 'future' or to 'historical inevitability', but as discerned in 'others' as their essential quality[83].

The utopianism that characterised the dominant representations of Havana during the 1990s as described above had much to do with these representations of other cultures according to their perceived position with respect to Europe's and North America's now 'past' modernism. For many authors writing at the beginning of the 1990s on the relationship between the postmodern and the postcolonial, the former's taste for the culturally different was a continuation of the taste for the 'primitive' by the West that had characterised the beginning of the twentieth century. For example, Simon During defined the postmodern in its relationship to the 'Other':

> We can, rather brutally characterize post-modern thought... as that thought which
> refuses to turn the Other into the Same. Thus it provides a theoretical space for what

post-modernity denies: otherness. Post-modern thought also recognizes, however, that the Other can never speak for itself as the Other.[84]

Likewise, also at the beginning of the 1990s, Kwame Anthony Appiah in his 1991 text 'Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in the Postcolonial?'[85] and Gayatri Spivak in 'Who claims Alterity?'[86] denounced this creation of 'a comfortable 'Other' for transnational postmodernity'[87]. Finally, Krishan Kumar in his essay 'The End of Socialism? The End of Utopia? The End of History?'[88], discussed the existence of new utopian tendencies behind many of the post-modern theorisations and their interest in cultural diversity:

> But of course there is a utopia, or utopias, in postmodernism. The announcement of 'the end of history' and the rejection of all future-oriented speculation merely displaces utopia from time to space. To this extent postmodernists are returning to the older, pre-18th century, spatial forms of utopia, the kind inaugurated by More (...) But there is also a certain spatial dynamism in the vision, commensurate with the global reach of postmodernism. One is free, indeed encouraged, to move between local cultures, like a tourist. Disneyland may not unkindly be taken as some sort of model of the postmodernist world: a range of cultural experiences drawn from different times and places which one can mix according to taste.[89]

Predominant representations of Havana during the 1990s must be situated within this discourse of the culturally different as essentially utopian, as that 'return to the spatial forms of utopia' characterised by Kumar above. I am not arguing the Cuban city was represented as solely utopian – or dystopian. Least of all, that it was represented as 'primitive'. However, it was the accentuation of what was different in its visuality and performativity (how the city was 'lived' by its inhabitants) that echoed the old utopianism that has characterised dominant western projections onto the city.

Correlations between space and the utopian have traditionally coincided with the image of the ideal city[90]. Lewis Mumford, for example, equated the origin of utopianism within the West (and the rest of the world) with the origins of the city itself: '... the concept of utopia is not a Hellenic speculative fantasy, but a derivation from an historic event: that indeed the first utopia was the city itself. ...'[91] Even more radically, Northrup Frye argues that utopia is in fact the vision of 'a city-dominated society'[92]. Even though the constructions of utopias are generally associated with a literary genre, as in the case of Kumar, the fact that authors refer to the utopian in its visuality - as vision and image - has much to do with the

spatial centrality embodied in the form and imagery of the modern city. And this is because, as Burton Pike has explained in his work *The Image of the City in Modern Literature* (1981), the "City' is, by any definition, a social image' that 'has chiefly represented the idea of community, whatever values might be attached to it in any particular context.'[93] Havana, as represented during the 1990s in photography, texts and cinema, was another kind of 'city' that, although contemporary to the European and North American examples[94] was also seen as their 'past'. This past was in the profusion of its old (and colonial) architecture; in the lack of advertising imagery and practically any other type of image-reproduction (apart from the sporadic bill poster with images of revolutionary leaders and figures); the non-predominance of the car over the pedestrian; and, more importantly, the generalised use of the streets by its inhabitants, where they sit, meet, play and overall, perform the 'idea of community' cities were, in their origins, supposed to represent.

When Sigmund Freud described the City of Rome as the 'Eternal City' in *Civilisation and its Discontents*[95], he was looking to illustrate the possibilities of coexistence between the 'archaic' and the modern in present time, as exemplified by Roman ruins still visible at the surface of the new city[96]. However, such coexistence between the old and the new has, in this image of Rome as the 'Eternal City', an immutable character. The scope of this analysis is far from attempting to define Havana as a represented 'eternal city' to the modern western city. On the contrary, I am searching for those other 'modernities', the mutabilities contingent to the city's history and also represented as utopian. I understand the concept of the city as an event, as Thomas Docherty has suggested in his introduction to *Postmodernism: A Reader*:

> That which appears to be a stable point in space, the political city, is in fact an event in time, and an event whose very essence is that it is fraught with an internal historicity or mutability.[97]

However, it is Fredric Jameson, commenting on the coincidence between the origins of the modern city and the beginning of utopian projections, who has better summarised this understanding of the city and the urban utopianism derived from it, as changeable narratives rather than fixed points in time and place:

> To understand utopia discourse in terms of neutralization is indeed precisely to propose to grasp it as a process, as *energeia*, enunciation, productivity, and implicitly or explicitly to repudiate that more traditional and conventional view of utopia as sheer representation, as the 'realized' vision of this or that ideal society or social ideal...
> [...]
> There thus emerges a tension, profoundly characteristic of all utopian discourse, between description and narrative, between the effort of the text to establish the coordinates of a stable geographical entity, and its other vocation as sheer movement and restless displacement, as itinerary and exploration and, ultimately, as event.[98]

As an example of this mutable character in the traditions of urban utopianism, Jameson describes how such traditions have moved along the axis of the dichotomy established between individualism and collectivity when dreaming on the ideal city:

> This earlier ideal of the city as a place of individual freedom is therefore at one with the emergence of 'individualism' as such and of the bourgeois subject...
> For meanwhile, in some other register of our minds and at some other level of collective representation, the city has a quite different ideological function to play and serves as the support for an ideal quite antithetical to that of bourgeois individualism, lending its content to visions of perfected community or collective existence from the image of the Heavenly City of Christian eschatology all the way down to the conception of the Commune itself. These two quite different ideologies – that of individualism and that of collectivity – are no doubt in the normal run of things able to coexist without any great discordance in that vast lumber-room of stereotypes and fantasies.[99]

Precisely this dichotomy - individualism versus collectivism - has had an important role to play in the utopian projections onto Havana along the period this research contemplates, either within or outside Cuba. As I will explain in Chapter V, a utopianism based on the desires of the individual to free herself/himself from the moral constraints imposed by a life in community has been predominant when describing Havana during the decade of the 1950s.

In his discussions on postmodernism, Jameson argues for the disappearance of the old dichotomy 'rural' versus 'urban' and the replacement of the category of the rural for that of the second world city[100] to serve as an 'other' to the first-world city. Jameson specifically states that the visuality of the second world city acted, during the years of the Cold War, as the dystopian image of the socialist city:

As for the Second World city, its vision is rather enlisted in the service of a rather different operation, namely to serve as the visual and experiential *analogon* of a world utterly programmed and directed by human intention, a world therefore from which the contingencies of chance - and thereby the promise of adventure and real life, of libidinal gratification - are also excluded.[101]

As a result of this displacement from the rural to the second world city[102], the boredom, provinciality and lack of excitement of the former, in contrast to urban life, were now thought to characterise the socialist city in contrast to the idea of the capitalist city as the centre for creativity and change.

These ideological divisions between first, second and third world cities, product of the simplistic Cold War political rhetoric and its cinematographic recreations, have now become obsolete. However, they have played an important role in the discourses on the city from within and outside Cuba. It is interesting, for example, that Elizabeth Wilson in her book *The Sphinx and the City* criticises such categorisations as ahistorical, under the impression that first-world cities, by definition, would normally be among those first historically founded:

It is also ahistorical to lump all third-world cities together, given that most Latin American cities were founded in the sixteenth century and are therefore much older than the majority of African, or indeed North American cities, while many cities of the Middle East are older still.[103]

That the 'age' of a city seems to be important in this debate takes us again to the narratives of progress of the West and its universal aspirations described by Lyotard. Of all the polarities the post-modern critique of teleological thought deconstructed, the division between developed and underdeveloped countries was the most poignant. Such polarity had situated the 'First World' as a future to the 'Third World': the West's political and economic systems became not only the desirable/utopian but also the 'inevitable'. Once it is recognised that there is a 'Third World in every First World, and vice-versa', as Trinh T. Minh-ha has suggested[104], and that the City of Havana in particular belongs - culturally, historically and politically - to the West, looking at its representations just under the prism of the West 'representing' its 'other' would be, at the least, an extreme simplification. I

prefer to speak of Havana represented by Cubans and non-Cubans alike, as a space where those expressions of desires waiting for fulfilment are projected or contested.

The anachronistic character of Havana's visuality corresponds not only to its outdated contemporaneity, due to the unique development experienced by the city after the political events of 1959. It also relates to its status as a 'revolutionary' city, avant-garde and possible future to the neighbouring countries of Latin America. Its role within the western political urban imaginaries is of a city whose 'otherness' is defined as much by its categorisation as a Third-World city as to its political peculiarities, being the only 'socialist' city in the western hemisphere. The meeting point between the anachronistic and the utopian in Havana's visuality is, therefore, historically determined, only relevant as a sign of a decade, the 1990s, and a geographical space, the West - to which Havana also belongs - where and when the debates about the end of modernity, as an aesthetic and political project were still at its peak.

A paradigmatic example from the late 1990s of Havana represented as this utopian 'other', is Wim Wenders' documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999). His representation was largely based on the anachronisms of the city's visuality. Before exploring the metaphors generated by this very influential documentary, it is important to mention the specific relation of Wenders to the city in his earlier films. In *Tokyo-Ga* (1985) and *Lisbon Story* (1994) he used music and architecture to create a metaphorical background where the past colludes with the present in order to put into question our celebrated modernity. His earlier documentary *Tokyo-Ga* relates Wenders' peregrination to Japan in order to discover traces of the Tokyo filmed by one of his most admired directors, Yasujiro Ozu. What he describes is a city occupied by advertising and cinematographic imagery, whose inhabitants seem to be first fascinated by, and then lost in a world of appearances and the artifice of other 'realities' through Play Station games, fake food and the imitations of the United States cultural paradigms. He seems to lament the abandonment of traditions and the lack of 'transparent images', as described in the documentary by his friend, the German filmmaker Werner Herzog.

The relation between *Tokyo-Ga* and *Buena Vista Social Club*, filmed fourteen years later, could be found in this search for 'transparent images' of a society or space where

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consumerism and taste for the virtual rather than the real has not yet been developed. He seems to have found this ideal in Havana, a metropolis lacking what normally characterises every contemporary metropolis, the never-ending consumption of the image.

Visual anachronisms are often displayed in this documentary, helping to define the city as a space frozen in time, and as an other to western urbanities. In the initial sequence of the film, we are introduced to the city through a long high shot of the Malecón, Havana's famous avenue of old colonial buildings looking out onto the sea. An American car from the 1950s passes by while the soundtrack plays *Chan, Chan*, a modern version of a 1920s peasant Cuban song. Within seconds we are contextualized in space and time by a superposed text that writes Havana, March 1998 [Illustration 4]. This delayed time between the first view of the Malecón and the final appearance of the text works as a kind of revelation: Havana's different temporality.

There are several moments within this film where we find utopian ideas of the ideal society as a 'return to innocence'[105] (See DVD: *Buena Vista Social Club* tracks). For example, the sequence where the interpreter Eliades Ochoa plays *El Carretero*, a peasant song that glorifies countryside life as free from modern needs - a primal, pre-urban society like the one dreamt by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Emile* (1762). This song is accompanied by shots of Havana's street life, where children play with toys made of garbage and people travel on very old and much-repaired bicycles. The message Wenders seems to convey, whether intentional or not, is that Havana is a kind of utopian space where people enjoy the happiness of having nothing and needing nothing. In the mind of the first world spectator this translates as the utopia of a de-commodified society where 'false' needs are suspended. Such representations of Havana come to remind us of something lost on our way to economic development: an image of the 'lost city':

> Everything was dark, to begin with. Streets and houses shrouded in the deep darkness of the night. In the meagre light of the few cars shadows flurried across the footpaths, and some tired dogs crossed the streets. Coming from Los Angeles, where the night is mostly lit up as bright as day, it was striking to realize that neon lights and electricity had suddenly turned into luxury items. *One thing was obvious right away, you could feel it physically: a different timescale prevailed here.* We got to know the Cuban time better over the next few weeks. It was like no other time I knew. Or was it? Like a time I had known in my childhood perhaps?[106] (my italics)

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Following these reflections, he explains later in this text what he means with a 'different time scale':

> ...we people from the future, from 1998, from the age of over-information, used to consuming anything and everything, our eyes and stomachs full...
> We saw everything from the point of view of our own timescale, certainly through our digital camera. (With her black- and –white photos and her old Leica Donata was in closer touch with Cuban time).[107]

Wenders endeavours to present Havana, and particularly, the uses of the city by its inhabitants, as unique and authentic - a 'transparent city'. Havana is, more importantly, represented as an urban space different to that associated with North American and European cities. What according to Wenders characterizes Havana is its anachronistic visual character. The Havana in *Buena Vista Social Club,* and not the other Havanas, is a city where the car does not possess a central role and, therefore, where citizens make use of the streets as if they were part of the private space of the house, now something practically impossible in the metropolis of Europe and North America. It is a city lacking modern consumer technology and, therefore, without the over-production of images and the speed of their deployment in cities such as Tokyo or New York. But more importantly, it is the image of an old city, a historical centre, inhabited by a population perceived as poor and ethnically mixed. This compared to the rest of the western world, and particularly Europe, where historic centres have become the main business areas and the poorest and often the non-white sectors of the population have been successfully transferred to the suburbs and peripheries. However, in this documentary what is missing is as important as what is present. What Wim Wenders decided not to include were both the big hotels designed under the premises of modern architecture during the 1950s and now highly visible in the city's skyline, the Habana Libre, the Cohiba and the Riviera, and the presence of many blocks of social housing very similar to those demolished in St. Louis, Missouri – and also inhabited by a high proportion of Afro-Cubans[108]. I do not believe that these important absences were due to Wim Wenders' lack of knowledge. In choosing what to show of Havana, Wenders echoed his own utopianism, coincident with that of the western casual visitor to the city. I consider that *Buena Vista Social Club* should be understood as not only a documentary film, but also as an artistic document belonging to the tradition of western

utopian thought and its recreations of the ideal commonwealth.

With regards to that set of 'desires' deployed in the making of *Buena Vista Social Club*, there is something else in this film that has greatly contributed to constructing a particular notion of Havana. *Buena Vista* is a documentary on the musical traditions that, since the 1920s, have helped to shape the cultural history of the city. The emphasis on the Afro-Cuban foundations of these traditions, and the fact that the majority of the musicians featured are also Afro-Cubans, appear at odds with the city's actual realities. Havana's citizens are mostly Euro-Cubans whose traditions are also highly influenced by the cultural and social history of Europe and North America. In this sense, it is also an eminently western city[109]. As I will explain in following chapters, the new cultural agents and institutions after 1959 actively promoted the centrality of the Afro-Cuban traditions in the formation of a Cuban national identity. The City of Havana needed to fit these discourses and be presented, beyond anything else, as 'Cuban'. Its different historical development with regards to the rest of the island during practically the whole of the twentieth century became, after 1959, an issue to be 'resolved'. The 'africanisation' of Havana related to this search for coherence between the country and its capital, taking into account that the eastern areas of Cuba had a majority of Afro-Cubans. However, it also had, and still does have, much to do with the logic of the tourist industry in the city. As Rosalie Schwartz has explained in her account of the tourist industry's history in Cuba, this 'africanisation', ironically, had also the purpose of attracting more European and North American tourists to Havana[110].

It is unavoidable that this chapter should end with a very different image of Havana during the 1990s by Cuban filmmaker Fernando Pérez. In *Madagascar* (1994), shot during the peak years of the special period, the two female lead characters, a mother and her daughter, display different strategies to cope with the acute economic crisis the island was going through. At the beginning of the film, Pérez shows documentary footage of people cycling in the streets of Havana (See DVD: *Madagascar:* opening sequence). He inserts close-ups of some of the cyclists' expressions, some of them are elderly men and women. Shown in slow motion, we can perceive their exhaustion, they are not cycling out of pleasure. A large group of people appear dragging their bicycles through a dark tunnel, moving slowly and in complete silence. This sequence would not mean much to the spectator who does not know

what the crisis meant for the people in the city: no transport, no electricity, very little food and still having to get up every morning and work for a wage that pays for very little. In a unique sequence Pérez summarised the desperation of those years. From here the film carries on to display a very strange dystopia[111].

In the following chapters I shall explore those utopian aspects that have visually defined Havana as an urban project inside and outside Cuba from the years of the Great Depression until now. Within Cuba, this utopianism has been in part related to the ideological constructions of a coherent national narrative, which has experienced important transformations since the beginning of the twentieth century until the present, particularly with regard to the gradual inclusion of specifically Afrocuban cultural forms. As I will explain in the next chapter, the Cuban national project has been mainly concerned with the ideal of a nation that would be 'home' to all, once cultural differences are transcended. Such a discourse has traditionally been embedded within the ideologies based on the existence of two different ethnic groups in the island, the Afrocuban and the Eurocuban, and the belief in their gradual synthesis, giving way to the birth of one 'Cuban race'. It is the idea of cultural *mestizaje* as utopia via, in its most extreme version, miscegenation. The role of Havana within these discourses on the national has been ambivalent. On one hand, as the city became a focus of attraction for most immigrants within and outside the island, it soon developed as an important cosmopolitan centre where different cultural forms flourished, particularly in music and dance, contributing to the cultural assemblages of the national. On the other hand, as this development was strongly due to the transformation of the city into one of the most popular tourist destinations in the Caribbean islands, Havana's gradual enrichment and its North-American self-fashioning in opposition to what was going on in the rest of Cuba, facilitated its 'demonisation' by those who saw it as an obstacle to Cuba's national independence. With regard to this relation of Havana with the entertainment and tourist industry, I shall also explore the utopianism associated with the dichotomy work/leisure as projected onto Havana's urbanity and at the core of the ideologies emanating from the cinematographic and tourist industries since the 1930s. Overall, I have searched for those expectations of, and projections onto the city, that have helped to define it, and that, at the same time, in their failure, have also given way to other unexpected urban modernities.

Illustration 4. Film still from *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999). Opening sequence: 'Havana, March 1998'.

Illustration 5. Film still from *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999) showing general view of the city.

Illustrations 6 and 7. Film stills from *Madagascar* (1994). Cyclists in Havana

Chapter II: <u>Cuban National Identity. *Mestizaje* and Abakuá Utopia</u>

This chapter examines the different literatures discussing Cuban national identity formations during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The relevance of such analysis within this thesis is based on the crucial role that the ideology of *mestizaje*, as the belief in the formation of a Cuban cultural and even racial *mulato* entity through the encounters of the European and the African, has had in many of the documents that have traditionally represented Havana. Overall, it is the utopianism in the idea of *mestizaje* that would define many of the discussions represented below, as a desirable final synthesis of cultural and race reconciliation. The Cuban capital has traditionally functioned as the space where the different cultural traditions have come into dialogue and conflict, as it has been the case in most of the European and American metropolis. This preliminary analysis will help to decipher the important role of Havana and its representations within the discourses on the national. It will also offer the historical and theoretical background to the city's contemporary appeal as a space perceived as ethnically and culturally diverse.

The key words in this chapter are those concepts associated with the study of cultural exchanges and national identity formations in Latin America and the Caribbean Islands: the already defined concept of 'mestizaje', and also those of 'syncretism', 'transculturation', creolization, 'hybridity' and 'baroque' that I will define within this chapter. Mark Millington has explained how the inter-relations between these concepts 'are not absolutely clear':

> *Mestizaje* was long favoured but has now become generally confined to discussions of racial mixing, ... Likewise, syncretism had some general usage but is now seen as best applied in circumstances of religious fusion. Transculturation and hybridisation are currently much in favour, although they have different profiles. For reasons of its Cuban origins, the first has a distinctly Latin American identity and is rarely employed outside that context. By contrast, the second is deployed with global reference and has associations with post-structuralist postcolonialism [112] ...

However, as I will describe in the following analysis, my literature review on the subject has helped me to delineate specific inter-relations between these four concepts when applied to the Cuban case: 'mestizaje' as a synthetic result of the processes of

'transculturation' – the processes of loss and gain as the result of cultural contact, defined by Cuban ethnographer Fernando Ortiz; 'syncretism' as the activity of cultural translation, though it is in the translation of one religious system into another where it is generally recognised[113]; cultural 'hybridity' or 'creolization' denotes the mixing of two or more discrete traditions generally in relation to the geographical space where this mixing becomes possible. In this analysis, this space is that of the American continent, and more particularly, the area occupied by the Caribbean islands[114]. Finally, 'baroque' as the aesthetic category that has been used to poetically describe the encounters between different aesthetic traditions and their synthetic productions[115]. It is important to accentuate at this point that Havana is and has always been a mainly white city, with a predominantly Spanish-European influence but with an also very influential Afro-Cuban component. As Jorge and Isabel Castellanos explain: '... in 1953 Great Havana had a total population of 1,217.674 inhabitants. ... 304.305 were black or *mulatos*, representing 25.0% of the total'[116]. It is agreed that after the 1959 leaders declared the socialist character of the Revolution there were mass emigration waves to the United States and other parts of the American continent and Europe, an important proportion of them residents in Havana. Most of the migration, particularly during the first wave of the early 1960s was Euro-Cuban and from Havana[117]. This fact substantially increased the proportion of Afro-Cubans in the city. The Island's total population has also traditionally been geographically distributed according to race, with the Eastern regions being predominantly black[118]. The relevance of the latter statistical data resides in its influence on what some authors consider the divided nature of Cuba's national identifications: on one hand its insertion within the Latin American ideological discourses on *mestizaje* and national formations[119]; on the other hand, its historical connexions with the other Caribbean islands, whose national discourses are not so much based on cultural and racial mixing, but on the legacies of the Atlantic slave trade and the presence of a 'transformed' Africa within America[120]. Before discussing the concept of *mestizaje* and its influence in contemporary utopian and dystopians projections onto the Cuban city, I think it is necessary to relate the historical contingencies that allowed this particular discourse on national formation to exist in the first place.

The first Spanish permanent settlement in Cuba was founded in 1511 by Diego Velázquez de Cuéllar. Three hundred Spaniards and their African slaves were the new population to arrive to Baracoa, an area which already had a numerous native population (Ciboneys,

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Taínos and Guanahatabeys)[121]. By the second half of the sixteenth century the population in the newly founded towns, mainly San Cristóbal de La Habana, Santiago de Cuba and Puerto Príncipe, were already culturally very diverse, with Africans, Spaniards and native Indians, the latter now reduced to a mere three thousand individuals - from approximately eighty thousand at the beginning of the conquest. Genocide, diseases, starvation and suicide finally depleted the native population to nearly complete extinction[122]. The Spanish settlers, mainly from the south of Spain and the Canary Islands, kept on coming, while thousands of Africans - belonging in their majority to the Lucumí, Carabalí and Congo (Bantú) cultures of West Africa – were shipped against their will to work as slaves in the growing sugar plantations[123]. The European immigration into Cuba during the two first centuries after the conquest was not as numerous as the one in North America, and, more importantly, was in its majority a male migration. Between 1800 and 1850 the African population exceeded the Spanish one. Walterio Carbonell has argued that those were the core years in the formation of what is now seen as the founding base of Cuba's popular culture[124]. Hugh Thomas explains how by the time of the formal abolition of slavery in Cuba in 1820 there were 200,000 slaves, 75% of them actually born in Africa. In the following years, and despite restrictions in the trade, between 200,000 and 300,000 were brought to the island[125]. Therefore, the vast majority of people of African descent in Cuba by the second half of the nineteenth century were not proper 'creoles', born in the island, maintaining a very distinctive cultural identity, against the cultural domination of the white population, (creoles and Spaniards), who imposed their language, their architecture, and more generally, their economic, political and military might. The cultural diversity among Africans in Cuba between the first thirty years of the nineteenth century constituted, approximately: '25.53 percent Carabalí (Efik, Ejagham, Ibo, and Ibibio), 22.21 percent Congo (Bakongo), 19.18 percent Mandinga (Mandingo, Malinke, Mende, and Bambara), 8.38 percent Lucumí (Yoruba), 7.57 percent Ganga (a mix of ethnic groups hailing from southern Sierra Leone and Northern Liberia), and 6.75 percent Mina (Popo)'[126]. Later, as a consequence of the Haitian Revolution, an important number of Ewe-Fon came into Cuba and also culturally influenced those already living in the Island, particularly in the Eastern regions[127].

According to Moreno Fraginals, this preservation of their cultural identity among the different African ethnic groups was also very important in the urban areas, being highly

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hencouraged by the Spanish authorities as a way of keeping the slaves divided, which gave to the cultural history of Cuba in the following years a very different character from that of the other British colonies in the area[128]. The Spanish government allowed the creation of what was known as the *cabildos,* which were different associations of Africans, organised according to tribal, religious and/or cultural criteria. These *cabildos* were responsible for the later survival of many cultural forms coming from West Africa, which later had a very important influence on the formation of a Cuban national identity, once Afro-Cuban cultural expressions were included. This is for Fraginals an important contrast with what happened in those Caribbean British colonies, where the colonial authorities forbade the slaves' from practising the cultures and religions they had brought from Africa.

During the second half of the eighteenth century another ethnic group arrived to add to the cultural encounters in the Island: approximately one hundred and fifty thousand Chinese labourers were brought to Cuba and worked in conditions not too different from those of the African slaves[129]. Even though they had only a marginal influence in the cultural formations that later characterised the island, their presence in Havana is still very visible, particularly in Havana's Chinatown. By the end of 1859, after the Spanish authorities in Cuba launched proactive whitening policies to counterbalance the increasing number of blacks in the island, the white population took the lead in numbers again and has maintained a majority ever since, particularly in Havana[130]. However, in the first decades of the twentieth century there was a temporary stop to these policies. Due to the rapid technological development and expansion of the sugar industry in the island, companies started looking for cheap workers in the surrounding Caribbean islands. In 1920, of the 174, 221 emigrants, 54% were Spaniards, 21% Haitians and 16% from the other Caribbean Islands, mainly Jamaica[131]. 'Whitening' policies were quickly reintroduced, though, and the state started to actively blockade migration coming from Haiti and the West Indies during the 1920s and 1930s, which were also the years of important mass migrations from Spain to the Island[132]. West Indians and Haitians settled mainly in the Eastern areas, increasing the proportion of Afro-Cubans in the East for the next generations.

All the above serves as historical background to the different representations of an 'imagined' Cuban national identity that have been shaped by the experience of Spanish colonialism, the introduction of slavery in Cuba and the centrality of an industry that

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required of an abundant and unskilled workforce. In classic Cuban historiography, there is an unanimous agreement regarding the ideological origins of today's national mythologies: they can be found in the writings of the Cuban nineteenth century intellectual José Martí[133]. Martí, a Cuban creole born to Spanish parents in 1853, was the pre-eminent intellectual during his times who proclaimed the existence of a Cuban national reality and the need for independence from Spain. Unlike the majority of pro-independence white intellectuals during the nineteenth century, who had advocated the reality of a *criollo* Cuban culture which excluded those of African descent[134], Martí wrote that Cubans were 'more than white and more than black', negating the validity of the concept of 'race' as a biological category that divided human beings into two groups of essentially different people. In 1891 he wrote an essay entitled 'Nuestra América' (Our America) where he declared: 'The native mestizo has triumphed over the alien, pure-blooded criollo ... there can not be racial hate because there are not races...'[135]. In his writings he described the Cuban nation as formed by those of African and Spanish descent alike. However, his ideological nationalism was one drawn from the experiences of the North American and French Revolutions and theoretically in accord with the principles of rationality and historical progress emanating from the Enlightenment in Europe. In tune with western perceptions of Africans at the time, he also considered African cultures as 'primitive' and, therefore, inferior to the West. Even though he explained that the differences between the two groups in Cuba, blacks and whites, were exclusively cultural, his idea of a nation formed by the 'mixing' of European and African cultures presupposed the extinction of the latter through the universalising of an education shaped by the former[136]. Martí died at the beginning of the second war for independence in 1895, and has since been heralded as the 'father' or the 'Apostle' of the Cuban nation[137] and, as Robin D. Moore has written: 'Far from curbing racial divisions in the new Republic, Martí's commentaries were often used by early twentieth-century politicians to deny allegations of bigotry and to suggest that the revolution had solved such problems.'[138]

Most authors now argue that it was the fact that the rebel armies fighting for independence at the end of the nineteenth century were in their majority constituted by Afro-Cubans, that prompted this rapid inclusion of the Afro-Cubans within the Cuban national project by the white elites, Martí among them[139]. However, it was not until the surge of the Afro-cuban movement among a group of black and white intellectuals in Havana during the 1920s that the social and cultural consequences of this formal inclusion began to be addressed[140].

Robin D. Moore, in his analysis of Afro-cubanism during the 1920s, defines this movement as a trend where most Afro-Cubans did not have much of a real input: 'Stylistically, its emergence constitutes a new period of hegemonic concession in which black street culture is accepted, but only on European or middle-class terms'[141]. However, as Moore also argues, it was the inclusion by the Cuban intellectuals of the cultural forms of the Afro-Cubans as part of the national discourse that represented a decisive turn in the future of the Island's racial relations[142]. According to De la Fuente, the afro-cuban movement was responsible for the modern ideology of *mestizaje* now hegemonic in Cuba, as an ideology based on the realities of *mestizaje* through miscegenation[143]:

> Contributing to the salience of class, in addition to the politics of state patronage, was the ideology of mestizaje produced by the nationalist intellectuals who formed the Afrocubanista cultural movement in the late 1920s and 1930s. A reformulation of the nationalist myth of racial equality, Afrocubanism had taken Marti's notion of Cubanness one step further, inventing a synthesis that proudly proclaimed miscegenation to be the very essence of the nation – a mulatto 'Cuban race.' ...[144]

A more extended explanation of the Afro-Cuban movement will appear in Chapter VII. However, its relevance within this chapter is precisely its contribution, through the writings of the Cuban ethnologist Fernando Ortiz, in the identification of the figure of the *mulato* with that of nationhood. Based on his ethnographic knowledge, Ortiz developed a more theoretical concept of *mestizaje*, after Marti's discussions on this same subject at the end of the nineteenth century. Though Ortiz initially investigated the cultural forms of poor Afro-Cubans in their relation to criminality and, therefore, as undesirable 'atavist' forms that needed to disappear from Cuban society[145], he later wrote a series of very detailed analyses of the main Afro-Cuban religions and cultural expressions and their influence on Cuban society as a whole. According to Christine Ayorinde, Fernando Ortiz's concern was 'that Cuba was a *patria sin nación*' [a land without a nation][146]. In this respect, Cécile Leclercq points out the relevance of the progressive disappearance of the mainly Hispanic peasant culture in these appropriations of the cultural forms of those of African descent:

> La cultura afrocubana llegó a ser caracterizada de 'popular', cuando en realidad representaba una parte de la cultura popular, siendo la otra parte la cultura guajira blanca que se estaba extinguiendo.[147]

[Afro-Cuban culture was characterized as 'popular', when in reality it represented just one part of the popular, the other part being the peasant white culture that was then disappearing.]

Among the many studies of Afro-Cuban cultural expressions published by Ortiz, one of the more relevant was his analysis of the influence of Afro-Cuban dance and theatre on the Cuban folklore during his time, published under the title *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore de Cuba* (1951). This analysis followed his readings of the works by R.C. Thurnwald (*Blacks and Whites in East Africa*, 1935) and Melville Herskovits (*Acculturation: The Study of Culture Contact*, 1938), and the elaboration of a new ethnographic concept, 'transculturation', in his earlier essay *Contrapunteo Cubano. Tabaco y Azúcar* (1940). This concept would describe the processes by which different cultural groups lose, exchange and transform their cultural forms when there has been a long period of close contact between them:

> The real history of Cuba is the history of its intermeshed transculturations. ... And each of them torn from his native moorings, faced with the problem of disadjustment and readjustment, of deculturation and acculturation – in a word, of transculturation...
> [...]
> I am of the opinion that the word *transculturation* better expresses the different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another because this does not consist merely in acquiring another culture, which is what the English word *acculturation* really implies, but the process also necessarily involves the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be defined as a deculturation. In addition it carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena, which could be called neoculturation. In the end, the result of every union of cultures is similar to that of the reproductive process between individuals: the offspring always has something of both parents but is always different from each of them.[148]

This concept of 'transculturation', as a cultural process described using the observation tools of western ethnography during the first half of the twentieth century, gave within Cuba scientific credentials to the possibilities of cultural miscegenation, where, as described above, two different cultural traditions might 'blend' into one - losing some of its parts in the process – and reaching an apparent synthesis, finally creating the cultural base of a new nation. As John Beverley has argued 'transculturation functions as a teleology'[149]. Ortiz's intellectual project was aimed at 'translating' the Afro-Cubans to the Euro-Cubans, in order to turn both of them into a 'same', that made Afro-Cuban culture only Cuban, and

therefore also the 'property' of Euro-Cubans. According to Vera Kutzinski, Ortiz's theorisations were markedly influenced by the traditionally troubled relations between Cuba and the United States since the latter's invasion in 1898:

> Afro-Cubanism can more profitably be seen as a historically specific instance of *cubanía*. Fernando Ortiz's term for what he understood as a spiritual condition, *cubanía*, unlike the more passive national identification expressed by the concept of *cubanidad*, signifies an active desire to be Cuban, and its various articulations in literature, the arts, and the social sciences were to provide indigenous ideological antidotes to the economic, social, and political crisis induced by United States interventionism.[150]

Many Afro-Cuban intellectuals concurred with this idea of cultural *mestizaje* as an inevitable development that would preclude final racial reconciliation. For example, Nicolás Guillén wrote a series of poems where the encounters between Africa and Spain, visually signified by the presence of the *mulato*, are celebrated using a metaphorical equation between nation and family, as, for example, in *Balada de Los dos abuelos* ['Ballad of The Two Grand-fathers'][151]. Being a member of the Communist party, Guillén also included the United States' economic and political influence on the Island as 'counterpoint' to Cuban national aspirations. This is the case of his later series of poems published under the title *West Indies, Ltd* (1934). The issue of racial discrimination in Cuba has traditionally been associated with the United States' policies in the Island, as a causal factor that seemed to exonerate white Cubans from real responsibility[152]. It was the lack of *mestizaje* within the United States' society, the fact that the lower social groups were highly segregated particularly in the southern states, that would serve as proof of their responsibility in the survival of racism within Cuba.

However, not every Afro-Cuban intellectual agreed with this celebration of a 'mestizo' culture that would unite those born in Cuba against the possibility of final annexation by the United States. Gustavo Urrutia, an Afro-Cuban journalist and writer who was highly influential among wealthier Afro-Cuban groups[153], in an essay from 1933, compared the racism of whites in the United States and Cuba. He concluded that, though apparently very different, they were very similar in intention:

... there is a distinct difference between the racial prejudice of North American whites and that of Cuban whites with regard to the colored people. In the United States the white race strives to isolate the Negroes and segregate them in every possible way. The Anglo-American considers his Negrophobia as a natural and legitimate sentiment, and he gives expression to it frankly. For the Spanish Cubans it is a shameful sentiment which they will not on any account confess to the Negroes. They try to dissolve the black race in a torrent of Aryan blood, and aim at their extinction in every possible indirect way. The ultimate way in both cases is to exterminate the Negroes.[154]

Urrutia's fear of extinction through miscegenation presents the processes of *mestizaje* not as Guillén's desired utopia of a raceless and reconciled society, but as the factual exercise of domination and violence on the black body, particularly the black female body, that has characterised the history of Cuba: 'to dissolve the black race in a torrent of Aryan blood'. Even though he was a crucial figure in the Afro-Cuban movement during the 1920s and 1930s[155], Urrutia's loyalties were with the *Negritude* movement, initiated by the Haitian poet Aimé Césaire, and based on the search of a common black identity in the American continent beyond or apart from the different national discourses[156].

Benedict Anderson describes the particular case of the American states with regard to their non-white populations and their status within the national discourses during the wars of independence. He speaks of the 'doubleness of the Americas' to characterise the foundational racial contradictions on which they were initially based:

> ... one key factor initially spurring the drive for independence from Madrid, in such important cases as Venezuela, Mexico and Peru, was the *fear* of 'lower-class' political mobilizations: to wit, Indian or Negro-slave uprisings. ... When, in 1879, Madrid issued a new, more humane, slave law specifying in detail the rights and duties of masters and slaves, 'the creoles rejected state intervention on the grounds that slaves were prone to vice and independence [!], and were essential to the economy. ... The liberator Bolivar himself once opined that a Negro revolt was 'a thousand times worse than a Spanish invasion'.
> [...]
> 'The doubleness of the Americas and the reasons for it, sketched out above, help to explain why nationalism emerged first in the New World, not the Old. On the one hand, none of the creole revolutionaries dreamed of keeping the empire intact but rearranging its internal distribution of power, *reversing* the previous relationship of subjection by transferring the metropole from European to an American site. ... On the other hand, ... Neither in North nor in South America did the creoles have to fear physical extermination or reduction to servitude. They were after all 'whites', Christians, and Spanish – or English-speakers; ... The revolutionary wars, bitter as

they were, were still reassuring in that they were wars between kinsmen. This family link ensured that, after a certain period of acrimony had passed, close cultural, and sometimes political and economic, ties could be reknit between the former metropoles and the new nations.[157]

This 'racial solidarity' between white creoles and white Europeans after independence in Cuba was carried out through the Island's migration policies – even after the end of the United States' occupation of the Island in 1902. While Afro-Cubans and their cultural expressions were being used in order to build a differential national identity, government policies would encourage white-Spanish immigration at the same time as trying to repatriate and prevent any more black Jamaicans and Haitians from entering Cuba[158]. Such policies denoted the nature of the ideologies of *mestizaje* in Cuba as miscegenation and *de-facto* 'whitening of the population', as denounced by Urrutia in 1933.

The contemporary ideologies of *mestizaje* in Cuba have as historical background the consequences of what is now known in Cuban historiography as the 'race war' or 'la guerrita del 12' (12's little war)[159]. In 1910 The *Partido Independiente de Color* (The Independent Coloured Party) was founded in Havana, the main urban centre during those years where Afro-Cubans could normally find better social and economic opportunities[160]. This was the sole important movement in Cuba that denounced racial discrimination and claimed equal rights for black Cubans by attempting to give them independent political representation. In 1910 the Cuban Congress inserted a clause in the Constitution – known as the Morúa clause - that effectively outlawed the Coloured Party, stating its intentions to be 'racist' and against the interests of the Republic. This clause meant the imprisonment of many of its members and the 'armed protest' and confrontation between whites and blacks in the Island. In May 1912, the national army murdered thousands of members of the now illicit *Partido Independiente de Color* in the eastern regions. These were the times when racial tensions in the island were at their peak. One of the major grievances of the Coloured Party had been the tendency by the two biggest political parties in Cuba, the Conservatives and the Liberals, to facilitate white emigration while obstructing the permission of entry to those who came to work from Jamaica and Haiti or any other region with a dominant black population. In response to accusations of racism while the Morúa clause was being discussed in the Congress, the Coloured Party sent a circular defending the right of anyone to emigrate and look for a new life in Cuba:

Queremos que la inmigración sea libre para todas las razas. Claro y manifiesto es nuestro propósito humano, natural y político. Esa ley que el Senado ha aprobado ya, va dirigida contra los partidos Liberal y Conservador, que tienen la tendencia racista de que la única inmigración que pueda venir a esta isla sea blanca y por familia.

Esta ley es contra el Presidente de la República, que autorizó a la Guantánamo Sugar Company la importación de 50 trabajadores puertorriqueños, que tenían que ser precisamente blancos, porque de otro color no podían venir a Cuba.[161]

[*We want emigration to be free for all the races. Our human, natural and political objectives are clear and manifest. That law that the Senate has just approved is against the Liberal and Conservative parties, who have the racist tendency to allow only a white and family-related emigration.*

That law is against the President of the Republic, who authorised the Guantánamo Sugar Company the importation of 50 workers from Puerto Rico, who needed to be white because no other colour could come to Cuba.]

Policies to favour the growth of the white population to the detriment of the black had existed in Cuba since the beginning of the nineteenth century. They were initially a response to the Haitian Revolution (1794 – 1804)[162]. It would not be too exaggerated to say that relations between emigration waves and racial relations within the Island have historically been one of the most influential factors in Cuba's social and political changes. They were also crucial in the formations of a Cuban national identity during the twentieth century. In her historical analysis of Cuba's search for a differentiated national identity, Cécile Leclercq has identified two conflicting ideologies within the Island: the discourses of national formations among the elites in Latin America, which considers the populations of the old Spanish colonies in the American continent as belonging to the same political project, and those coming from the rest of the Caribbean islands, whether French, British, Dutch or Spanish ex-colonies, producing a different set of cultural identifications and identities which Leclercq defines as hybrid:

Pues la identidad cubana se encuentra exactamente en la encrucijada entre el discurso americanista, que postula los criterios de la diferencia latinoamericana en relación al modelo occidental, y el discurso caribeño, formulador de una identidad híbrida, debido a la heterogeneidad racial y cultural de la región...[163]

[*Cuban identity finds itself between the americanist discourse, that establishes the criteria for the Latin American difference in relation to the Western model, and the*

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Caribbean discourse, formulator of a hybrid identity, due to the racial and cultural heterogeneity of the area ...]

For Leclercq, the Latin American discourse is a western discourse, coming from Europe's teleological concept of history - the belief in the inevitability of a nation's destiny to become culturally and racially one[164]. More importantly, Leclercq considers that the relation between these two discourses on cultural identity in Cuba, the Latin American and the Caribbean, is a relation of domination. In her critique of Ortiz's concept of transculturation, she rejects the idea of cultural communication and exchange:

> ... La aculturación, en Cuba, fue un fenómeno de acomodación de la población
> negra a la cultura española dominante...
>
> La característica de las fases descritas por Ortiz – deculturación, aculturación,
> transculturación – no es comunicación, sino dominación cultural.[165]
>
> [*... acculturation, in Cuba, was a phenomena of accommodation of the black*
> *population to the dominant Spanish culture...*
> *[...]*
> *The nature of the phases described by Ortiz – deculturation, acculturation,*
> *transculturation – is not communication, but cultural domination.*]

However, Leclercq does not expand on the presence of that Caribbean 'hybrid identity' named in the paragraph above. She just identifies it as: 'el discurso posmoderno latinoamericano nacido en Martinique'[166] [*the postmodern Latin American discourse born in Martinique*]. The biological definition of hybrid, as the pseudoespecies created by the combination of two discrete species, presupposes the existence of two 'pure' forms that come to create a 'contaminated' third entity, the hybrid. Ernesto García Canclini has defined the subcultures in Latin America as hybrid, giving to this concept a marked political intentionality, that is: to resist the cultural domination of the white elites, still allied to the old metropolis[167]. On the other hand, Renato Rosaldo in his critique of García Canclini's use of this term, argues that when applied to the study of culture, the concept of hybridity expresses 'conceptual polarities':

> On the one hand, hybridity can imply a space betwixt and between two zones of
> purity ... On the other hand, hybridity can be understood as the ongoing condition
> of all human cultures, which contain no zones of purity because they undergo
> continuous processes of transculturation (two-way borrowing and lending between

cultures). Instead of hybridity versus purity, this view suggests that it is hybridity all the way down... From this perspective, one must explain how ideological zones of cultural purity, whether of national culture or ethnic resistance, have been constructed.[168]

This latter understanding of the ideological formations of cultural identities through the concept of hybridity, which rejects any essentialism or calls to purity, has been particularly relevant in the case of the Caribbean islands, as Leclercq explained above. The distinction she makes between the Latin American discourse on *mestizaje*, ideologically linked to the West's concept of history as teleology, and the Caribbean one on hybridity – two discourses that she considers in conflict when analysing Cuban national identity - is based on the theorisations coming from the non-Hispanic areas in the Caribbean sea. Among the many Caribbean authors who have dealt with this subject, Stuart Hall is the more relevant for this analysis, as he has described the geographical space of the Caribbean Sea as a space of hybridity. For Hall, those living on the Caribbean islands possess diaspora identities, which by definition deny the cultural essentialisms needed in the formation of western-type national narrations, such as that still defended in Cuba. Hall explains the formations of the different Caribbean cultural identities in relation to three 'presences': *Présence Africaine*, *Présence Européenne* and *Présence Americain*, meaning with the latter the 'New World' or *Terra Incognita*[169]. He defines this last presence in its ambiguity, as 'the beginning of diaspora, of diversity'. A diaspora identity is for Hall, an identity that lives with difference:

> Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. One can only think here of what is uniquely – 'essentially' – Caribbean: precisely the mixes of colour, pigmentation, physiognomic type; ...[170]

In what sense is this discourse different from that of *mestizaje* in Latin America? For Hall and others[171], it is its resistance to uniformity and to the formations of fixed identities - its negation of cultural synthesis and essentialist identifications. Creole identities that are 'constantly producing and reproducing themselves', as described by Hall, would not have needed the figure of the *mulato* in order to recreate the appearance of racial conciliation. Authors such as Moore, Leclercq, De la Fuente and Kutzinski argue that the figure of the *mulato* or *mestizo* has helped to diffuse the problem of de facto discrimination. In Cuba those of clear European descent have traditionally monopolised resources and political

power[172]. It is easy to understand why it has been more convenient for the Cuban elites to adhere to the idea of cultural mestizaje rather than that of creolization or cultural hybridity. As Hugh Thomas has described, the history of Cuba has been characterised by a constant 'pursuit of freedom', that is, national independence. This might explain the urge by its elites to define a differentiated national identity. At the same time, the latter must be one and not many, if those in positions of privilege, traditionally Euro-Cubans, are to keep them, while at the same time being 'Cubans' and not 'foreigners'.

The idea of *mestizaje* is intimately linked to that of synthesis, which according to Leclercq also characterised another theoretical construction on national formations in Latin America: the idea of the Baroque. Alejo Carpentier was the Cuban author who more generally popularised this concept in relation to the aesthetic character of Cuba's cultural productions, mainly music and architecture[173]. It does not escape Leclercq that this is also a concept of European origin, as that of nation and *mestizaje*[174]. The definition of the baroque as an aesthetic category refers to that particular style that became predominant in the arts during the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth centuries in Italy, Spain and other areas of Europe. As such it was initially identified by Heinrich Wölfflin in 1888[175], in his attempt to differentiate it from what came before, the Renaissance. In Wölfflin, the transition from Renaissance to Baroque would be stylistically found in the transitions from the linear to the pictorial, from solid form to moving form, from close form to open form, from clearness to unclearness and, the most relevant to this analysis, from multiplicity to unity[176]. However, after Wölfflin's definition, this concept was later used to also characterise the political and economic changes during those two centuries[177]. This last definition seems to be at the base of Lewis Mumford's description of the baroque city that I will analyse in the following chapter[178]. More generically, and again from Wölfflin's theorizations, the baroque has also been defined as a change of episteme, as in Michael Foucault's theorisations in *The Order of Things* and Gilles Deluze's *The Fold*[179]. Finally, there is that fourth line of definition, intimately linked to the initial baroque as an aesthetic category, and found in the specific context of Latin America. Needless to say these four definitions are interlinked through relations of causation. With regards to the context of America, Tzvetan Todorov has theorized that the encounter with the 'other' produced by the colonisation of the American continent had a crucial role in the epistemic changes in the western world described by Foucault, Deleuze and others[180]. According to Todorov, the encounter with the American

civilisations and their different ways of relating to the world contributed greatly to the definitions of a western identity in opposition to the colonised 'other'. This shift characterised the next two centuries and marked the transition to what was later termed as the modern era in the western world. In Todorov's words:

> The history of the globe is of course made up of conquests and defeats, of colonizations and discoveries of others, but, as I shall try to show, it is in fact the conquest of America that heralds and establishes our present identity ... even if every date that permits us to separate any two periods is arbitrary, one is more suitable, in order to mark the beginning of the modern era, than the year 1492, the year Columbus crosses the Atlantic Ocean.[181]

However, he does not mention that this date also marked the beginning of the transatlantic slave trade and its crucial influence on those epistemological changes that took us to what Todorov calls the 'modern era'. Cuban intellectuals could not ommit this fact. Carpentier's uses of the term baroque does not refer to the more common definition of the baroque in western art historiography as an aesthetic movement representative of a particular historical period mainly in Europe and Latin America during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries[182]. Carpentier defines the baroque as a style particular to Latin America that resulted from the synthesis of different, and in cases, incompatible, styles. For Carpentier, it was the encounter with the 'other', not only those who lived in America when the Spanish first arrived (or the geographical other of Europe: the 'baroquism' of the American landscape[183]), but also the African slaves and their traditions. From here, Carpentier extrapolated the concept to every cultural manifestation, so that for example, Cuban music is defined as the synthesis produced by the encounters of the African and European musical expressions[184].

In the following chapter I will use this concept to characterise the architectural particularities of Havana and its symbolism after the second half of the twentieth century. In this chapter, baroque, as an aesthetic synthesis of contraries, accompanies the other conceptual pillar of the Latin American experience: religious syncretism. Normally defined as 'the synthesis of different religious forms'[185], syncretism has also been related to the processes of cultural assimilations and cultural transformations derived from the experiences of colonialism and cultural domination. Octavio Paz has theorised the relations between baroque aestheticism and religious syncretism as characterising the cultural

identities formed in the old Spanish colonies, particularly New Spain (now Mexico) after the conquest. In his text *Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz* (1982), Paz sees in the seventeenth century syncretism of the Catholic order of the Jesuits, the origins of the Latin American national mythologies:

> ... The union between criollo aspirations and the great Jesuit plan for world unification produced extraordinary works in the sphere of religious beliefs, as well as in art and history. Jesuit syncretism, joined to emerging criollo patriotism, not only modified traditional attitudes about Indian civilization but motivated a kind of resurrection of that past...[186]

Paz characterises Jesuit syncretism, not as the indianization of Christianity practised by the Indians, but as the translation of the Indian's religious belief into Christianity, a translation that would 'seek prefigurations and signs of Christianity in paganism'[187] and, therefore, tended to transform the differences of the Indians' cosmological beliefs into the sameness of Christian universality. As Stewart and Shaw have pointed out, syncretism is more productively analysed when we put the focus on the '*processes* of religious synthesis' and the '*discourses* of syncretism'[188], and therefore we look at questions of domination and agency: who translates one system of beliefs into another and with what intention. The act of cultural translation is a power exercise which tends to meaning unification, as argued by Homi Bhabha in his essay 'How newness enters the World', where he recovered, from a postcolonial perspective, Walter Benjamin's theorisations on language translation. In Benjamin's essay 'The Task of the Translator' - that served as preface to his translation of Baudelaire from French into German - he identified those elements in a translation that resisted the translator's transformations: 'that element in a translation which does not lend itself to translation'[189]. In his reading of Benjamin, Bhabha defines 'the subject of cultural difference' within global metropolitan assimilations as this element of resistance to translation[190]. The relevance of these theorisations on religious syncretism as cultural translation, when applied to the Cuban context, is precisely this presence of those African elements that today still resist translation into the Cuban national mythologies imported from Europe. Afro-Cuban religions, mainly *Santería,* are commonly defined as syncretic forms derived from the adaptation of Yoruba belief systems to Catholicism. They were the result of translations of Catholic forms into West African ones, and practised by the African slaves at the beginning of the nineteenth century – as in the common double-naming of

Yoruba deities as also Catholic deities, i.e. Ochún and 'La Virgen del Cobre'[191]. After the end of slavery, these religious forms kept on being widely practised by mainly poor Afro-Cubans, who were separated from the Euro-Cubans' own systems of beliefs, Catholicism. After the 1930s, Fernando Ortiz 'translated' again these Afro-Cuban religious forms back to the Euro-Cubans, by recording through observation their particular symbolism and system of meanings, in order to include them as part of the new discourses on a Cuban national identity based on the total integration between Afro-Cubans and Euro-Cubans[192]. According to Leclercq, his intention was to record a tradition he thought was in extinction, as Ortiz characterised them as 'primitive' and therefore a thing of the past[193]. Translation was only one-way: Euro-Cubans translated Afro-Cuban traditions in order to accommodate them within the western concept of Nation, but without taking them as their cultural identity.

In these efforts of translations of the Cuban African elements into the European, Ortiz himself and one of his disciples, the Euro-Cuban ethnologist Lydia Cabrera, attempted to analyse one of the most hermetic belief systems of African origin, the male-only secretive Abakuás or ñáñigo societies, of Carabalí origin[194]. These societies first appeared among Afro-Cuban slaves working in the harbour areas of Havana's port during the beginning of the nineteenth century, and since then - as they also exist today – their presence has been nearly exclusively recorded in this area of Havana and the province of Matanzas[195]. The Spanish authorities tried to destroy them from the 1870s, as they were seen as the focus of male slave resistance[196]. Since then, and even after independence from Spain in 1898 and the United States in 1902, every authority in Cuba has tried to eliminate them without any success[197]. This is the reason why their members have always been described by mainly Euro-Cubans[198] as dangerous criminals and asocial elements going against the ideals of a unified Cuban nation[199]. Their presence in Havana has been widely documented since their origin, denoting the fear the Euro-Cubans professed for them, as for example in the descriptions by white commentators of the slave parades in Havana during 'El Día de los Reyes' (The Three Kings Days], the only day during the year when the slaves could go out in the streets and express their cultural traditions in front of Euro-Cubans and free Afro-Cubans in the city[200]. The figure of the ñáñigo, or 'diablito' (little devil) – a hooded man performing nearly-acrobatic movements during these processions [Illustration 8] - has

become since then an image associated with the persistence of 'primitivism' and 'atavism' among black men in Havana[201].
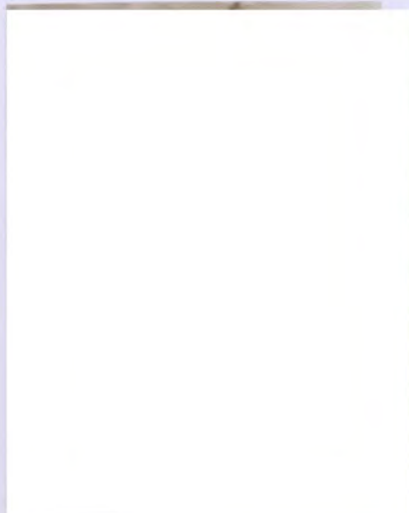
Illustration 8. Victor Patricio Landaluze. *Íreme* or *ñáñigo* (1881)

As it was recorded by Lydia Cabrera, in order to become an Abakuá, a man needed and still needs to prove he is a 'good son', a 'good husband' and a 'good father', as it is expressed in the speech delivered during the initiation of the new members, who at the same time promise not to reveal the secret of the society to any non-initiate[202]. Following Cabrera's account, Daniel E. Walker has recently argued in his essay *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans* (2004), that the existence of these societies was due to the destruction of familial and friendship links between black Cubans as a consequence of the slave institution. Walker describes the Abakuá associations during the nineteenth century as associations that tried to re-establish the black man's sentiment of 'manhood', once the institution of slavery had removed their ability to become husbands to their wives and fathers to their children:

> The Abakuás, who still exist today, were originally an all-male secret society made up of slaves from the Cross River region of Nigeria. Referred to as either Ngbe, Ekpe, or the leopard society in West Africa, its members were responsible for maintaining the well-being of the community...
> To be selected as a member of the Abakuá society required fulfilling four very strict criteria. An inductee could only be nominated after he had shown clear evidence of being a good father, a good brother, a good friend, and a good husband... Not only did the Abakuás represent the most positive attributes of men in the slave community, but the fact that they punished transgressions such as adultery, stealing, and disrespect with physical beatings or even death gave them authority in a community that was in constant battle with a slave regime that denied most vestiges

of black manhood and questioned whether the slaves possessed even a semblance of a moral code or ethical system.[203]

Within the objectives of this chapter, it could be said that the hermetic character of the Abakuás was a cultural act of resistance to translation. Also, that they resisted cultural translation not by excluding white men, but by excluding women, either white or black. Even though they were associations of African origin, Euro-Cuban men have been allowed to become members of the society since a very early date. As Cabrera and later, David Brown have explained, this was due to the influence of a black Abakuá named Andrés Petit, who revealed the society's secret to Euro-Cubans so they could form their own societies (the Society is formed of many small societies named '*potencias*', '*juegos*', which work independently)[204].

The paradoxical position that the Abakuás have sustained within the rethorics of *mestizaje* in the Cuban national mythologies, resides on their hermeticism. The fact that Abakuás' secret codes were not 'syncretised' or 'translated' into those of the Euro-Cubans had much to do with their representation as a threat to the ideals of Cuban national identity as a product of cultural synthesis[205]. However, their male-only, but not black- only character works as paradigm to the utopian mestizo society defended by the majority of the literature on this subject within Cuba[206], even though, it could also be understood that membership of the Abakuás by an Euro-Cuban is the result of his 'africanization', not of his 'cubanisation'[207]. As it is expressed in their initiation speech, at the basis of the Abakuás has always been the idea of brotherhood, that is, male-only bondage and identification, an idea that as Benedict Anderson and George Mosse have argued, is also at the base of modern national formations[208]. Mosse states that 'nationalism had a special affinity for male society and together with the concept of respectability, legitimized the dominance of men over women'[209]. Also, in *Imagined Communities*, Anderson argues that race has not traditionally been a crucial defining criteria in the constitution of the American modern nations. Within the Abakuás, every brother is considered equal to all others, regardless of skin colour and class. This is also the ideology permeating the modern concept of Nation. The exclusion of women at the same time ensures that knowledge is confined to the masculine, while women obtain just the symbolic presence of the mother to whom the Abakuá must be a 'good son', and the wife to whom he must be a 'good husband'. Her

body is also where the physicality of cultural translation takes place; producing the body of the *mulato*, which becomes the site where cultural differences are 'lived' and apparently reconciled.

In Cuba, the concept of cultural hybridity has been far too associated with its biological etymology. Taking into account that the concept of 'race' has been definitively questioned as an ideologically constructed product of the historical contingencies of western colonialism[210] - Ortiz himself wrote against this concept in 1946[211] - the idea of a 'mixed-race body' as conforming an other different to assumed 'white' and 'black' original races, can only represent a continuation of the nineteenth century's racialist ideologies. Despite the contradictions, the figure of the *mulato* is still used as embodying the cultural foundations of the Cuban nation, so that cultural 'mixing' seems to be the result of biological 'mixing'. The cultural authorities after the 1959 Revolution continued this tradition by rescuing a text by writer Luis Entralgo from the year 1953, where the figure of the *mulato* is equated with national unity[212]. In this text, Entralgo speaks of the 'ethnic liberation' of blacks and whites, freed from character traits coming from their racial origins, and accomplished just by the sexual encounters between white men and non-white women[213]. However, even though Entralgo speaks of a mixed-race man, these associations between the national and interracial mixing have traditionally been performed by the body of the mixed-race woman, as has been argued by Vera Kutzinski in her book *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (1993). Kutzinski has pointed out how the high cultural visibility of the figure of the *mulata* – as in the case of nineteenth century novelistic and visual cultures – 'contrasts sharply with social invisibility'[214]; to finally conclude that 'the mestizo nation is a male homosocial construct premised precisely upon the disappearance of the feminine.'[215]

The figure of the Abakuá appears in a famous drawing by Federico Miahle[216] [Illustration 9], where he represents the slaves' annual celebration of their traditions brought from Africa during 'El día de los reyes' in Havana. The figure of the *íreme*[217] is at the foreground of the picture. To the right of the scene, appears an Afro-Cuban dressed as an European gentleman. This figure relates to the work by the Spanish artist Victor Patricio Landaluze, who drew several images of Afro-Cubans in Havana dressed in the same outfit, a dress

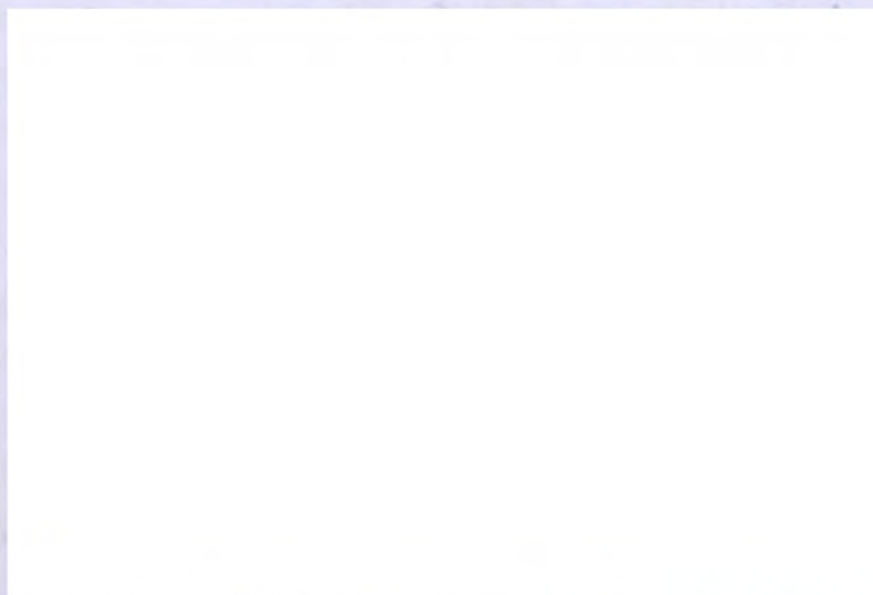code often used by cart riders in the city at the end of the nineteenth century [Illustrations 10 and 11].

Illustration 9. Federico Miahle's *Día de los Reyes, La Habana* (1855)
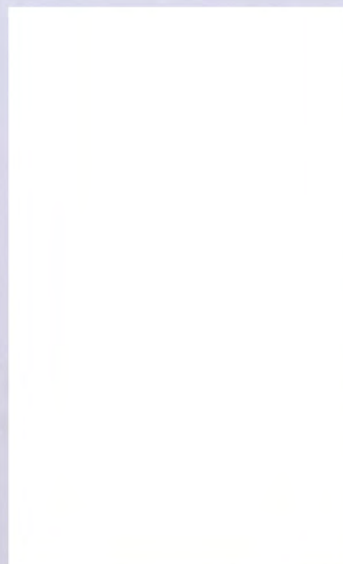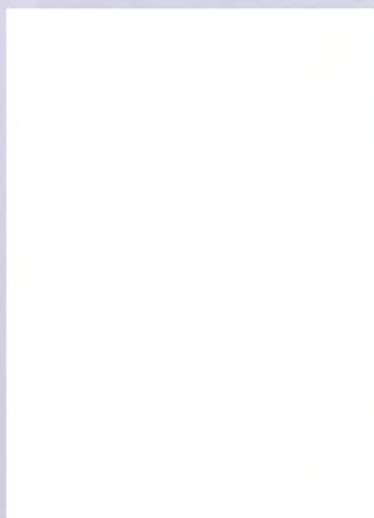
Illustrations 10 and 11. V.P. Landaluze's images of Afro-Cuban men in Havana (1881)

According to Kutzinski, Landaluze and Miahle were recreating the image of 'los negros catedráticos', a vaudeville play written by Francisco Fernández in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this play, Afro-Cubans were ridiculed for their attempt to imitate the dress codes and mannerisms of European gentlemen, without much success[218] [illustration 12]. While in Landaluze's representation this figure is shown as part of the parade (he holds

his hat requesting a donation for the performers) [Illustration 13], in Miahle's he appears to join the Euro-Cuban men as spectator to the spectacle. This figure's space seems an in-between, neither with the Africans nor with the Europeans. He is represented as a creole in contrast to the only African figure of the Abakuá. Havana had since nearly the beginning of the colony an important number of 'free men of colour', some of whom would also join the Afro-Cuban cabildos according to ethnic and tribal affiliations[219]. They would work for wages or, on occasion, be independent traders, such as tailors. Free Afro-Cubans in urban areas were a very influential group during the wars of independence and earlier rebellions against Spanish rule[220]. In Miahle's illustration, he seems to represent this in-between, neither African nor European, but a Cuban who has creolised both traditions within himself. Certainly this creolisation had little to do with the figure of the *mulato*, later upheld as the image of the Cuban Nation.

Illustration 12. Publicity poster for Francisco Fernández's play 'Los negros catedráticos'

Illustration 13. V.P. Landaluze's *Día de los Reyes, La Habana*

Landaluze also made several illustrations of the *iremes* during the Three Kings Day, approaching the windows from where white Cuban women would look at the parade [illustrations 14].
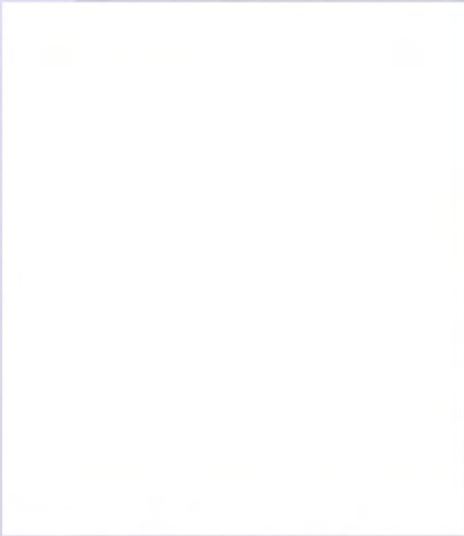

Illustration 14. V.P. Landaluze's representation of *ñáñigos* during *El Día de los Reyes* (1878)

Their position within the city was that of a safe and fascinated spectator. At the same time, the window would showcase them, and only during that particular day, Afro-Cuban men, hiding their identities behind the *ireme* sac, could gaze at them without punishment. This was also recorded by Euro-Cuban commentators at the time:

> Los pardos y morenos esclavos, y algunos libres, de más prosopopeya, ... se presentan...felicitando a cuantos caballeros encuentran al paso, ... y a las señoras, que por lo general se encierran para librarse de impertinencias, y suelen dejarse ver en las ventanas o balcones, para divertirse con los mamarrachos, sus saltos, bailes y carreras.[221]
>
> [*The brown and dark slaves, and some free ones, of more elegancy, ... Appear ... congratulating every gentleman in their way, ...and the ladies, who normally lock themselves away, allow themselves to be seen in windows and balconies, to enjoy with the clowns, their jumps, dances and runs.*]

The withdrawal of Euro-Cuban women to their spaces of vision in the city - the windows and balconies of the domestic house, has been an important part of the city's sexual politics. Historian Robert M. Levine included a photograph entitled *Love Making Cuban*

Style, in his book *Images of History* from 1989 [Illustration 15], where the sexual politics between the different social groups in Havana are theatrically represented. In his description, Levine makes an attempt to understand the social context in which this photograph was taken, and more importantly, how it was perceived:
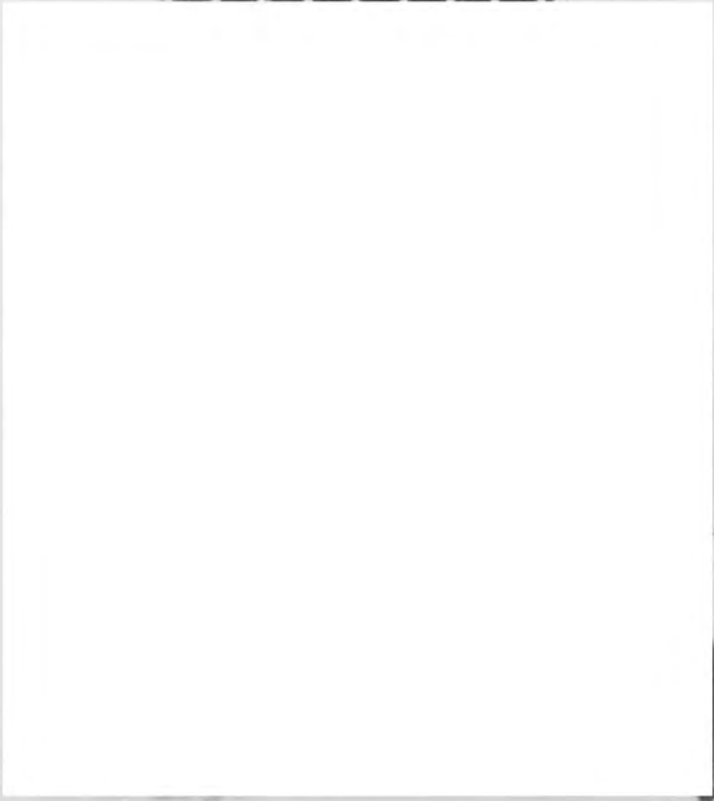

Illustration 15. *Love Making Cuba Style* (Anonimous). Printed in Robert M. Levine's *Images of History* (1989)

'Love-making Cuban Style' (circa 1895), was obviously the work of an English language photographer shooting for the home market. The young man furtively passes a note to (or receives one from) the heavily chaperoned young woman who, with eyes averted, stands as if in jail. The black nursemaid holding the white child is not barred from the suitor, attesting to her social undesirability. In postcard form these kinds of scenes sold briskly in Cuba as well as abroad. It is anyone's guess as to how receptive upper-class Cubans were to such scenes: they may well have considered them funny.[222]

Levine refers to the black woman's 'social undesirability' without commenting on her de facto sexual availability (to white men). He also interprets her relation with the child she is holding as that of being his or her nursemaid. As he did not even know who the author was, it is also impossible to determine whether these assumptions were indeed the photographer's intentions when he staged the scene. Could it not be possible that the black woman represents the white man's mistress and the child she is holding her son or

daughter, fruit from their relationship? Is not this interpretation nearer to what the photographer experienced in Cuba at the time? Precisely the novel now considered as the first Cuban novel, *Cecilia Valdés,* relates the life of a mixed-race woman, daughter of an Afro-Cuban servant and a wealthy Euro-Cuban businessman, who never recognizes her as his daughter. The 'upper-class' and not so upper-class Cubans would have found this image not only 'funny', they would have most probably identified with it, as they have traditionally done with the novel by Cirilio Villaverde. The Afro-Cuban woman and the baby she is holding look at the camera in an act of conspiracy with the spectator, maybe because she knew what the photographer was trying to imply. Her gesture sharply contrasts with the other characters' vacuous looks. Going with my interpretation and not that of Levine, this mixed-race child she holds is what the mythologies of the Cuban Nation would define as the *mulato,* the 'real' Cuban, product of the encounters between Europeans and Africans. However, within the two separated main cultural groups living then in Havana, where did this child belong? Where was that cultural space in the city of neither Africans nor Europeans, but only Cubans that he or she was supposed to occupy? His or her cultural identifications would only follow the mother's line. As Afro-Cuban and Euro-Cuban women were then prevented from accessing and producing the knowledge a nation normally bases its existence upon, it could be said that, in a patriarchal and racist society, a child without (an official) father was in fact a child without nation.

Leclercq's distinction between an identity based on *mestizaje* or synthesis and another on hybridisation seems not be adequate to the case of Havana. The city of Havana should be seen in the light of other European and American cities, that is, as social entities where different cultural traditions have traditionally coexisted, though in inequality. The modern concept of multiculturalism then appears more appropriate[223]. This concept is here understood in its utopianism, that is, as the coexistence of discrete cultural traditions under the same political umbrella that guarantees their mutual respect[224]. Although, cultural crossovers or influences are always there, political guarantees mean that these traditions are allowed to continue existing separately, while also changing without having to disappear. However, as it has been discussed, the idea of multiculturalism is more utopian than factual. Aline Helg has recently denounced the fact that the Cuban constitution still does not recognise the existence of at least two different cultural traditions within the island and the need for equality between them[225]. The maintenance of differences between traditions -

with unequal access to resources, exposure and political and cultural rights - means that it is a concept being upheld as an 'ideal' rather than a reality. In contemporary Cuban historiography, this ideal is now acquiring relevance. For example, in 2005 the book *De donde son los cubanos?* (*Where do Cubans come from?*)[226] was published in Havana, recording the historical relevance of four different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the island: the Haitians[227], the West Indians[228] (those coming from the English speaking Caribbean), the Chinese[229] and the Euro-Jewish[230]. Dominant representations of the city during the twentieth century would normally record the dynamics between the two dominant traditions, Afro-Cuban and Euro-Cuban, if and when Afro-Cubans were represented at all. However, as I will describe in following chapters, in its representations, Havana has usually appeared as the space where the traditional concept of *mestizaje* in Cuban national mythologies is, more often than not, challenged. What is more important, in the context of this analysis, is the deep utopianism behind these representations, where the city becomes the ideal social construct for the pacific coexistence of different traditions. As in Miahle's and Landaluze's illustrations, the relations between the image and the supposed 'realities' they tried to represent resided in a type of knowledge not always made apparent by the image itself. This knowledge would always depend on the specific position the spectator held in the city, whether Afro-Cuban or Euro-Cuban, woman or man, foreign or national, poor or wealthy, aspiring bohemian or secluded traditional.

Chapter III: <u>Out With The New, In With The Old: Architecture and Nation</u>

Todavía hay esto: la revolución intenta su arquitectura que será bella y hace surgir del suelo sus propias ciudades. Entre tanto, combate la americanización oponiéndole el pasado colonial.
Cuba invocaba antaño contra la metrópolis voraz que era España, la independencia y la libertad de los Estados Unidos; hoy busca contra los Estados Unidos raíces nacionales y resucita a los colonos difuntos.
[...]
> *Los Revolucionarios sólo tienen indulgencia para los edificios construidos por sus abuelos en los primeros tiempos de la democracia.*

Jean-Paul Sartre *Huracán Sobre el Azúcar* (1960)

[There is still this: the revolution attempts a beautiful architecture, raising from the earth its own cities. In the mean time, it fights Americanisation by opposing it with the colonial past.

In the past, Cuba invoked, against the hungry metropolis that was Spain, the United States' independence and freedom; today it searches its national roots against the United States and resuscitates the dead colonisers.
[...]
The revolutionaries have only clemency for the buildings built by their grandparents in the first times of Cuban democracy.]

This chapter focuses mainly on Havana's architectural and urban peculiarities. I have looked at those buildings that have defined its skyline from the beginning of the 1930s until after the 1959 political events. They are also the buildings used in most of the cinematographic productions based in Havana, in order to function as signs of the city or its landmarks. I analyse each case in relation to their political and cultural contexts, taking into account shifts in meanings brought about by political and social changes. This chapter also deals with the divisions between the old colonial city or the 'baroque city' and the more 'North American' city of El Vedado – a subject already extensively written about, particularly by Argentinian architect and urbanist Roberto Segre. I have tried to put this division within the context of what was happening at the time in the whole of the American continent, including the United States, regarding the demolition of old cities and their replacement with buildings designed under the premises of the modern style in architecture.

69

Another important section of this chapter is the description of the 'Hotel' as an architectural category. I explore how, once it had adopted during the 1950s in Havana the aesthetic premises of the 'International Style', it transformed the city's skyline, adding new layers of meaning to its visuality. I analyse the romantisation of the old city by Cuban intellectuals - particularly Alejo Carpentier - and the Cuban authorities before and after the 1959 revolution, in the light of the new architecture and its meanings. Overall, this chapter discusses the role of Havana's architectural peculiarities in the formation of Cuban national narratives, before and after the 1959 Revolution, with the concept of 'the baroque' in the Latin American context as key to understanding these narratives.

When Jean Paul Sartre wrote his comments on Havana's architecture in *Huracán sobre el Azúcar*, the relation between architecture and social change in the United States and Europe had already been expressed in the dominant aesthetics of modern architecture as described in Chapter I. Its influence on the rapid changes that Havana experienced during the decade of the 1950s meant the dramatic transformation of the city's visuality, by introducing the architectural form of the high-rise modern building. The completion of the emblematic Focsa building in 1956 [Illustration 16]– then one of the tallest buildings in Havana, containing 400 luxury flats on 28 floors– appeared as a symbol of the city's urban development in accordance with North American economic hegemony in the area. After Focsa was built, new building plans contemplated a sharp increase in the number of rooms and services offered to the thousands of North American tourists visiting the city every year. The North American entertainment industry invested in replicas of Miami and Las Vegas hotels and casinos, such as the Flamingo in Las Vegas, which had been remodelled in 1953 to allow for the growing gambling industry in the city. The Riviera, Hilton (now Habana Libre) and Cohiba hotels [Illustrations 17 and 18] were finished in the three-year period before the Revolution of 1959[231].

Illustration 16. Image of the Focsa building published in *Bohemia,* año 53, n. 5, January 29, 1961. Underneath it reads: '*The miracle of the urban reform'*, alluding to the reforms introduced by the new government after 1959 that affected the conditions of houseowners and tenants in Havana. The new reforms outlawed the ownership of more than one residence and make it possible for tenants to become owners of their residencies.
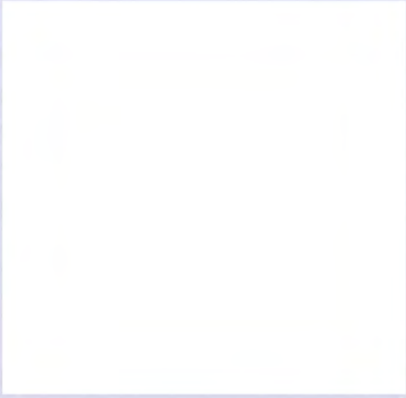
Illustration 17. Hotel Riviera Hilton in Havana.

Illustration 18. Hotel Cohíba in Havana.

The pre-1959 urban project for Havana was known as the Sert Plan, owing its name to the Spanish modernist architect Josep Lluis Sert[232], the main designer. This plan was published in 1956, and proposed the removal of most of the old low-rise buildings along the coastal line known as Malecón towards the east and the drastic transformation of the important architecture of the old city, giving way to the construction of new high-rise hotels and flats.

It was a very ambitious plan, thought to provide for the growing needs of a city quickly becoming an exclusive tourist resort. Because it was never implemented, due in part to the political events of 1959, this plan acquired in Cuba a mythical status: it represented what Havana might have looked like if the revolution had not happened and, as such, became an important visual prop in the construction of an undesirable planned future in order to explain the city's present as desirable[233]. J. L. Scarpaci, R. Segre and M. Coyula situated the Sert Plan within the Latin American context. This context refers to the application of the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM) urban premises to the development of cities in Latin America[234]:

> Latin America in the 1950s was one of the last bastions left untouched by the urban planning theorists of the CIAM. Significant projects related to CIAM ideas were launched through the region: Sert and Le Corbusier's plan for Bogotá (1951), Lucio Costa's idea for Brasília (1957), and Antonio Bonet's project (1957) for the Barrio Sur neighbourhood of Buenos Aires (Gutiérrez, 1983). Havana's project of 1956 joined this list, with each of these plans sharing Le Corbusieran models associated with the Athens Charter.[235]

The symbolic battles between Havana's two main architectural traditions, as described by Sartre, were also being fought elsewhere, in fact everywhere in Europe and America, including within the United States borders. At the bottom of the architectural debates opened by the Cuban revolutionary process were the contradictions and political problems brought about by the project of western modernity[236]. For the architects and urban planners in post-1959 Cuba, the visual form then being adopted by the modern North American and European city was the prelude to the possible dystopian character of a future urban society based on the premises of the free market and never-ending wealth accumulation[237]. Havana is the only important Latin American city that managed to save most of its old city from what was understood as the formal authoritarianism of the Modern Movement in architecture.

The four physical areas describing the different historical stages of the city – Old Havana, Havana Central, Vedado and Miramar - can be seen as the visual representation of the cultural shift experienced by the city, between the end of Spanish rule and the beginning of the United States' influence in the continent. However, such oppositions between the two traditions were already a common trend in Havana's architectural and urban developments.

During the decade of the 1920s, plans to link Havana's urbanity to its North American counterparts resulted in ambitious development plans and the construction of the two best-known Havana landmarks: the Capitolio and the National Hotel. The government, then headed by General Manuel Machado, had hired the French architect and urban planner, J.C.N. Forestier, who would partly design and supervise the developments. Forestier looked at the Parisian experience of the nineteenth century when the city went through fundamental visual transformations thanks to Baron Haussmann's plans for renovation. The attempt was to break the narrowness and provincialism of the old Spanish city by remodelling and designing new avenues through the demolition of old neighbourhoods, opening up spaces of military monumentality[238]. The new urban development for Havana reflected many of the principles that had been at the base of the Haussmanisation of Paris: mayor monumental buildings were not isolated but linked with the other spaces in the city, via avenues, boulevards, parks and other buildings[239]. This urban renovation took the aesthetics of the neo-classical as its architectural model: the dome-shaped Capitolio, the Parthenon at the University building and the imperial lions at the end of the Prado walkway[240].

The most significant visual renovation of the city was the building of the National Capitolio [Illustrations 19 and 20] twenty years before the final Americanisation of the city. The National Capitolio was built between 1927 and 1929 as a nearly exact replica of the Capitolio in Washington D. C. It represented one of the many attempts by the then dictator Manuel Machado[241] to associate himself with the Cuban national project, as the leader who would achieve Cubans' aspirations of economic development and political independence – having the United States as its model. Situated next to the old colonial city, its monumentality contrasts with the small scale of the latter, its low buildings and narrow roads. The old colonial city's main features were at the time historically identified with the regression of the Spanish metropolis – and in contrast with the modern look of the North American city. The architectural form of the Capitolio was an early example of the neoclassical style characteristic of monumental architecture in the United States during the nineteenth and beginnings of the twentieth centuries[242]. Neo-classical architecture has been defined as the architectural style that had as its inspiration the classical orders from the Greek and Roman civilizations but made contemporary by the times of Napoleon I and Napoleon III in France by G.L. De Cordemoy's treaty *Nouveau Traité de Toute*

l'Architecture (1706) and M. A. Laugier's *Essai sur l'Architecture* (Paris, 1753)[243]. In both cases, their 'anti-baroque' stance meant an attempt to rationalise architectural design, which, according to De Cordemoy and Laugier, apart from a faithful reproduction of the classical orders also involved a new simplicity of design, moving away from the decorative and organic dynamism that had characterised baroque architecture during the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century in Europe. Neo-classicism in architecture and urbanism is commonly associated with the idea of Empire, in Rome until 476 AD and France during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the times of imperial rule by Napoleon I and Napoleon III. Its presence in the design of the city of Washington D.C. in the United States during the nineteenth century related to this association of the neo-classical with ideals of social stability and harmony provided by a strong and centralised form of government, that had as its finest example the city of Paris. In the United States, the neo-classical was, therefore, the architectural form adopted to symbolise national identity and unity, at a time when both were still in formation, through the historical events of genocide and forced displacement of the Native American population, the war with Mexico and the Civil War that confronted South with North[244].
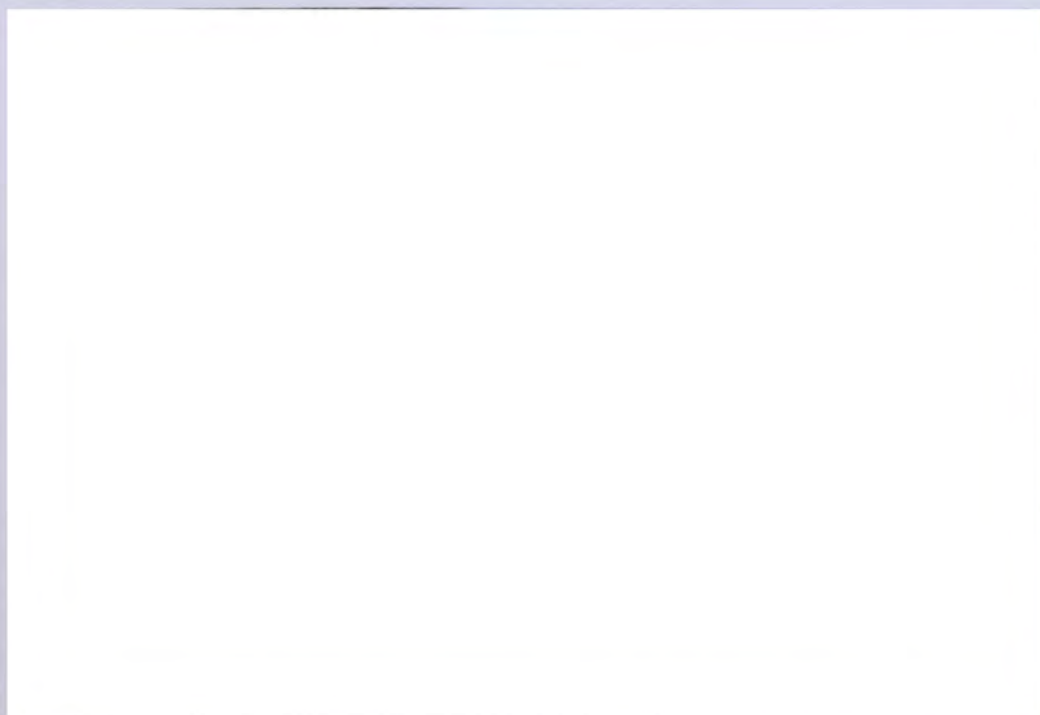

Illustration 19. Postcard with image of the Capitolio in Havana.

Illustration 20. Postcard showing
aerial view of Havana with the Capitolio.

In the American continent, neo-classicism came to visually represent the utopianism of the American Revolution with the final constitution of an independent state, which according to Benedict Anderson, set the course for the following national formations and independence wars in the American continent[245]. The Capitolio in Havana works as the visual metaphor for the complete identification between the Cuban and the United States national projects. It was built before the 1929 stockmarket crash, during the so-called 'dance of the millions', a time of outstanding economic growth for the island [246]. On the day of its inauguration, five beams of light were projected from its dome into the city [Illustration 21]. The effect at night was that of the cinematographic expressionism of Lang's *Metropolis*. The dome-shape represented the universality of Cuban national principles. The light beams showed its commitment to the modern values of technological progress and political freedom. The neoclassical modernism of its architecture was the result of a deep utopianism, that of the Cuban nation, developed during the independence wars in the nineteenth century[247]. Since its building, it has functioned as a symbolic marker for Havana on every possible film, tourist flyer or photographic exhibition.

Illustration 21. Photograph of the Capitolio inauguration day.

However, its meaning in each of these representations has changed to the point of obliteration. The symbolic relevance of this building, particularly in the visual representations analysed here, resides in its capacity to contain visually the historical aspirations of its origins and its contemporary paradoxes. Inside and underneath its dome, the visitor faces the world's biggest indoor sculpture: a female figure holding a dagger, as symbol of the Republic. The walls are clad in green marble and opposite the sculpture, there is a diamond inserted on the floor right underneath the dome's centre, said to have belonged to the Russian tsars. This diamond marks the Cuban zero kilometre - a symbolic point of origin. Miguel de Céspedes, who was Gerardo Machado's private secretary when the Capitolio was inaugurated, equated the diamond's presence with the symbolic gestures of old empires:

> Todas las grandes naciones de la tierra tienen señalado un lugar que sirve como punto de partida para medir sus distancias. Los antiguos romanos median la longitud de sus calzadas a partir de un punto situado en el Capitolio, los franceses lo hacen desde el Arco del Triunfo Napoleónico… En Cuba el punto inicial de la carretera central será el diamante de veinticuatro quilates que se colocará en el centro del salón de Los Pasos Perdidos, directamente bajo la aguja central de la Cúpula del Capitolio.
>
> [*All the great nations on earth have a marked place functioning as starting point to measure distances. The antique Romans measured the length of their road from a point situated in their Capitolio, the French do it from the Napoleonic Arch of Triumph … In Cuba the initial point of the central road will be the twenty-four carat diamond situated at the centre of Los Pasos Perdidos salon, directly underneath the central needle of the Capitolio's Dome.*][248]

Such an imperialist tone does not seem to correspond with the national aspirations of a small ex-colony. The Capitolio's monumentality in proportion to its surroundings strikes the viewer as a building out of place, a foreigner to the city where it cannot find its equals. Its symbolism resides precisely in this oddness within its surroundings. The history of the city has the Capitolio as a reminder of the utopian ideals that inspired its construction: a building that represents the birth of a 'great nation' and designed according to the aesthetics reminiscent of western imperialism in the American continent.

When the Capitolio was built, Havana was still seen as another possible North American city. Whether as a protectorate or through annexation, successive North American administrations saw Cuba as part of United States national territory. In his essay on Cuban history, Philip S. Foner dated such aspirations as early as 1801[249]. The North American imagery representing Havana has always fluctuated between this national identification with the island's destiny and the acknowledgment of Cuba's distance from the American national project – as evidenced by the use of Spanish as the national language and the different and diverse cultural backgrounds of its population. The Capitolio was one of the many cultural products of such ambivalence: it is a monument to Cuba's national independence that visually betrays the island's submission to a 'foreign' and more powerful nation.

In his book *Architecture and Utopia. Design and Capitalist Development* from1973, the architectural and social theorist Manfredo Tafuri discussed the neo-classical form of the city of Washington. From a Marxist perspective, this analysis was an attempt to explain the architectural form of the city as expressing the deep cultural and social transformations brought about by accelerated economic growth and the subsequent urban development. The meanings of neo-classical architectural forms are, in Tafuri's interpretation, directly linked to the economic forces, termed as 'capitalists', and imposing themselves through the elimination of any other economic forms derived from earlier stages in human development. In contrast to New York, Washington would be a response to the inevitability of social change and as such, it contained the ideology of the old order, directly imported from Europe and culturally imposed on those already living in the continent. In classical Marxist historiography it is understood that during periods of transition, political powers do not necessarily coincide with economic powers, as they are normally associated with the

societal forms now disappearing[250]. The chaotic growth and new forms of New York expressed the aesthetic of those powers now dominant. When specifying the two different intentions that originated both Washington and New York, Tafuri explains the origins of contemporary Washington as the heterotypical counter-point to the technological and socially chaotic New York:

> In the planning of Washington, the jeffersonian ideological program was immediately taken by L'Enfant. The founding of a capital translates the 'foundation of a new world' into visual terms, and corresponds to a unitary decision and a 'free choice' that no collective will in Europe had been able to put forward. The political choice that had been made had to be expressed by appropriating the available European models. Or, rather, these models had to be grafted onto the American tradition of city planning.
>
> [...]
>
> The Park Commission had not to complete a city created and adapted to business; rather, it had to work with a deliberately abstract collective symbol, an ideology realized in terms of urban images, the allegory of a political organization whose socioeconomic consequence is a rapid and mobile evolution but which here wishes to present itself immobile in its principles. The city of Washington gives form to the immobility and conventionality of those principles, there represented as ahistoric.[251]

Tafuri argues that the creation of Washington as city-monument responded in part to the fear of the future societies' capitalist growth and technological development revealed in New York. Washington's design expressed the 'fear of the urban', as a threat to the democratic principles of the American Revolution, mainly individual freedom and political equality[252]. According to Tafuri, the growing divisions between the urban and the rural were perceived as a threat to the permanence of such principles[253]. Tafuri argues that by making their capital a monument-city, architects and urban planners in the United States sought to visually transcend the temporality and rapid change experienced by those immersed in New York's chaotic urbanity[254]. The classic image of Washington had therefore, in Tafuri's view, a purpose: that of reassuring its inhabitants and visitors – particularly national visitors – that the universal values of individual freedom and democratic rule were safely under the protection of the state, regardless of the unforeseen changes the uncontrolled forces of a free market would bring. Such an interpretation of the city of Washington by Tafuri required the existence of New York, its chaotic growth and formal eclecticism, in order to recreate Washington as its other, as the 'eternal' and,

therefore non-capitalist, city. Monumental Washington was one of the many visible statements in the discourses on national formation in the United States. However, outside the particular contingencies refered to by Tafuri as capitalist growth in the United States during the nineteenth century, it can also be said that historically, public buildings have usually been monumental, have represented power, have aspired to eternity and, more importantly, have been a response to changes perceived as threatening to the status quo[255]. It is in the 'copy' - what the design of the building or buildings looked for in order to imitate - where we might find the clues to their symbolism and their functions within a particular discourse. Tafuri's interpretation can be applied to the broader context of the political aspirations of the whole continent, which has traditionally looked to the North American Revolution as its political model[256].

Many of the travel books dedicated to Havana that have been published in the last ten years comment on the Capitolio's monumentality, and its isolation from the rest of the city's visuality[257]. The building of the Capitolio at the end of the 1920s had the function, among others, of confirming the western traditions within the island. Since 1902, after the United States ended the military occupation of Cuba, this tradition needed to be reinforced, particularly after the 'race wars' of 1912. The building of the Capitolio was an attempt to visually represent the values contained in the Republic's constitution, which would emphasise the need to safeguard the island's independence from the United States. At the same time, by looking to the United States' model, it successfully replicated the latter's particular 'westernisation'. What Cuba mainly shared with the United States was the history of the slave institution in its soil and, therefore, the presence of an important proportion of African descendents among its population. What the visitor to Havana perceives as a building 'out of place' is not only the Capitolio's monumentality but also its symbolic presence[258]. However, what the Capitolio came to represent since its inauguration on May 1929 was already at odds with Havana's new realities. According to Lawrence Vale, the building of Capitols has normally been synchronized with the building of national projects[259]. In the case of Cuba, it was the 'dance of the millions', as the decade of the 1920s in the island has been normally characterised. However, rapid economic growth also meant a tightened economic dependence on the United States' economy[260].

With economic dependence came cultural influence, which was by the 1920s a nearly exclusively urban process. This was even more evident after the Great Depression, which halted any possibility of industrial development and diversification in the island[261]. While the rest of Cuba maintained its economic dependance on the production and exportation of just one type of product, sugar, and of just one market, the United States, Havana was left as the service centre of a mainly rural country. After the 1929 crash, it was mostly the growing entertainment industry that would invest in the city[262].

After the Capitolio, which was the architectural form embodying the political aspirations of a nation, the city's emergent new realities were embodied in the form of the 'hotel'. This was an architectural and urban concept that, although it had historically been resolved according to different formal solutions, is contemporarily associated with the precepts of modernist architecture once deprived of its initial social aspirations, as Jencks argues in *The Language of Post-modern Architecture*[263]. The construction boom during the 1950s in those cities then considered as 'tertiary' cities, such as Las Vegas, Miami or Havana, consolidated such an association for many years to come. The hotel contains within itself nearly all the features of the traditional city: a gathering centre, governance, leisure space, market, housing and entertainment. It is designed as a fortress or a medieval walled-city: its inhabitants do not need to venture outside its limits in order to acquire basic items such as food, water, clothing or shelter. At the same time, high-rise buildings embodied the principles of constant urban growth and land speculation: the possibility of a city to grow upwards and not just horizontally, meant that new investments could be made on urban space previously 'non-existent' or existing just 'on air', emphasising the idea that wealth can be created out of nothing and therefore can also be eternally accumulated[264]. The growing tourist industry, more than any other, came to embody this ideal.

Havana already had several prestigious hotels prior to 1930, such as the Inglaterra and the Plaza, built at the end of the nineteenth century and still within the architectural context of the old colonial city. However, the new hotels built after the 1930s, characterised by their monumentality and purism in style, changed the visual character of the city's coastline. Their design was situated within the framework of the city's skyline, and transformed it drastically. Their visual relevance corresponded to the importance of their economic role in the city. A hotel built after 1929 in Havana aspired to be 'seen', as its most powerful

promotional tool was the building itself. This tendency reached its peak at the end of the 1950s with the now emblematic Capri, Hilton and Riviera. However, this development had already been initiated by the building of the National Hotel at the end of the 1920s right on the coastline of the Malecón. This hotel [Illustrations 22 and 23] was built during Machado's dictatorship, again with American investment. Its design and execution were also the responsibility of an American firm: McKim, Mead & White[265]. It sits on the top of a high rocky promontory by the sea and very close to La Rampa, the most well known area of the Vedado neighbourhood. Its monumentality and positioning made it at the time of its construction the most significant landmark in the so-called 'American city', that area where the wealthier groups in Havana had moved at the beginning of the century, building mainly detached houses and mansions under the influence of architectural examples coming from the United States[266].
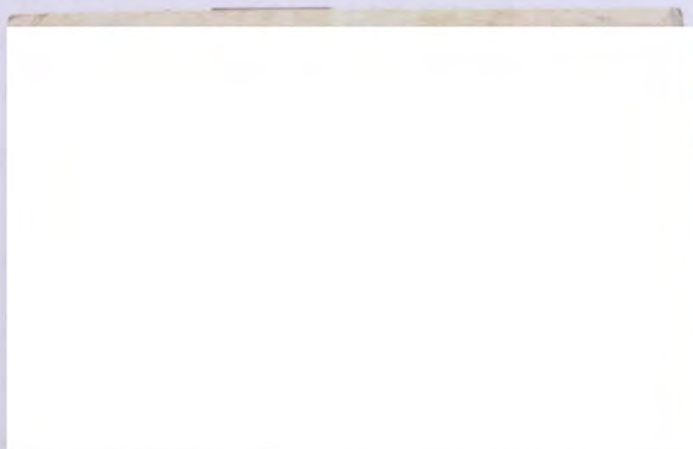

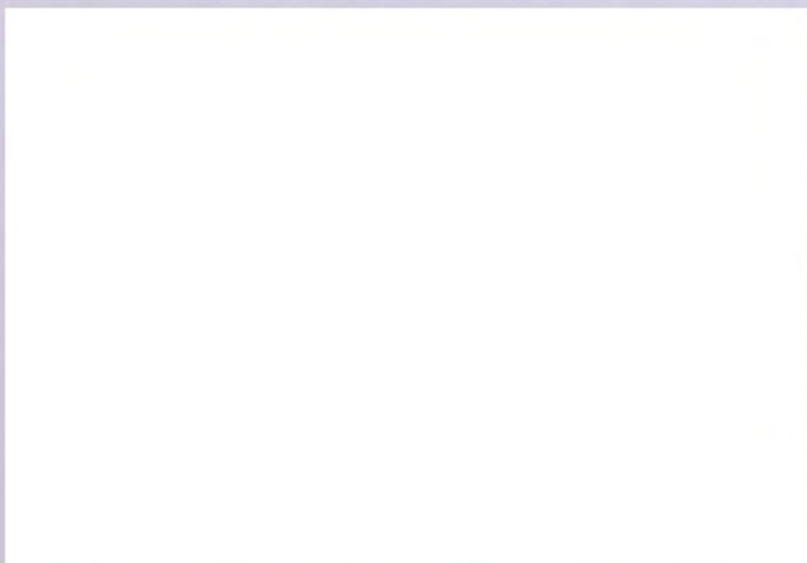Illustration 22. Postcard showing the Hotel Nacional in Havana.

Illustration 23. Photograph of the National Hotel.

The National Hotel's overall design was a late version of the Art Deco (and neo-classic) style predominant in New York during the 1920s[267]. However, its interior is reminiscent of the old city's colonial architecture. Built in a slow-rise area, it had no 'competition' regarding its height and size before the 1950s. Its image soon became as emblematic of Havana as that of the Capitolio. It was not long before the National Hotel's reputation equated with its visual dominance. It became the hotel of choice for most of the personalities - including relevant figures from the United States' infamous mafia groups - visiting Havana in the twenty-five years following its inauguration[268]. In the Cuban imagination the National, even more so than the Capitolio, was a symbol of United States political and economic control of the island. The writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante was well aware of how symbolically charged the National Hotel was for the Havana citizen. In his novel *Three Trapped Tigers*, the North American couple visiting Havana spend their nights at the National Hotel. Cabrera Infante uses their impressions of the hotel to satirise the figure of the North American tourist in the city. Mr Campbell praises the hotel's American traits: "If there is anything the Cubans have learnt from us Americans, it is a feeling for comfort and El Nacional is a comfortable hotel and, even better, it's efficient"[269]. He makes this remark after having consistently criticised the Cuban "infernal noises that they must call music", the humid weather and grotesque crafts. The National Hotel and the North American tourists who inhabit it are, in Cabrera Infante's satire, metaphors of Havana's paradoxes. As one of the most recognisable landmarks in the city's skyline from 1930, the National Hotel was at the same time the sign of a city turning into a foreign land to its own inhabitants. This explains why those photographs the *Bohemia* magazine chose to depict of North American tourists fleeing Havana after the 1st of January of 1959, had been taken in front of the National Hotel [Illustration 24]. By then, the National had appeared in every film or postcard advertising the city to the potential North American visitor. For the inhabitant of Havana, the sight of North American tourists fleeing the city from the National Hotel came to symbolise the moment when the city was taken back to them.

Illustration 24. Page from *Bohemia* showing North American tourists leaving the Hotel Nacional after the 1st of January 1959. *Bohemia,* año 51, No. 1, January 2, 1959.

Together with the Capitolio, the National Hotel was also often represented in many of the films shot in Havana before January 1959. In films such as *A la Habana me Voy, Sucedió en La Habana, Weekend in Havana* or *Una Gallega en La Habana*, the introductory shots mainly consisted of these two buildings (See DVD: *A la Habana me Voy* and *Weekend in Havana*: sequences introducing Havana). It was their 'North American resonance' that made them so appropriate for the big screen. Cinema and architecture had by then already intermingled to give to the image of the 'city' its predominantly North American and cinematographic look. When images of the Capitolio and the National Hotel appeared on the screen, it was the background Latin-sounding music that would locate them in the Caribbean islands. In her work *La Invención de La Habana*, Enma Álvarez Tabío distinguishes between 'outside' and 'inside' view-points when representing Havana[270].

Although her study refers exclusively to literary cases in Cuba, this distinction can be applied to the cinematographic tradition. Each of the films cited above, whether North American, Mexican, Argentinian or Cuban productions, had the point of view of the 'outsider' or the tourist. Havana is the city we are transported to, and therefore such a visual introduction becomes necessary in order to announce to the spectator a change of scenario. Views of the old city are practically non-existent, apart from a still of the cathedral's façade in *Weekend in Havana*. Once inside, the city spaces represented are almost exclusively the cabaret, the casino and the hotel room, which would typically be housed in one of the luxury hotels.

Taking into account that exclusively Cuban productions were very rare before 1959, cases of an 'inside' perspective, where the representation of Havana's main landmarks was unnecessary, were also very few. One of the most significant examples in Cuban cinematography before 1959 was *Estampas Habaneras* (1939). In this film, the characters occupy the spaces of the old city – comprising old Havana and central Havana - away from the North American mansions of Vedado and Miramar. There are no long shots of the city, or architectural references to location. However, interiors and outside façades are of a marked 'Spanish look', together with the performed songs and dances. Spectators know they are in Havana because the main characters are distinctively 'habaneros'. The city is represented through its music and customs, not its architecture.

This film had tried to make Havana the symbolic site for Cuban national mythologies, including the myth of a nation based on cultural diversity, as expressed by the different nationalities and ethnicities of the characters. This last aspect in the film will be analysed in following chapters. For the purposes of this chapter, it is important to emphasise the omission within the film of those North American cultural traits present in Cuba at the time, primarily its architectural expressions, which were then acquiring a dominant role. Even though the so-called *floridización*[271] of the city was well advanced towards the west in Vedado and Miramar, the locations chosen to film *Estampas Habaneras* were restricted to the port surroundings and the distinctive spaces of the old city. The old colonial city is in this film held up as the symbolic space of national identity and, therefore, resistance to the cultural influences coming from the United States[272].

In *Siete Muertes a Plazo Fijo* [Illustration 35], shot seventeen years later, the 'inside' perspective is also dominant. However, this time the 'Americanisation' of the city becomes unavoidable. The main characters live in the North American mansions of Vedado and visit the cabarets and nightclubs at the American hotels. This film was an attempt to paraphrase some of the stylistic features of the Hollywood *noir* genre characteristic of the 1950s and by then well known to Cuban audiences[273]. These features comprised references to the gangster and gun culture in the North American city together with its car culture, and filmic strategies such as dramatic camera angles, close-up shots of the characters' faces and the use of chiaroscuro and highly contrasted images. All of the latter were strategies being used at the time in the Hollywood *noir* tradition in order to emphasise feelings of uncertainty and fear of the urban at night[274]. Such imitations of the *noir* genre and the almost exclusive location of sequences in the area of Vedado gave the Cuban spectator a 'Americanised' image of Havana[275].

The visual contrasts established at the end of the 1950s between the old city and the new North American city can be understood as the ideological separation of what was then defined as capitalist and socialist modernities. By then, those on the island who identified the North American city - the monumentality, glass and steel of the high-rise modern building - as visual signifiers for the ideology of capitalism, had already an image of what a non-capitalist city would look like. It was not the eastern European look of the cities in the Soviet Bloc but the low rise and human scale of the old city, built at a time thought to be of higher spirituality and reconciliation with nature. The post-1959 events, which culminated with the attempt to remove any United States' economic and political influence on the island[276], allowed for a new look at the old city, at the time a mostly neglected and marginal space.

Such a new look concentrated on those aspects of the old city that would distinctively differentiate it from the rationalist and functional aesthetic of the modern style. Even though the architecture of the new hotels was neither the only one nor the most important during the 1950s in Havana, it was their monumentality and social significance that made of them a visual summary of what had happened in the city during that decade. Alejo Carpentier, in tune with the national rhetoric of the revolutionary leaders after 1959, looked to the old city in search of a national style that would stand in defiance against the

hegemonic architectural and urban forms coming from the United States. The publication of his poetic essay *La Ciudad de Las Columnas* in 1964 [City of Columns], dedicated to the particularities of Old Havana's architectural style, corresponded to the glamorisation of the colonial architecture[277] in the following years. It assumes a spontaneity lacking in the new North American urban forms. However, in this essay, Carpentier seems to be describing an archaeological space, where only the ruined walls and the dusty architectural motifs provide clues to an older civilisation. He does not include in his analysis the old city's inhabitants, as if they did not belong there, but were just its temporary guests. For Enma Álvarez Tabío, Carpentier's approach to Havana in much of his literary work belongs to an 'outsider' position. His European origin and the long periods spent in Europe, mainly France, are, again according to Álvarez Tabío, the reasons for this lack of 'intimacy' with the city and its inhabitants. In his search for a national style, which he defines as a 'non-style', Carpentier makes the 'syncretic', the synthesis of different architectural styles into a new coherent form, the most recognisable feature of the old city. He sees this Cuban 'non-style' in the many 'baroque' motifs that can be found repeated in the old city, such as the proliferation of columns in its streets, the grilles and gratings at the front doors and the stained glass windows, the overall profusion of a formally eclectic ornamentation, markedly differentiated from the purity of the modern forms. For Carpentier, the whole city was designed to be 'in the shade':

> La vieja ciudad, antaño llamada de intramuros es ciudad en sombras, hecha para la explotación de la sombras – sombra, ella misma, cuando se la piensa en contraste con todo lo que le fue germinando, creciendo, hacia el Oeste, desde los comienzos de este siglo, en que la superposición de estilos, la innovación de estilos, buenos y malos, más malos que buenos, fueron creando a La Habana ese estilo sin estilo que a la larga, por proceso de simbiosis, la amalgama, se erige en un barroquismo peculiar que hace las veces de estilo, inscribiéndose en la historia de los comportamientos urbanísticos. Porque, poco a poco, de lo abigarrado, de lo entremezclado, de lo encajado entre realidades distintas, han ido surgiendo las constantes de un empaque general que distingue a La Habana de otras ciudades del continente.[278]

> [*The old city, in old times called walled-city, is a city in the shade – the shade, itself, when we think of it in contrast with everything that was germinating, growing, towards the West, from the beginning of the century, in which the superposition of styles, the innovation of styles, good and bad, though more bad ones than good ones, created in Havana that style without style that later, by a symbiotic process, the amalgamation, stands as a peculiar baroquism that acts as a style, inserting itself in the history of urbanistic actions. Because, little by little, from the*

multicoloured, from the mixture, from the fitted between different realities, emerged the constants of a general pattern that distinguishes Havana from the other cities in the continent.]

Overall *La Ciudad de Las Columnas* must be seen within the context of the cultural struggles characteristic during the 1950s not only in Cuba but also in Europe, which would nearly always imply the establishment of dichotomies between the North American city and the city forms of the past [Illustration 25]. However, in the particular case of Cuba, what Carpentier finds in the old city is a tradition left in the form of a baroque urban space. As introduced in Chapter II, the concept of the 'baroque' has been very important in the construction of Cuban national narratives, mainly in the writings of predominant Cuban intellectuals, not only Carpentier but also José Lezama Lima.

As it was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the Spanish Empire in America consolidated, the type of architecture and urban planning exported to the colonies coincided with the aesthetic premises then dominant in the metropolis. In their beginnings, new cities were built with the forms of what is normally termed the 'Colonial Style' in architecture and the visual arts, a style characterised by the adaptation of European baroque to the cultural and geographical specificities of North and South America, including the Caribbean islands[279]. Carpentier's recovery of the American baroque relates to this 'point of origin', the encounter of the Spanish Empire with the continent (not only the people already living there, but also the continent's different geography), as the crucial formative period of a Latin American identity. However, apart from this historical contingency, there was more in the definitions of the baroque that fitted conveniently the need for a new discourse on what it meant to be Latin American.

Illustration 25. Photograph illustrating A. Carpentier's essay *City of Columns* (1982 edition)

The 'syncretic', according to Carpentier, is a dominant feature in the category of the 'baroque', or, more precisely, is what defines the baroque in the cultures of Latin America, as expressed in the paragraph above. Heinrich Wölfflin's formal definition of the baroque style in his text *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888) already contained the notion of synthesis, the tendency to unity that Wölfflin found in the baroque form[280]. Wölfflin also understood the baroque as a sign of crisis and decline[281]. Wölfflin's notion was later recovered by Gilles Deleuze in his own theorizations on the subject:

> Wölfflin has summarised the lessons of this progressivity of light that grows and ebbs, and that is transmitted by degrees. It is the relativity of clarity (as much as of movement), the inseparability of clarity from obscurity, the effacement of contour – in short, the opposition to Descartes, who remained a man of the Renaissance, from the double point of view of physics of light and a logic of the idea.[282]

However, Carpentier also took his notion of the baroque from the Spanish thinker Eugenio D'Ors who, as early as 1920, had already theorised on the baroque as a style born from the encounter of contraries:

> Siempre que encontramos reunidas en un solo gesto varias intenciones contradictorias, el resultado estilístico pertenece a la categoría del Barroco. El espíritu barroco, para decirlo vulgarmente y de una vez, *no sabe lo que quiere*.[283]
>
> [*When we find gathered in just one gesture several contradictory intentions, the stylistic result belongs to the baroque category. The baroque spirit, to say it at once and commonly, does not know what it wants.*] (my emphasis)

In its relation to the category of the 'other'[284], the baroque came to exist when the 'same' and its 'other' formed an hybrid, 'lived together', so that it appears as an expression of a crisis of identity. Alejo Carpentier lived in Paris during the 1930s[285], collaborating with some of the members of the surrealist movement -mainly those who had separated from André Breton in 1930 - and participating fully in the city's avant-garde culture during those years[286]. Following this Parisian experience and the exposure to the city's cultural recreations of a 'primitive' Africa within and outside surrealism[287], Carpentier concluded describing the Latin American reality using the dichotomies established between Western civilization and its others ('primitive' Africa) that had been so crucial in the formation of the Paris avant-garde[288]. Surrealism and baroque, or surrealism as a new baroque, embodied

that coexistence of contraries, of the same and its 'other', which, according to Alejo Carpentier and José Lezama Lima[289], came to define the American continent.

The writer Luis Duno-Gottberg has characterised the concept of baroque in the Spanish and the Latin American contexts as a mainly Cuban phenomenon. In his essay '(Neo)barroco cubano e identidad. El periplo de Alejo Carpentier a Severo Sarduy'[290], *lo barroco* as the stylistic dominant of the old colonial city, served as the basis for new mystifications of the national brought about by the revolutionary processes initiated in 1959. Overall, Duno-Gottberg argues that Carpentier's concept of *Lo Barroco* is in direct relation to the 'cultural and racial diversity' of the Latin American people, and therefore 'se vincula así a un proyecto político'[291] [*it connects itself with a political project*]. The category of the baroque was readily available to explain the differences represented by Latin America with respect to European and North American modernisms, because in its definition there was the possibility of syncretism: a peaceful cohabitation of the same and its 'other', as it was visually manifested mainly in the architectural forms of the old colonial cities. From such mythical narratives of the Latin American continent, Carpentier and Lezama Lima moved to describe Cuban cultural formations following the premises of a baroque syncretism. Carpentier first reached this conclusion in his works describing the origins and main features of the Cuban musical tradition[292]. Later he attempted to extrapolate the same analysis to Havana's old architecture in *La Ciudad de Las Columnas*.[293]

Another Cuban author who applied the concept of the baroque to Havana's visual particularities was Severo Sarduy. Enma Álvarez Tabío dedicated a whole section, entitled 'De la ciudad moderna a la ciudad barroca' [*From the modern to the baroque city*][294], to Severo Sarduy's literary approaches to the city during the 1950s, particularly in his fictional novel *De Donde Son Los Cantantes* (1967). In Álvarez Tabío's argument, Sarduy's definition of Havana at the end of the 1950s as a city that 'has arrived at its baroque' coincided with Sarduy's theorisations on the category of the baroque – mainly in his essay entitled *Barroco* (1974), where he wrote on the differences between Galileo's circle and Kepler's ellipse as the visual trope embodying the idea of the baroque:

> El descentramiento – la anulación del centro único – repercute en el espacio simbólico por excelencia: el discurso urbano.[295]

[The decentralization – the elimination of the unique centre – impacts on the symbolic space per excellence: the urban discourse]

This lack of a unique centre, resulting from the proliferation of multiple centres is, in Álvarez-Tabío's interpretation, a metaphorisation of the type of urban growth experienced by Havana from the 1930s to the 1950s. Such growth had resulted in a constant move of the city centre from the old colonial city to the area of La Rampa in Vedado, passing through Havana Central. Another sign of Havana's 'baroquism' at the end of the 1950s, as noted in Sarduy's literary work, would be the writer's references to the city's 'excessive' nature:

> La ciudad que 'ha llegado a su barroco' exhibe, consecuentemente, su desmesura, sus excesos, su demasía: la cúpula del capitolio de La Habana es cinco metros mas alta que la del Capitolio de Washington, el teatro Blanquita tiene veinte lunetas mas que el Radio City de Nueva York, y así por el estilo.[296]

> *[The city that 'has arrived at its baroque' exhibits, therefore, its lack of measure, its excessiveness: the capitolio's dome in Havana is five metres higher than the one in the Capitolio in Washington, the Blanquita theatre has twenty more 'lunetas' than the Radio City in New York, and it goes on.]*

Therefore, in Álvarez Tabío's reading of Sarduy's main texts, it is this excessiveness and lack of a stable city centre that would define Havana as a baroque city at the end of the 1950s. However, among the many authors who have attempted a definition of a baroque sensibility outside the historicist interpretation, excess and relocation of a unique centre are not enough to recognise the baroque in a stylistic solution - not even in Sarduy's writings. Excess would need to refer to excessive stylistic cohabitation without a hierarchical order. It was not only that the 'centre' had been moved, but that the multiple and different centres would cohabit in a stylistic synthesis – whether final or just transient as in the figure of 'the fold' in Deleuze, or the 'style without style' in Carpentier.

It is not my intention to defend the appropriateness of the category of the baroque in order to explain Havana's dominant representations at the time. More relevant to this study is the relation between theorisations on the baroque as found in the visual forms of the city, mentioned above, and new approaches to the urban during the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, not only in Cuba but also within the entire western world. In 1961 Lewis Mumford

published a theoretical account on the history of the western - mainly the European and North American - city where the distinctions between what he calls the medieval and the baroque city resided on the level of authoritarian centralisation exercised by the recently formed nations in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries[297]. For Mumford, it is the enforcement of the state, its bureaucratic formation and growing capacity for social control that would explain many of the new urban forms designed at the time and increasingly dominant in future urban plans for the main European capitals. Baroque urban planning was an attempt to manage an already highly 'baroque' urban reality, grown to excess and involving the close cohabitation of different cultures, defined by class, gender and racial differences. His final analysis of the city of Washington D.C. in the United States would work as proof of how such a 'baroque' conception in urbanism was exported to the American continent and taken to its logical conclusions:

> On the surface, Washington had all the aspects of a superb baroque plan: the sitting of the public buildings, grand avenues, the axial approaches, the monumental scale, the enveloping greenery. With no single city, not even St. Petersburg, available to serve him as model, L'Enfant had nevertheless succeeded in envisaging what a great capital, conceived in baroque terms, might be. He had heeded Alberti's dictum that 'the city, or rather the region of the city, is the greatest and most important among public buildings.' [298]

Therefore, according to Mumford, it would be in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that baroque city planning would be properly developed and applied, and only in the major European and North American cities. The rest of the world's other metropolitan centres, including the colonial cities, would experience such urban re-organisation only at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. In the case of Havana, this would for the most part mean Forestier's plans during the 1920s, with the design of the Capitolio area, its surrounding gardens and avenues. Such plans were in part frustrated by the Great Depression and soon replaced by the new urban forms then characteristic of the capitalist city, as described by Mumford:

> The dismissal of L'Enfant was a sign that the landowners and commercial speculators, not the government, were to exercise the major control over the development of the capital. [...].
>
> [...]. In the name of freedom, the new leaders of commerce and industry, once they were freed from the restraints of baroque taste, invited speculative uncertainty and

planless competition. As a result, the great tide of urbanization in the nineteenth century resulted in a strange phenomenon: the progressive submergence of the city. The landscape was filled, instead, with a spreading mass of urban flotsam and jetsam, cast overboard in the storm of capitalist enterprise.[299]

The distinctions made in 1961 by Mumford, between the medieval city and the baroque city, responded to his preoccupation, shared by many of his contemporaries, with the hegemony of modern architecture and the ideology of the free market in the planning of new urban centres. The medieval town, still physically present in Europe, but historically absent in the United States, came to visually embody a city created to be a lived-in community, easily transited by foot - a human-scale city, known to each of its inhabitants and ignorant of the principles of functionalism, wealth accumulation and state control:

> With certain notable exceptions, the dominant medieval buildings did not exist in empty spaces; still less did one approach them along a formal axis. That type of space came in with the sixteenth century, as in the approach to Santa Croce in Florence; and it was only with the nineteenth century that urban 'improvers' who were incapable of appreciating the medieval system of town planning removed the smaller structures that crowded around the great cathedrals, to create a wide parklike area, like that in front of Notre Dame in Paris: bleak staring emptiness. This undermines the very essence of the medieval approach: *the secrecy and the surprise, the sudden opening and the lift upwards, the richness of carved detail, meant to be viewed near at hand.*
> Aesthetically, a medieval town is like a medieval tapestry: the eye, challenged by the rich intricacy of the design, roams back and forth over the entire fabric, captivated by a flower, an animal, a head, lingering where it pleases, retracing its path, taking in the whole only by assimilating the parts, not commanding the design at a single glance.[300] [my italics]

Such vindication of the old city was then a common theme in the United States and Europe. One year after the *City in History*'s publication, Jane Jacobs also published her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961). This essay has been taken as a manifesto against the dystopian results of urban planning as defended by Le Corbusier. Her calls for urban diversity and the need for uncontrolled urban growth precluded the post-modern critique of modernism as metanarrative, of which the need for urban planning had been one of its most visible results. However, it is in her defence of the old building where we find the new sensibility towards city growth, seven years before the urban unrest in many cities in Europe and the United States that characterised the end of the 1960s:

Cities need old buildings so badly it is probably impossible for vigorous streets and districts to grow without them. By old buildings I mean not museum-piece old buildings, not old buildings in an excellent and expensive state of rehabilitation – although these make fine ingredients – but also a good lot of plain, ordinary, low-value old buildings, including some rundown old buildings.

[...]

Old ideas can sometimes use new buildings. New ideas must use old buildings.[301]

Carpentier's description of Havana's baroquism belonged in part to this idealisation of the old town by Mumford and Jacobs. The similarities between Mumford's description of the medieval town and that of Carpentier's in Havana related to the same notion of the city as, first of all, an aesthetic experience: 'the secrecy and the surprise', 'richness of carved detail, meant to be viewed near at hand.' However, Carpentier was not describing a medieval town, nor a baroque city, in the strict historical sense of these concepts. His description seems to coincide rather with the notion of eclecticism in architecture[302]: 'the superimposition of styles, the innovation of styles, good and bad, though more bad ones than good ones, created in Havana that style without style ...'. When most of old Havana was built, baroque urban planning did not exist in Spanish cities. What did exist was a baroque sensibility, dominant in the visual arts and literature during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After this period, the city grew by stages, following a variety of aesthetic premises coming not only from different historical periods, but also from different regional areas[303]. In fact, the most eclectic area of Havana is not the old colonial town or the nineteenth century area of Havana Centro, but the twentieth century's 'American' city of Vedado. The wealthy families who started building Vedado at the beginning of the century often contracted private architects and created their own houses following very diverse styles. This happened throughout the century, so that next to a neo-classical style mansion you might find a modernist house under the influence of an architect such as Mies Van der Rohe. Other houses might follow Art Deco or Spanish Colonial new style. Indeed, old and central Havana are stylistically very uniform areas when compared to Vedado [Illustrations 26, 27, and 28]. The sensibility that Carpentier saw in Havana was a sign of urban diversity prior to the urban standardization represented by modern architecture. However, it was not eclecticism that he was looking for, but rather syncreticism. Even though in philosophy the term eclecticism and syncretism tend to coincide[304], when we look at cities, there is a difference between the presence of buildings designed borrowing from different styles and the coexistence in the same city area of buildings stylistically

different[305]. The description of Las Vegas by Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour seem to coincide with the latter[306], probably because, unlike Carpentier, they were not in search of synthesis, but rather of plurality. Carpentier walked the city, discovering the variety of its motifs and forms. Finally, as in his previous descriptions of Cuban music, he held it up as a visual essay of Cuban identity. What Havana really was about, eclecticism as plurality, was transformed into eclecticism as synthesis[307]. This baroque quality, the syncretism of different styles, its lack of order and hierarchy is what Carpentier identifies as the origin of the Cuban nation, a quality shared with the other Latin American nations. However, allusions to the category of the baroque were not limited to the Latin American context. From Eugenio D'Ors's 1944 text to the Situationists' references to their aesthetic as 'baroque' at the end of the 1950s, references to the old category of the baroque responded a great deal to the increasing discomfort with the urban life originated from the hegemony of rationalist thought and its homogenising effect[308]. The old colonial city in Havana, also coming from an old Empire, was, at least apparently, designed following precepts foreign to capitalist urban planning.
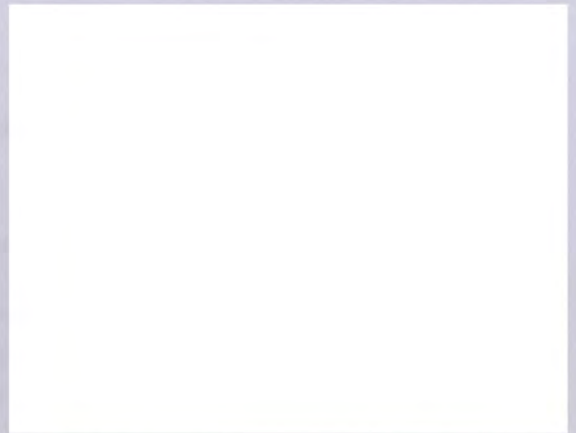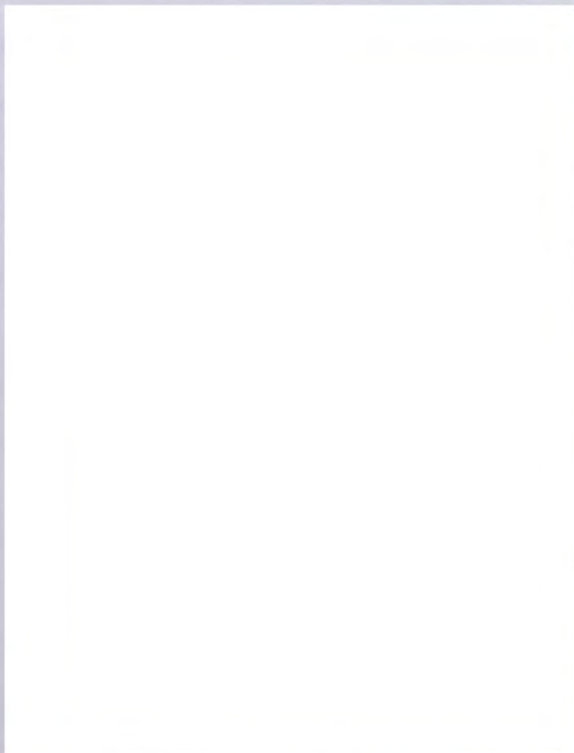
Illustrations 26 and 27. Vedado houses

Illustration 28. Vedado Methodist church.

Whether or not there was a coincidence in meanings and intentions between Lewis Mumford and Carpentier when theorising the aesthetics of the baroque city, the role of Havana in this debate at that particular time, the beginning of the 1960s, seems crucial. The importance of the category of the baroque when discussing Havana's visuality resides, therefore, in this identification of the old colonial city with the ideological project born from the political events of 1959. This ideological project had as its 'other' the one represented by the United States and was based on two very similar precepts: a) the existence of a Latin American identity, a product of the supposedly cultural syncretism caused by the Spanish colonisation, and in opposition to North American identity; b) the identification of this Latin American identity with the premises of an international socialism, and again, in opposition with the North American political project.

Coming back to Severo Sarduy's writings on this subject, the idea of the baroque when linked to the idea of the city was finally translated as a revolutionary aesthetic:

> Barroco que en su acción de bascular, en su caída, en su lenguaje pinturero a veces estridente, abigarrado y caótico, metaforiza la impugnación de la entidad logo céntrica que hasta entonces lo estructuraba desde su lejanía y su autoridad; barroco que recusa toda instauración, que metaforiza al orden discutido, al dios juzgado, a la ley transgredida. Barroco de la Revolución.[309]

> [*Baroque that in its action of swinging, in its fall, in its picturesque language sometimes strident, multi-coloured and chaotic, metaphorises the impugnation of the logocentric entity, which until then had structured it from its remoteness and its*

Links between a baroque aesthetic and the aesthetics of the Revolution have been drawn in Europe since the time of the French Revolution. However, when Sarduy wrote the above text he had first hand experience of the aesthetics developed by those involved in May 1968's revolutionary rhetorics, as he had already been living in Paris for ten years[310]. However, as a Cuban exile, his references were also the aesthetics coming from the island and associated with revolutionary change.

Sarduy's writing of 1973 on the baroque city and its revolutionary nature, while actually witnessing the radical changes and social unrest in both countries, Cuba and France, exemplifies the relevance of old Havana at the time. The relations between the baroque and the revolutionary in Havana after 1959 and Paris during the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, are articulated through this notion of the old city as the space that comes to represent an 'other' to what was then understood as the capitalist city. The fact that the new 'American city' had many formal similarities with the dystopian architectures characteristic of the socialist cities in Eastern Europe, also gave the distinctive visuality of the old city such significance.

In his 1969 book *Diez años de architectura en Cuba revolucionaria (Ten Years of Architecture in Revolutionary Cuba)*, Roberto Segre illustrated Havana's urban growth before the 1959 revolution by contrasting two images: the image of one of the slums outside Havana and the image of two of the new buildings of luxury flats by the Malecón, the Focsa and the Someillán[311] [Illustration 29]. The horizontality of the former and verticality of the latter come to visually represent the duality established between the First and the Third world at the beginning of the 1960s. By juxtaposing these two images, Segre intended to describe the existence of the first world in a third world city. The battle that post-1959 architects and urban planners presented to the hegemony of United States' urban design in the development plans for Havana had much to do with the symbolic meanings the Cubans then attached to the high-rise building designed under the premises of the modern style in architecture. The majority, rising from Havana's skyline, were hotels and luxury flats, making their image dominant, as if to define the character of the city. In the

particular case of Havana, the fact that it had always been a low-rise city, accentuated the power of such an image: no other building could compete with the economic and social dominance of the North American hotel. The Cuban national project at the end of the decade of the 1960s, the aspirations to national independence, could not be found on Havana's skyline, apart from the timid and now low-rise dome of the Capitolio. Political rhetoric based on national mythologies of self-fulfilment through political independence directly contradicted the imposing image of the North American hotel. Later, all along the Malecón to the National Hotel followed the high-rise buildings of the Hilton, the Capri and the Riviera. Such contradiction was presented at once to anyone new to Havana's recently refashioned skyline.

Illustration 29. Photographs illustrating R. Segre's book *Diez años de arquitecture en Cuba revolutionaria* (1969)

Many of the aesthetics developed after 1959 in Havana were an attempt to define it politically and culturally as a revolutionary city. A clear example of this is the use of the city's walls, not only to propagate political ideologies, but also and particularly to create the illusion of urban utopianism: a city that belongs to its citizens, who make free use of it and

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creatively transform it[312]. Even though the use of the city's walls for political denunciation has been around centuries, during May 1968 it became the visual embodiment of a new form of urban utopianism: the city as work of art and its citizen as the artist. However, far from this idea of the city as artistic creation and artistic living, the new Cuban government's first plan for Havana had been to end its status as exclusively a service city following the old Soviet ideals of urban development, that is, the creation of a city of new proletarians, produced by and associated with newly created industries[313]. In this sense, those first involved in the design of a new urbanism for Havana, once the Sert Plan was dispensed with, were still recipients of that utopianism that had taken hold at the beginning of the twentieth century in Europe and the United States, where technological development and the possibilities of human progress were the foundations of nearly every utopian projection onto the city.

Roberto Segre characterizes the urban efforts of the first eight years after the 1959 revolution as an attempt to visually oppose the past with a totally new form, consistent with the new 'contents' assumed by a revolutionary architecture and urbanism. However, in the two phases he distinguishes during these eight years, he describes the early relocations of some of the already existent building's purposes as also an important part in the re-creations of the city as revolutionary:

> Al comienzo de la Revolución juega un papel predominante la transformación de los valores simbólicos que cargan las formas de la arquitectura de la capital. Ella representa el nivel de vida de una minoría desarrollada dentro de un marco mayoritario subdesarrollado, de equipamiento funcional y de servicios equiparables al 'standard' de un país industrializado y no de un país esencialmente agrícola... Las primeras iniciativas cambian los contenidos conservando las formas: los cuarteles convertidos en escuelas, los clubs privados en círculos sociales del pueblo, las lujosas mansiones de la burguesía en viviendas para los becados. La segunda etapa consiste en la creación de las formas representativas de los nuevos contenidos.[314]

> [*At the beginning of the Revolution the transformation of the symbolic values, which are carried by the architectural forms in the capital, play a predominant role. [Havana] represents the status of a developed minority inside an underdeveloped majority, with advanced equipment and with services equal to a developed country's 'standard' and not to an essentially rural country ... The first initiatives changed the contents keeping the forms: barracks turned into schools, private clubs into popular social centres, luxury mansions of the bourgeoisie into housing for*

In 1968 Segre distinguished five main architectural projects, characteristic of these two
phases: the Educational City Camilo Cienfuegos, the reorganisation of the tourist centres
and urban services, the neighbourhood of 'La Habana del Este', the University City 'José
A. Echevarría' and the National Schools of Arts[315], also known as the Instituto Superior de
las Artes or ISA [*Superior Institute of the Arts*]. Of these, the National Schools of Arts (or
ISA) are the most symbolically charged [Illustrations 30, 31 and 32]. They were built
reusing the spaces of the famous Country Club in Havana, a golf club for very wealthy
North Americans and Cubans. The main building with its colonial resonances - the tiling on
the roof, wood work and low rise, typical of the architectural forms exported from mainly
Southern Spain - was retained as the main entrance to the Schools. Within the vast
landscape, three new structures were built following the designs of three (at the time)
modern architects: Ricardo Porro designed the School of Visual Arts and Modern Dance;
Vittorio Garatti, the Schools of Music and Classical Dance; and Roberto Gottardi, the
School of Drama. Therefore, there are three aspects of the design of these new architectural
groups emphasised by Roberto Segre not only as innovative, but also as characteristic of
the new form the revolutionary architecture aspired to in order to also house new and
revolutionary contents: each theme was individualised through the particularities of each
building, the use of bricks and the architectural form of the Catalan dome and the
integration of the work with its natural context[316]. All these, following Segre's argument,
are examples of an architecture understood as closer to the popular and 'liberada de los
moldes impuestos por la penetración cultural norteamericana...'[317] [*free from the moulds
imposed by the North American cultural penetration...*] Therefore, this project, which was
supposed to initiate and set the principles for a revolutionary architecture, was conceived in
opposition to the United States's architectural exportations. First of all, a space reserved for
the entertainment of the very wealthy was now used for the artistic education of the
underprivileged (poor Cubans and Third World students). Secondly, instead of high-rise
verticality and the geometrical repetition of the cube as the basic architectural shape
predominant in the architecture coming from the United States, the School of Arts
buildings were characterised by the low-rise horizontality of the old city and the round
shape of the dome, or Catalan vault, also an architectural resonance from the past. Thirdly,

in contrast to the formal clarity and closeness of the modern building, this new architecture displays multiple openings and closings and organic form. Fourthly, steel and glass were replaced by the use of red brick as the main construction material, which accentuated the buildings' ancient look; and finally, instead of the radical separation between the city and nature that had characterised monumental modern buildings, this was an attempt to integrate architecture within the surrounding landscape, by organically following its form[318].

Illustration 30. Cover to John A. Loomis' book *Revolution of Forms: Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools.* (1999), showing part of the ISA Schools' architecture.

Illustration 31. Photograph of a building from the School of Visual Arts (ISA)
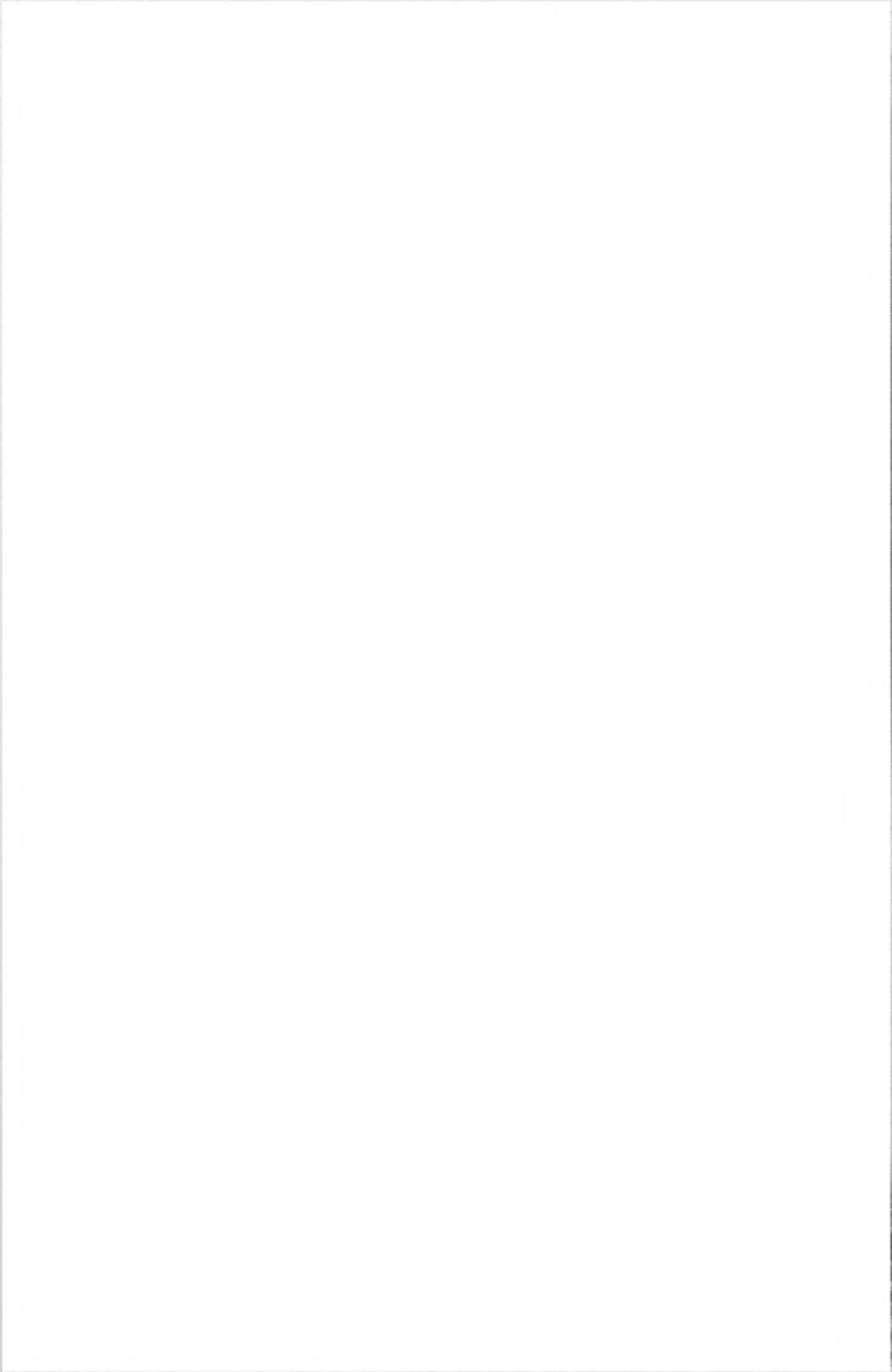
Illustration 32. Photographs of model for the School of Drama and of the
Music School (ISA)

As Roberto Segre also mentions in his text, such buildings have been classified as belonging to the 'romantic' period in the Cuban Revolution (see endnote 317), and therefore, promptly abandoned as the architectural model for later building projects within the programmatic purposes of the Revolution. The ISA is in fact still under construction. However, its significance as a building ideologically designed to function as architectural paradigm of a new social order is still very relevant[319]. The priority given to the construction of this building as one of the first architectural projects of the revolution answered to that utopianism that equated the old city with a life lived for the making and enjoyment of the arts. This utopianism was not only in its anachronistic elements: the dome and the red brick[320], it was also in its labyrinthine structure, reminiscent of the medieval city, lacking the rational order and structural clarity of modern architecture and urban planning. Far from representative of the post-1959 urbanistic and architectural projects in Havana[321], this building has a symbolic status very similar to that of the Capitolio: it came to visually embody the failed utopian aspirations predominant during these two very relevant periods in the history of the island.

We now find that those aspects of Havana's visuality that have helped to give it its contemporary status as a revolutionary city are in relation to the utopianism that dreams of the return of the lost city: one that was made creatively by its citizens, 'the city as a work of art'[322]. The role that Cuba's post-1959 main cultural institutions[323] have had in this recreation of Havana as an avant-garde city, as a city where creative practices are central to its planning and economy, has been crucial[324]. I use the term avant-garde city following the definition of the artistic avant-garde in Peter Bürger's classic text *Theory of the Avant-garde* (1974). In Bürger's theorisation the artistic avant-garde would differ from modernist art in its aspiration to make the artistic institution redundant once art and life become again one[325]. So the term avant-garde can be interpreted as both moving forward towards a desirable future and returning to a desirable past, hence its essentially utopian nature and, more importantly, its relation to the old city as not only the vision of a lost past but also of a desired future.
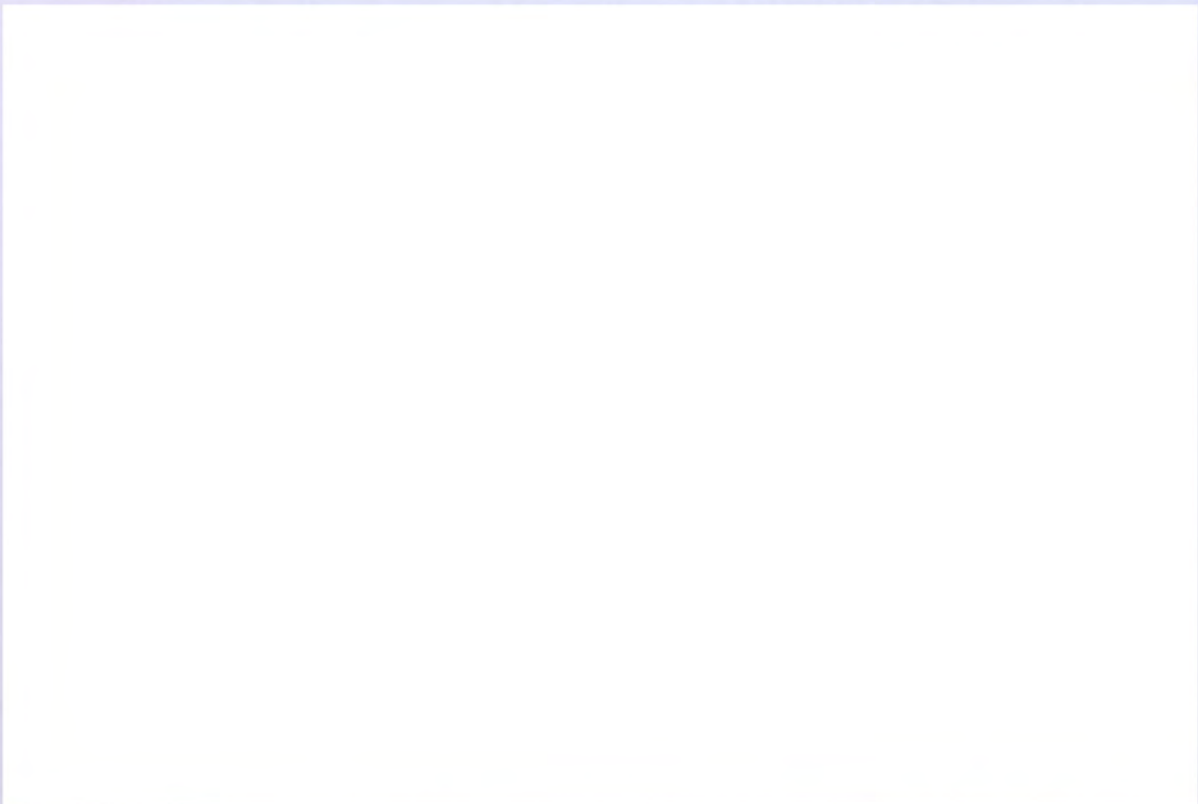
Illustration 33. Film still from *A La Habana me voy* (1941) showing the *Capitolio*

Illustration 34. Film still from *Weekend in Havana* (1941) showing the Cathedral in Old Havana.

Illustration 35. Film still from *Siete muertes a plazo fijo* (1950) showing a modern style building in Vedado, Havana.

Chapter IV: Film and Urban Space

This chapter explores the relationship between cinema and its representation of architectonic and urban space in Havana. It will necessarily draw from the conclusions reached in Chapter III, particularly in relation to the visual juxtaposition of the old and the new city, the colonial and the American city. This strategy has been traditionally used in the nationalistic and/or revolutionary discourse, or in other contexts, to allegorise the nostalgic utopianism of our contemporaneity, using the visuality of the old city. Both types of discourses are intimately interlinked in the four emblematic documents from Cuban filmography I will be looking at in this chapter: *Estampas Habaneras* (Havana Stamps, 1939) by Jaime Salvador, *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (Memories of Underdevelopment, 1968) by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and *De Cierta Manera* (One Way or Another, 1973) by Sara Gómez and the Russian-Cuban co-production *Soy Cuba* (I Am Cuba, 1964) by Mikhail Kalatozov. In each of these films, the represented urban space –buildings and whole neighbourhoods – acquires a symbolic dimension, reflecting the discourses associated with the city at the time when they were shot. Within many of these films the urban spaces represented acquired an overstated significance, with their presence, absence or construction as visual metonymies for social change and national identity. I have drawn comparisons among them, placing each space, including those who inhabit them, within these discourses. I have focused on how cinematography represents the significance of the high-rise modern building within the history of the city, alongside the meanings associated with the presence of the slum and its later disappearance after the 1959 events. In both cases, questions of spatial divisions according to race and class are central to understanding the type of urban discourses being deployed in these films.

The cinematographic recreations of Havana's urbanity and architectural spacing have normally been charged with a very specific symbolism. In much of the cinematography that preceded the 1959 revolution, whether Cuban or not, this symbolism was associated with those aspects of the city's visuality that linked the mythologies surrounding the Cuban nation with those in the United States. As I explained in the preceding chapter, the constant visual references to the Capitolio and the National Hotel as symbols of the city in many Cuban and non-Cuban films are the most direct examples of this equation between both national projects. However, Cuba lacked a proper national cinema, and was, therefore, too

dependent on the greater expertise and economic prowess of Mexican and North American institutions. It was also over-dependent, probably due to its economic advantages, on the aesthetic solutions of mainstream Hollywood[326]. These two factors might explain on their own the visual national parities in cinema, which were more a result of the specificity of the medium than of the cultural realities of the island. The content of this chapter will focus mainly on post-1959 productions, where the tensions between the different cultural traditions surfaced during those first years of ideological confusion and negotiation.

Any post-1959 film made in Cuba, particularly during the first fifteen years of the revolution, responded to a greater or lesser degree to the social and political conflicts the revolution had unleashed. After 1959, the new government made the development of a national cinema one of its priorities, founding in 1959 the Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Arts and Industry) under the direction of Alfredo Guevara. As Michael Chanan and many others have already discussed, the creation of the ICAIC became crucial to the ideological objectives of those now in power[327]. The 1959 law that allowed for the creation of the ICAIC stated that cinema was: 'el más poderoso y sugestivo medio de expresión artística, y el más directo y extendido vehículo de educación y popularización de las ideas' [*The most powerful and suggestive medium of artistic expression, and the most direct and extended vehicle for the teaching and popularisation of ideas*]. Many of the Cuban filmmakers involved with the ICAIC since its founding were members of or had ideological sympathies with the PCC (Communist Party of Cuba), such as Alfredo Guevara himself and the two more important filmmakers from this period, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa[328]. However, the ideas that the new cinema was supposed to popularise were at the time still being negotiated. The socialist character of the 1959 Revolution was not finally established until after the ICAIC had already initiated its activities. What seemed to be unanimously accepted was the nationalist character of the Revolution[329]. This meant that the development of a national filmography had to involve not only economic and political independence, but also cultural independence from the United States, including the overwhelming influence that the cinema coming from the north had on the film aesthetics deployed until then. However, most of those filmmakers, now given prominance in the island's productions and so responsible for what a national cinema should look like, were also aesthetically and ideologically influenced by post-Second War European avant-garde

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and experimental cinemas, particularly Italian neo-realism, but also the recently named French New Wave[330]. The Cuban films I will analyse in this chapter owed more to the influence of the latter than to the post-war Italian filmography[331]. First of all, because of their direct involvement with the social changes occurring in the island, they were more concerned with denouncing and 'explaining' reality (filtered by the Marxist ideology of those who made them) rather than with just its direct representation. Secondly, because the development of a national filmography required breaking with the aesthetic conventions coming from Hollywood[332], also a clear concern of those filmmakers traditionally associated with the New Wave[333]. However, what they took from the neo-realists was the unmediated cinematographic take of the city's streets, a strategy that *cinema verité* had previously borrowed from documentary filmmaking of earlier cinematographic avant-gardes, such as in Dziga Vertov's *The Man With the Movie Camera* (1929) or Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (1928) and others. In *Memorias del subdesarrollo* and *De Cierta Manera*, Havana becomes recognisable for the first time not thanks to its monumental architecture, the Capitolio or the National Hotel, or the more 'americanised' version of the spectacles at its most prestigious clubs and cabarets. Instead, it is now defined by other spaces, until then rarely represented in film, embodying the differences and relations between the different groups inhabiting Havana at the time. These differences were established according to divisions regarding class, ethnicity and gender, with the first category, class, as the catalyst for the other two. This first cinema[334] and its take on the city was a cinema of 'reaction', more concerned with representing a reality in the process of changing. In the eyes of those now producing cinema in Cuba, this process refers to the transformation of a 'capitalist' city into a 'socialist' one, and the conflicts such a transformation would create[335]. In *Memorias ...* and *De Cierta Manera*, the relations between the characters and the spaces they occupy are symbiotic: characters do not only define the spaces where they live, they are a product of those spaces, they are defined by them and are also forced to transform with them. In the case of *Memorias ...* the lead character is a member of the wealthy groups in the city, inhabiting one of the luxury flats at a recently built high-rise tower, from which he enjoys a privileged view over Havana. In *De Cierta Manera*, Mario is a factory worker, born and raised in one of the slums surrounding the city, and now living in one of the new blocks of social housing, built after the demolition of Havana's slums by the new authorities.

The establishment of dichotomies between the old city and the new 'American' city discussed in the third chapter fitted appropriately within this new attempt at representing Havana's differentiated spaces as containers of conflicting ideologies. These dichotomies were played out to a higher degree of symbolisation by the Georgian-born filmmaker Mikhail Kalatozov and the director of photography, the Russian Sergei Urusevsky, when shooting the Havana sequences in *Soy Cuba* (1964)[336]. This film was a Cuban and Soviet co-production, though it was in its totality financed by the Soviet Union after Cuba stopped diplomatic relations and trading with the United States and aligned itself with the Soviet Block[337]. It is exemplary of the polarised ideologies produced by the political realities of the Cold War and as such it reached a level of oversimplification now seen as exaggerated and extremely propagandistic. Mikhail Kalatozov was at the time one of the best-known Soviet filmmakers thanks to the earlier success of his other feature film, *The Cranes Are Flying* from 1957. The script of *Soy Cuba* was co-written by Russian Eugenio Eustushenko and the Cuban Enrique Pineda Barnett and it consists of four different short stories, set in pre-revolutionary Cuba: the first and third entirely based in Havana and the other two in the island's impoverished rural areas. The film's ideological purposes were initially to represent the acute contrasts between Cuban rural poverty and the wealth of an 'americanized' Havana. As I describe in the following chapter, this contrast became a central part of the post-1959 historical re-writing of the island's past[338] and as such was literally represented by Kalatozov. The film's initial sequence consists of three-minute aerial panning shots that take the spectator from the hardships and extreme poverty of a small village - where people live in self-made huts and appear to have nothing - to the tops of one of the luxury hotels along Havana's Malecón - the Capri - with wealthy American tourists relaxing, drinking and sunbathing by the swimming pool (See DVD: *Soy Cuba:* opening sequence). This sequence starts off with the close up of a woman's body wearing a swimming costume. She is taking part in a beauty contest, while tourists sit and chat, indifferent to the world dramatically exposed at the beginning of the film. The image of a woman's body being displayed as an object of consumption serves to introduce the thematic of this first narration: the story of an Afro-Cuban woman, Maria, who lives in one of Havana's slums and frequents the hotels' clubs and cabarets as a sex worker. However, Urusevsky's aesthetic recreations of the city's visuality compensated for the script's extreme ideological simplifications. First of all, Urusevsky's photography exploited Havana's extreme chiaroscuros produced by the intense luminosity in the island and an

architecture adapted to hot climates. Secondly, the contrast between the two cities is formally played out through Urusevsky's stylised shots. Aesthetically, Urusevsky chose to use a long-take that follows the architectonic form – the camera draws horizontal and vertical lines, allowing the spectator an unusual spatial experience, a cinematographic recreation of the architectonic form[339]. In the background stands the Focsa building, as a formal and ideological visual equation with the Capri.

The elaborated formalism in this whole sequence, with the camera finally submerging into the swimming pool, pairs with the final sequence in the third story (See DVD: *Soy Cuba: student funeral*). Urusevsky used the same strategy when recreating the funeral of a student murdered by the police in Havana. The student was a member of the underground groups operating in the city in support of the guerrillas fighting the army in Sierra Maestra. This time the chosen setting is Central Havana, where the architecture is primarily of colonial resonance: low rise, craftsmanship and ornament, and its inhabitants are from the middle and lower social groups, more characteristic of the old parts of the city[340]. Again, Urusevsky uses a long-take, using a sophisticated system of pulleys to hang the camera in order to complete the take without interruptions[341]. The camera first follows the coffin, pausing to enter one of the old buildings where there is a cigar factory. Workers at the factory get hold of a Cuban flag. The camera follows one of the workers who displays the flag through a window. The use of a wide-angle lens helps to record in its entirety the specificity of the old architecture, while we can still see the high-rise buildings of the 'American' city in the background. The Cuban flag is finally laid on the coffin carrying the student's body, portraying his death as a patriotic sacrifice. Whilst in the first story, the architecture of the hotel is represented as foreign to the city, as foreign as its occupiers, in the funeral sequence old architecture and nationhood are equated.

Soy Cuba represented a post-1959 narration of Havana's immediate past and its inevitable destruction. Before shooting this film, Kalatozov and Urusevsky were shown around Havana by Enrique Pineda Barnet, a Cuban filmmaker and scripwriter deeply committed to the ideology and objectives of the new government. They toured the city in an American black Cadillac, at the time a sign of the recently dismantled economic control and cultural dominance of the United States and a sign of wealth and economic status[342]. Pineda Barnet wrote an article in 1962, describing this trip around Havana with both Kalatozov and

Urusevsky. In tune with the post-1959 discourses on the city by the new authorities, Pineda Barnet took them to the most infamous slum from the 1950s, Las Yaguas, then about to be destroyed and replaced by social housing:

> Por fin el Cadillac negro entró en Las Yaguas. Por primera vez posiblemente un Cadillac cola de peto tropezaba en las furnias del deprimente barrio de indigencia. La gente que quedaba en Las Yaguas nos contaban como ya se había derruido el barrio similar en 'La Manzana de Gómez' en Santiago de Cuba, y como ya estaba casi terminado el Nuevo barrio de construcciones confortables para los habitantes que quedaban en Las Yaguas...[343]

> [*At last the black Cadillac went into Las Yaguas. Possibly for the first time a cola de peto Cadillac would bump into the dirty puddles of the depressing and poor neighbourhood. The people left in Las Yaguas told us that a similar neighbourhood had already been destroyed in 'Manzana de Gómez' in Santiago de Cuba, and how the new neighbourhood of comfortable constructions was nearly finished for the inhabitants of Las Yaguas...*]

After this experience, Kalatozov decided to recreate in a set the space of Las Yaguas at the end of the first narration in *Soy Cuba*, when Maria takes her client, a North American man, to her house in the slum (See DVD: *Soy Cuba:* Las Yaguas). In order to produce the needed dramatic effect that would fit the ideological needs of the new narrations of the city, he situated the figure of the tourist within Las Yaguas, a space represented as completely 'foreign' to him. The labyrinthine effect of the final sequence in this third narration, where the tourist is unable to find his way out of the slum and is in fear of its inhabitants, worked as a spatial metaphor for the chaotic effects of the kind of capitalist urban growth typical at the time in most Latin American cities. The slum becomes the image of urban chaos and violence, an image still commonly used in most contemporary representations of Latin American cities[344]. At the end of this sequence, Kalatozov featured close ups of some of the inhabitants of Las Yaguas, who most probably were extras recruited among poor Afro-Cubans in Havana[345]. While standing in line and closely staring at the camera, the people of Las Yaguas do not speak or act. Close-ups of their faces and their grave expressions added to the general atmosphere of fear and angst of the whole sequence.

The old city, the new 'American' city and the slum are in this film nearly parodies of themselves, dramatised to an extreme that would render this film ineffective to the purposes of the new regime[346]. Havana's inhabitants could not identify with the extreme

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simplifications played out by *Soy Cuba*, as they had been direct witnesses and actors in what the film was trying to describe. In fact, it was Urusevsky who said the intention had always been more poetic than descriptive, hence the use of infra-red material[347]. At the end, the film was left as an aesthetic exercise more than a 'realist' take on events. However, what I understand to be the most relevant aspect of this film is the play between the architectonic form and the cinematography, which recreated visually the dialogue and conflicts between the different cultural traditions in the city.

In *De Cierta Manera* (1974), Sara Gómez's only fictional film, the image of Las Yaguas neighbourhood also plays a symbolic role. At the time this film was made, the slum of Las Yaguas had already been demolished and its inhabitants re-housed in recently built social housing schemes. This film relates the relationship between Mario, an Afro-Cuban born in Las Yaguas, and Yolanda, an Euro-Cuban from a middle-class background, who works as a teacher in a school where most children come from marginal families. The social issue at stake in *De Cierta Manera* was the question of gender equality, a poignant theme in a country ridden by gender-based differences. In the film's argument it was implicit that the elimination of poverty and social marginality would be crucial in the battle against gender inequalities. Mario's 'machismo' is in part explained as a consequence of his having grown up in Las Yaguas. Gómez inserted documentary footage of the now disappeared slum in the sequence when Mario and Yolanda describe to each other their backgrounds (See DVD: *De cierta manera:* Las Yaguas). Gómez went to the national film archives and searched for documentary footage of Las Yaguas prior to its demolition. The footage she decided to include within the narration consisted of a panorama showing the dimensions of the slum, with the new high-rise buildings appearing in the background. The sequence is set in the same location from which the documentary record had been previously shot. By 1973, Las Yaguas had already been replaced by a green recreational area empty of housing. The way in which this sequence was edited reveals a clear intentionality. She inserted the documentary footage while Mario, in voice-over, describes his earlier life in Las Yaguas; then she inserted another panorama, this time with the camera moving from right to left, showing the same area now empty of any housing. By inserting the second panorama right at the end of the first one, the spectator was made to witness the vanishing of Las Yaguas, as if the camera itself was erasing the slum. Prior to this film, Gómez had been a prolific

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documentary filmaker and was well acquainted with the allegorical possibilities of past documentary footage within a narration.

This film, as with practically every other film shot after the 1959 political events, was ideologically entangled with the revolutionary rhetoric coming from the political and intellectual leadership. Therefore, it was consistent with the utopianism animating the social and cultural life of Cuba at the time, which was mainly based on the belief that a completely new society could be created through radical transformations of people's life conditions and individual conscience through 'education'[348]. Apart from narrating the construction of a new type of society and a new type of citizen, this film was also seen as contributing to the 'education' of this new citizen, hence the didactic tone of the script. The insertion of documentary footage had the intention of recording a turning point in the history of the city: the disappearance of the slum of Las Yaguas, and with it, the 'backwardness' of its people. Those in the audience who recognised the significance of this footage, were immersed in a process of historical realisation: the realisation that what had disappeared, Las Yaguas, had been a sign of the city, one of its main landmarks, at least within the new narrations on the city now being promoted by the also new authorities.

However, Las Yaguas was associated with more than just poverty and marginality. It was also a space primarily inhabited by poor Afro-Cubans. As an Afro-Cuban herself, Gómez was interested in the cultural conflicts between Afro-Cuban traditions and the social and cultural ambitions of the new regime, to which she was supposedly ideologically committed. She was among the Afro-Cuban intellectuals who were ostracised at the World Cultural Congress, celebrated in Havana in January 1968, for their attempt to discuss the need for an Afro-Cuban studies curriculum. Apart from Sara Gómez, this group also consisted of the novelist Esteban Cárdenas, historians Walterio Carbonell and Pedro Deschamps Chapeauz, folklorist Rogelio Martinez Furé, poet Nancy Morejón, and ethnologists Alberto Pedro and Serafin 'Tato' Quiñones[349]. According to Carlos Moore's account, they were prevented from attending the Congress by the Minister of Education Jose Llanusa Gobel as soon as he learnt of their intentions. Historian Walterio Carbonell was even sent to a labor camp prison for resisting this decision. Again in Moore's version of events, the Afro-Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén[350] was the only Afro-Cuban intellectual in the Cuban delegation to the Congress, as he was not only an active member of the PCC, but

also a clear supporter of the theories of *mestizaje* when discussing the formation of Cuba as a nation[351]. The inhabitants of Las Yaguas were mainly blacks from the eastern parts of the country who had fled from extreme poverty looking also to benefit from the city's economic boom during the 1950s. In Havana there has always been an important number of middle class professional Afro-Cubans from a much wealthier backgrounds than those living in Las Yaguas[352]. However, the birth and rapid growth of such a huge slum at its periphery was a reminder of the flaws in Cuban national narrations. After 1959, the existence of such 'foreign' spaces as Las Yaguas, with its parallel existence on the margins of economic growth and national pride, contradicted the ideological equation of nation and socialism.

The relations between urban space and race in Havana were completely absent from Cuban cinematography prior to 1959. The 1939 film *Estampas Habaneras* is an exception, in which these relations are shown as straightforward physical segregation. The cinematographic strategy used in *Estampas* to represent the spatial division between blacks and whites is mainly based on the simplistic use of visual metonymies, such as windows and doors. The characters look through a window or stand by a door without entering the space occupied by Afro-Cubans (See DVD: *Estampas Habaneras:* representations of Afro-Cubans). Even though they are shown as part of the Cuban nation, they do not share the same space as the whites. There is the assumption that trespass, entering the space of the other, is out of the question.

The space occupied by the Afro-Cubans in *Estampas Habaneras* is ambivalent, its location in the city is unclear. Afro-Cubans seem to live and meet just next door to the white middle classes in old Havana, who would only need to peep through a window to observe them. This illusion of proximity – used only to facilitate the continuity of the narration – was necessary in order to ensure that Afro-Cubans were seen within Cuban national narrations, when explained to the recently arrived immigrants (the Spaniard and the Mexican). However, these spatial divisions between groups show the flaws at the time in the mythologies of the Cuban national project: Afro-Cubans could not be left out, but their different presence as occupying a separated space where they ended up developing a culture of their own meant that, in practice, there was a greater identification and integration between white Cubans and the recently arrived Spanish immigrants. By the year

in which *Estampas* was shot, white Cubans, particularly in Havana where they were predominant, needed to differentiate themselves culturally from the old metropolis, enough so that the myth of a unified Cuban nation could be sustained without the still very present ghost of the Haitian Revolution[353]. These cultural tensions and negotiations created what are now seen as political absurdities. For example, in 1934, the Communist Party of Cuba, in the Fourth Congress of the Confederación Nacional Obrera [CNO, Proletarian National Confederation], argued for a territorial partition of the country according to racial criteria: that is, the western provinces, including Havana, for the whites, and the eastern provinces, with Santiago as its capital, for the blacks. It was seen as a progressive attempt to give black Cubans 'their independence', freeing them from discrimination at the hands of white Cubans. This separatist resolution was termed as Autodeterminación Nacional [*National Self-determination*][354].

Nearly forty years later, both groups were still represented as occupying separated spaces. Michael Chanan has also written on *De Cierta Manera* in spatial and racial terms:

> The setting of the film is Mario's beat. In 1961, in one of the Revolution's first major projects to tackle the country's enormous housing problem, five new neighbourhoods were built for people living in Las Yaguas, a Havana slum that was one of the worst. The new neighbourhoods were constructed by the same people who were to live in them, who belonged to the dominantly black lumpen classes. One of these districts is Miraflores, where our two protagonists live and work.
>
> [...]
>
> These institutional settings are important elements in the sociospatial discourse of the film – the way the film maps the social relationships it portrays onto the spaces, physical and institutional, in which they occur: the factory, the school, the street, the home, and other places where the film unfolds. Each location corresponds to a different kind of social encounter.. [...]. The sociospatial discourse of a conventional narrative movie, though it always exists [...] is subordinate to the designs of the plot, and location is a coloring rather part of the film's very fabric. But not here. Just as Miraflores, the district, is almost a character in the film in its own right, so too the individual locations contribute their own character to the dialectic of action and interaction.[355]

As Michael Chanan describes, Las Yaguas was associated and particularly visually related, to the 'black lumpen classes', even though a few Euro-Cubans also lived there. Such association was also made by Karatozov in *Soy Cuba* and particularly by Sara Gómez in *De*

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Cierta Manera. The removal of Las Yaguas after 1959 was a symbolic act charged with layers of meanings: it not only came to represent the end of extreme poverty and marginalisation, it was also understood as the end of one of the most representative exponents of the racial divisions within Cuba, and particularly, within Havana.

However, the erasure of Las Yaguas in *De Cierta Manera*, visually encoded as a movement of the camera, meant something else. For the ideologues of the 1959 revolution, the persistence of certain Afro-Cuban religious rituals and traditions represented a threat to the ambitions of a socialist revolution[356]. Sara Gómez also inserted in the fictional narration documentary film of an Abakuá ceremony of initiation (See DVD: *De cierta manera:* Abakuá ceremony). As a male-only association, the Abakuás' presence within the film was a comment on the deep roots of Cuban machismo. This is made explicit in the voice over narration, which relates the problem of sexism and criminality in Cuba to the existence of these particular Afro-Cuban societies, forgetting, in part, the sexism also prominent among Euro-Cubans:

> La Sociedad Secreta Abakuá. Hecho cultural que sintetiza las aspiraciones sociales, normas y valores del machismo en el pensamiento tradicional de la sociedad cubana, trascendiendo los limites del rito y del mito. Puede decirse que su naturaleza de sociedad secreta tradicional y excluyente la sitúan contraria al progreso e incapaz de insertarse dentro de las necesidades de la vida moderna. Y para nosotros, dentro de nuestra situación especifica de construcción socialista va a representar una fuente de marginalidad y que promueve un código de relaciones sociales paralelas, fuente de resistencia y punto de endurecimiento y rechazo a la integración social, así como último reducto de la delincuencia como consecuencia del origen marginal de sus integrantes.[357]

> [*The Secret Society Abakuá. A cultural fact that synthesises the social aspirations, norms and values of sexism in Cuban society's traditional thought, transcending the limits set by rites and myths. It could be said that its nature as a secret, traditional and separated society makes it contrary to progress and unable to insert itself among modern life needs. In our opinion, within our specific situation in the construction of socialism, it represents a source of marginality that encourages a code of parallel social relations, source of resistance and hardening point, and rejection of the principles of social integration, as well as a nest for criminality due to the marginal origins of its members.*]

In an act of cinematographic trickery, Afro-Cubans and their cultural specificities were visually equated with the Las Yaguas neighbourhood, the vision of an underdeveloped city,

riddled with marginality, superstition and ignorance. This association between the Abakuás and the lumpenproletariat (in Marxist terminology[358]) as an outcast group formed by the beggar, the criminal, the sex worker, and any other type at the margins of the social, was a continuation of past perceptions[359]. Within the context of a self-defined socialist revolution, calls for equity between blacks and whites also meant for many a renunciation of difference.

Sara Gómez's position in this issue, as an Afro-Cuban woman divided along a racial, cultural, class and gender axis, could have only been ambivalent. Even though she was a middleclass Afro-Cuban intellectual, able to position herself between the two worlds - the Afro-Cuban and the Euro-Cuban - her concerns at the time were as much about racial differences as they were about gender equality in Cuba[360]. It is now difficult to determine how much of this final interpretation was her work and how much was added after her death in 1973 from an asthma attack prior to the film's completion[361]. However, the insertion of documentary footage of an Abakuá ceremony in order to denounce sexism among Afro-Cubans had autobiographical resonances. While planning for this film, Gómez had related to Tomás González Pérez, who co-wrote the film's script, her sentimental relation with a member of the Abakuá and her difficulties in dealing with the association's set of taboos regarding gender differences[362]. *De Cierta Manera* was also an account of her experiences as a liberal Afro-Cuban woman who knew the fight against racism could not be dissociated from that against sexism. In the film, the character of Mario is partly condemned in order to be redeemed[363], he is presented as a product of his social and cultural circumstances, a product of 'Las Yaguas'. After the post-1959 slum clearances, those living in them were housed in social projects under the aesthetic premises of modernism, following the pattern of European (Eastern and Western) and North American cities. Some of the post-1950 cinematography in Cuba reflected this fact, as in *Una Mujer, Un Hombre y Una Ciudad* (1978). It was also photographically recorded by Ernesto Fernández who published a book showing images of Las Yaguas before its demolition and of its inhabitants building their new neighbourhood[364] [Illustration 36]. Once the slum was removed and its inhabitants re-housed in modern designed buildings, they were expected to stop being 'foreign' to the city and include themselves in the processes of change triggered by the 1959 Revolution - from reactionary 'lumpen' to revolutionary 'workers'; and from Afro-Cubans to simply Cubans.

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Illustration 36. Ernesto Fernández's photographic portrait of one of Las Yaguas inhabitants building the new housing. Published in the book *Unos y Otros* (1978)

In 1967, Sara Gómez had assisted Tomás Gutiérrez Alea in the realisation of his film *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968). As described, the main character in this film, Sergio, is also explained according to his positioning in the city: a member of the white upper classes occupying a flat in the recently built Focsa. The Cuban viewer could not miss the symbolic relevance of this building in the film. The ownership of a flat in this building was automatically a sign of the social background of the character. Without any need to narrate the main character's individual history, the viewer at the time immediately recognised their position within the revolutionary process. In Francis F. Coppola and Mario Puzo's cinematographic version of the *Godfather* (1974), the high-rise American building plays a similar function. The meetings of the mafia boss Raymond Roth with the different representatives of the North American *families*, are set on the terrace of a hotel room looking down onto the city and the sea (See DVD: *The Godfather II*: meeting at the top of hotel in Havana). Following an old cinematographic tradition[365], Coppola made use of a visual trope equating high viewpoint with possession and power. There was also an attempt to give this sequence historical plausibility - Lansky occupied a room on the 8th floor at the

National Hotel for a long period and was also the main investor at the Riviera Hotel[366]. However, this sequence was more importantly a comment on the impact the new high-rise buildings had on Havana citizens' self-perception. Those who enjoyed privileged access to the top of the building and therefore could visually behold the city as a whole were also the ones destined to possess it and transform it at will. In *Memorias ...*, Sergio goes through a process of dispossession whereby his previous position of privileged viewing and ownership of the city becomes a sign of his isolation. As with Mario, Sergio is represented as a product of his position within the urban whole, member of a social group now presumed extinct: the bourgeois intellectual.

As explained in chapter III, the Focsa had been designed at the beginning of the 1950s to house a newly enriched class, closely associated with North American investments in the city. Roberto Segre described this building using a class-based terminology, indicating that its inhabitants were those who had been chosen to fulfil the real independence of the Cuban nation, now silently retreating into the comforts of the 'American way of life':

> El edificio 'Focsa' – 400 apartamentos y 28 pisos de altura – construido entre 1954 y 1956 por los arquitectos Ernesto Gómez Sampera y Martín Domínguez y el ingeniero Bartolomé Bestard, se destaca por conformar el mayor conjunto de Cuba y, en su época, uno de los mayores de América Latina. [...], el 'Focsa' es el primer ejemplo en La Habana de 'la ciudad dentro de la ciudad', es decir, de una isla de hábitat burgués autosuficiente y equipada con todos los servicios sociales. El aislamiento individual de las grandes mansiones de la década del 20, se convierte ahora en un aislamiento colectivo que elude la trama urbana como ámbito de vida: las contradicciones antagónicas están próximas a estallar y la burguesía se refugia en su propio hábitat.[367]

> [*The 'Focsa' building – 400 apartments and 28 floors high – built between 1954 and 1956 by the architects Ernesto Gómez Sampera and Martín Domínguez and the engineer Bartolomé Bestard, stands out as the biggest housing group in Cuba and, at the time, one of the biggest in Latin America. [...], the 'Focsa' is the first example in Havana of the 'city within the city', an island of bourgeois habitat, self-sufficient and equipped with all the social services. The isolation of the subject in the big mansions of the twenties, turns into a collective isolation which avoids the urban net as its life environment: antagonist contradictions were about to explode and the bourgeoisie searched for refuge in its own habitat.*]

The film *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) visually recreates the meanings this building had within Havana's urban context. The film was based on a short novel by Edmundo

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Desnoes, first published in 1967 under the title *Memorias inconsolables* (Inconsolable Memories) and later re-titled after the film[368]. It was an attempt to define the ideological position of the Cuban intellectual after the 1959 events. In its cinematographic version, this story describes the isolation of those who decided to become mere spectators to the revolutionary processes and the architectural features of the Focsa - a building designed for self-sufficiency - worked as the appropriate visual metaphor for such social isolation.

Although this film was shot in 1968 it was set in the years 1961 and 1962, two years of transcendent importance in the history of post-1959 Cuba. It was when the divisions between those who agreed with the communist turn that the new government had taken and those who were against it reached a deadlock. Therefore, it was the year of mass migration of mostly wealthy families to the United States and other geographical areas – a fact represented by the first sequence in the film, where Sergio appears to be saying goodbye to his family at the airport (See DVD: *Memorias del subdesarrollo*: airport sequence). For the purposes of this analysis, it was also an important year in the transformation of Havana as it was when radical urban reforms were carried out, which meant all tenants suddenly became owners of the houses they inhabited, and the outlawing of any house ownership for the sole purpose of renting[369]. Finally, it was also the year of the failed invasion attempt at the Bay of Pigs, culminating with the missile crises and the threat of nuclear attack by the United States[370]. All these three historical events are interconnected in this film, giving to this particular historical period in the city an apocalyptical tone.

To emphasise the panoptical effect, Gutiérrez Alea decided to incorporate a pair of binoculars, used by Sergio to 'spy' closely on the city from the terrace of his top flat (See DVD: *Memorias del subdesarrollo*: binocular sequence). The binocular shape on the screen seems to metaphorise his level of commitment to the political processes going on in the city at the time, as if we were the ones looking through the binoculars. The camera focuses first on two lovers on the rooftop of a hotel, then the ships in Havana Harbour, then to a group of military personnel involved in defence preparations, to the statue commemorating the Maine with the eagle at its top missing[371] and, finally, to a billboard with the slogan: 'This great humanity has said enough and has started to move forward', a quote from the Second Declaration of Havana of 1962. The privilege of observation given by unique access to the roof of the Focsa works as a sign of the 'idle' class. The power that such a privilege gives

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to the main character corresponds to the knowledge of being able to observe the city, by being outside and beyond it, from a restricted access area. The film's use of binocular vision emphasises this equation between positioning and power: to such 'positioning of power' corresponds the privilege of one kind of knowledge. However, Gutiérrez Alea made of such knowledge a handicap, a privileged position of observation is equated with isolation. Gutiérrez Alea presents the main character's new social isolation as a different kind of ignorance: he cannot possess the knowledge gained from other observational positions still within the urban whole but foreign to him. As related by Gutiérrez Alea and Edmundo Desnoes, Sergio, immersed in a new reality, is aware of this handicap, his isolation from that knowledge, and his inability to transcend his own class.

Sergio's flat on the top of the Focsa has a fortress quality. He walks the city and does not recognise it (See DVD: *Memorias del subdesarrollo*: Sergio walks Havana's streets):

> Sergio (*voice over*): "Since *El Encanto*[372] burned down, Havana is like a country town. To think they once called her the Paris of the Caribbean.
> ...
> That's what the tourists and the whores used to call her.
> Now it looks more like a Tegucigalpa of the Caribbean.
> It's not only because there are few good things in the stores. It's also because of the people.
> ...
> What meaning has life for them? What meaning has is for me? But I'm not like them!"

In one of the last sequences of the film, two members of the urban brigades visit him and question him regarding his flat. From this point his sense of safety is shaken[373]. When the main character leaves his flat in order to walk through Havana, not having anything better to do (his idleness again a sign of his class), he is represented as an anachronism in the city. This sequence is translated into the Baudelairian act of walking a city just to satisfy the *flaneur*'s voyeuristic need and, more importantly, his search for a sexual encounter. In this crucial sequence, the combination of his thoughts in voice-over with the documentary footages from the different parts of the city he visits[374] has the purpose of showing him as no longer 'owner' of the city, but a foreigner to it.

In his allusion to the bombing of the department store El Encanto, this sense of foreignness becomes acute. El Encanto was one of the many landmarks that had defined Havana as a first world city. Its disappearance seems to produce in him a final realisation: that his city is becoming a 'third world city', an underdeveloped one. The term *subdesarrollo* (underdevelopment) in the title of this film related to that third world/first world division dominating the post-colonial political debates of the Cold War[375]. However, the cultural turmoil experienced by Havana's inhabitants at the time was not just the simplistic conflict between rich and poor disputing the city's ownership. The character of Sergio is at war as much with his own social group (his 'class') as with those perceived as different to him ("But I'm not like them!").

He represents those from his own social group as vulgarised and decadent due to its tight links with the United States' economic interests in the island. The 'others', the poor and mainly Afro-Cuban, represent a different type of vulgarity. He presents himself within the European tradition, away from the snobbish materialism of the wealthy North American and the ignorance and naivety[376] of the poor classes in Cuba. But what did it mean to belong to the European tradition within the Cuban context? To intellectuals such as Edmundo Desnoes or Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, it meant to insert themselves within the tradition of artistic avant-gardism from Brecht's 'dialectical theatre' in the 1930s and 1940s, to the cinematographic avant-gardes represented at the time by Godard or Antonioni. Such a tradition, as described by Peter Bürger, was characterised as being the 'other' to the cultural hegemony of the modernist tradition, the site where its contradictions would become visible[377]. Like Sergio in *Memorias,* Alea and Desnoes were part of that group of Cuban intellectuals who deeply identified with the European avant-gardes and were critical of what they saw as North American cultural shallowness[378].

In December 1969, Cuban filmmaker Julio García Espinosa published what was then considered Cuban cinema's revolutionary manifesto: *Por un cine imperfecto* (For An Imperfect Cinema)[379]. In this manifesto, García Espinosa defines the role of cinema within the revolutionary process. This role would first of all represent a rejection of the hegemony of the naturalist tradition imposed by Hollywood, which required a technical and stylistic perfection only affordable to the rich nations. *Memorias del subdesarrollo* had been an example of this attempt. In March 1969, a year after this film was released, the Argentinian

Cine Liberación group, published another essay in *Cine Cubano*, theorizing on the new possibilities of cinema outside the dominance of Hollywood aesthetics and ideologies. The authors of this essay, Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino[380], would later extend these theorizations and publish what became known as the Third Cinema manifesto: 'Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World'. No doubt this last manifesto was very influenced by the experience of Cuban cinema until then, including García Espinosa's theorisations in *Por un cine imperfecto*. In Solanas and Getino's manifesto, 'First Cinema' would refer to mainly Hollywood and Hollywood-like productions[381] within and outside the United States; 'Third Cinema' would be equated not with the Third World, but with a cinema defined by the authors as militant or revolutionary, a 'guerrilla cinema'[382], contributing to the emancipation of the poor in the whole world. At the same time, this 'Third Cinema' was compared with the tradition of auteur cinema, a cinema based on the modernist premises founded on the belief in the autonomy of art from life and termed by them as 'Second Cinema'[383].

The cinema produced in Cuba since January 1959 was, according to these authors, an example of Third Cinema[384], while that coming from the Soviet Block would just be a differentiated case of First Cinema, still under the cultural dominance of the western elites[385]. Because the Cuban Revolution was seen by these authors as a process of cultural decolonisation, a national revolution, it was implied that the island's intellectuals and artists, traditionally associated with these western elites, would be the first to launch such decolonisation within themselves. But how could you stop being 'western' and start being something else? And, as with the Afro-Cubans, stop being Euro-Cuban and start being just Cuban? *Memorias* ... was the only film from that period that dealt with such a dilemma even before this 'Third Cinema manifesto' was drafted. Gutiérrez Alea and Desnoes, as with most of those Cuban intellectuals who related their work to the objectives of the Cuban Revolution, found themselves in an ambivalent position. They were torn between rejection of their own class and, at the same time, the impossibility of identification with those actively involved with the social transformations in the city. In the novel, which was written in the first person, there is an eloquent paragraph where French and Cuban medical practices are compared:

Now I remember that obnoxious doctor, the offspring of an old patrician family, already degenerated, whom we met in Paris. Made fun of French medicine, insisted Cuban medicine was much more advanced because it had the latest iron lung and the most stream-lined scalpel manufactured in the United States. He had no idea of all the experience and research and thought that was accumulated in the best French hospitals, even if they lacked the last word in perfumed anaesthetic. They're great diagnosticians. Laura immediately sided with the bastard; she said: 'Everybody in Paris stinks and the bathrooms are older than Methuselah.' I turned to Laura disconcerted (I really admired her shallowness).[386]

In this account, the narrator's contempt for the members of his social class, including his own wife, resides in this perceived polarity between Europe and the United States. In 'the experience and research and thought' of the French hospitals he upholds as proof of French medical superiority there seems to be the implication that such qualities were lost in the economic and cultural expansion of the United States to the rest of the world. Such cultural struggles between the two traditions in Cuba were not a consequence of the political events in January of 1959. They had existed since Spaniards and North Americans fought for control over the island in the nineteenth century[387]. Both Edmundo Desnoes and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea shared with Sergio in *Memorias* ... their condition as intellectuals from the Euro-Cuban middleclasses. The book and later film were also a reflection on their own position and expectations as the 'intellectuals of the Revolution'[388]. Overall they expressed contempt for North American cultural hegemony and admiration for European traditions. They also showed their isolation from an important sector of the Cuban population, the main audience of their cultural productions[389]. The opening sequence to *Memorias del subdesarrollo* might be related to these conflicts (See DVD: *Memorias del subdesarrollo*: opening sequence). They are documentary images of mainly Afro-Cubans dancing to a frenetic rhythm of Afro-Cuban percussion; suddenly, there is the sound of a gun-shot - someone falls and people move away, some of them screaming. The victim is rapidly removed and the music resumes immediately while people keep on dancing as if nothing has happened. There is a close-up of an Afro-Cuban woman looking straight at the camera. The image freezes at this point and we are left with the still of this woman's vacant look towards us. And again, as in *De Cierta Manera,* the concept of 'subdesarrollo' (underdevelopment), as expressed in the film's title, is associated with the Afro-Cubans in Havana.
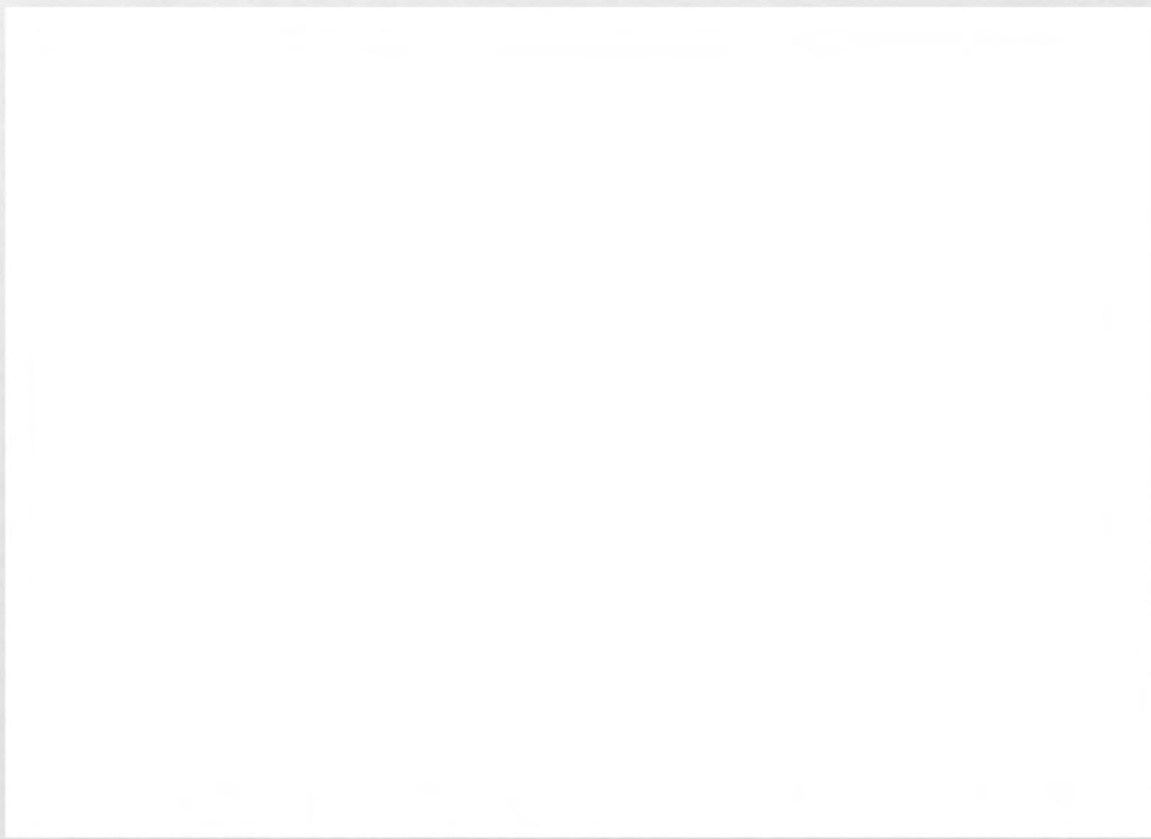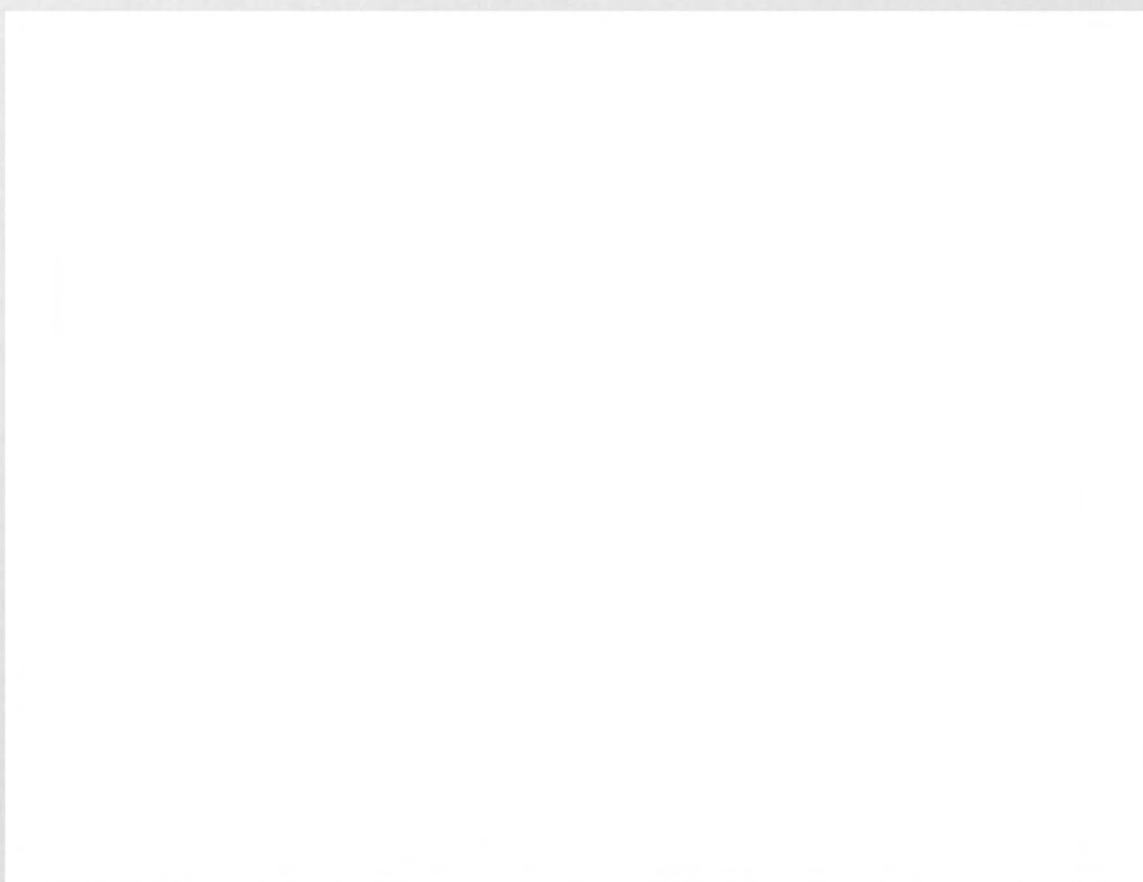
Illustration 37. Film still from *Soy Cuba* (1964) showing the top of the Capri Hotel, with the Focsa and other modern buildings in the background.

Illustration 38. Film still from *Soy Cuba* (1964) showing the architecture of Havana Centro during the student funeral.

Illustrations 39 and 40. Film stills from *Soy Cuba* (1964) showing the North American tourist in Las Yaguas.

Illustration 41. Film still from *De cierta manera* (1974) showing documentary footage of Las Yaguas.
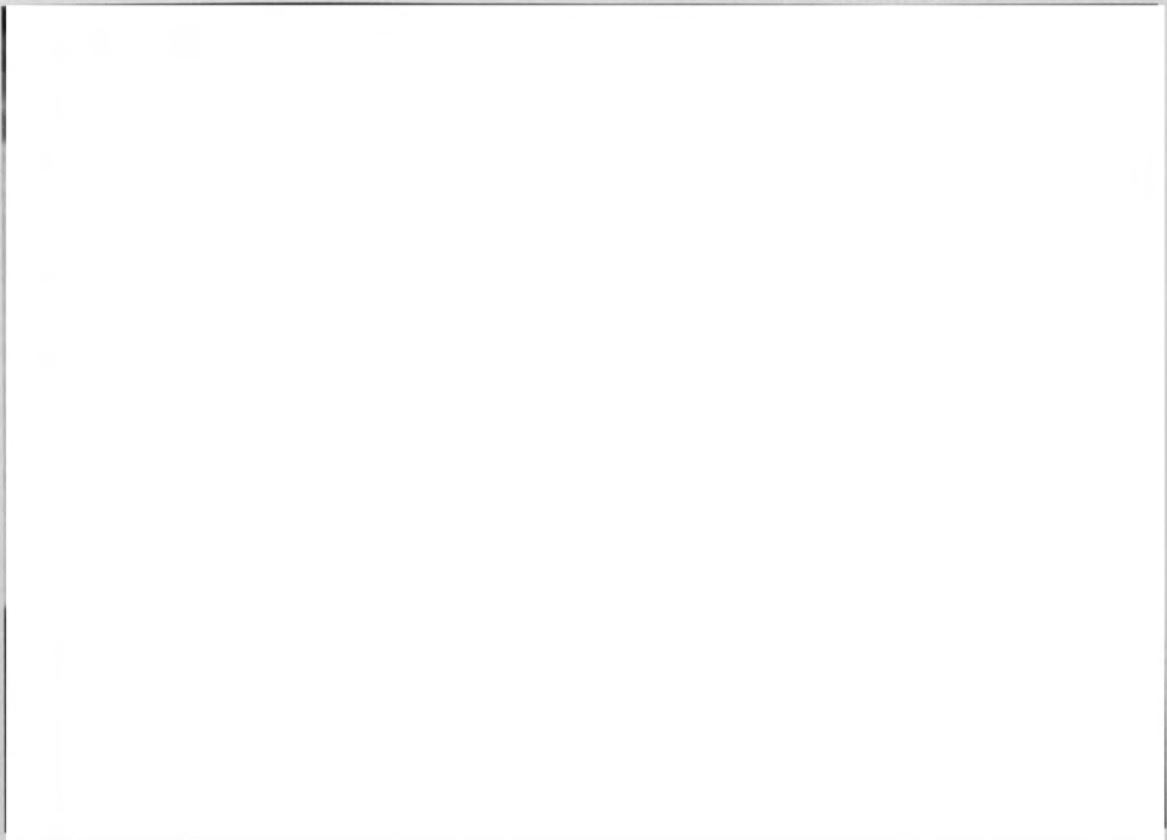
Illustration 42. Film still from *De cierta manera* (1974) showing an Abakuá initiation ceremony.

Illustration 43. Film still from *Estampas habaneras* (1939) showing the use of windows to represent the other space occupied by Afro-Cubans.

Illustration 44. Film still from *Estampas habaneras* (1939) showing a 'sanitised' version of Afro-Cuban dance and music forms.

Illustration 45. Film still from *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) showing Sergio in his flat at the top of the Focsa building, looking at the city through binoculars.

Illustration 46. Film still from *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) showing people in Havana.

Chapter V: <u>Nightlife as Heterotopia: The 'Roaring Fifties'</u>

North American tourists swivelled to the rhythms in huge open-air clubs and in tiny dance halls, where they were vigorously lifted out of a world of musical clichés into one of rhythmic trances. The music gave rise to extraordinary fashions, too; tight-fitting, tropical-colored costumes with ruffled bloused, trailing skirts, scarves, flamboyant headgear, and outlandish jewellery. From these fashions emerged a visual archetype of the Caribbean siren; the graphic embodiment (a logo of sorts) of unbridled passion and amusement.

Vicki Gold Levi, *Cuba Style* (2002)

En parejas preguntas estaba cuando regresé de la memoria histórica a la calle desierta, a la ciudad actual y la noche. Dos patrias tengo yo: La Habana y la noche, ...

[With coupled-questions I was when I returned from the historical memory to the empty street, to the actual city and the night. My two motherlands: Havana and the night, ...]

Guillermo Cabrera Infante, *Ella Cantaba Boleros* (1996)

An hour and a few drinks later (finally he agreed to have a drink with me), the old man gave me an in: he used to work in the theatre.
"Where? At the Martí?"
"No. At the Shanghai."
"Ah. And what did you do there? I've heard it was a strip joint. Is it true that they shut it down as soon as the Revolution began?"
"Yes, but I hadn't been working there long. I was Superman. There was always a poster just for me: 'The one and only Superman, exclusive engagement at this theatre.' Do you know how long my prick was when it was fully erect? Twelve inches. I was a freak. That's how they advertised me: 'A freak of nature. Superman. twelve inches ... thirty centimeters ... one foot of Superprick ...appearing now... Superman!"

Pedro Juan Gutiérrez, *Dirty Havana Trilogy* (1998)

Either the heterotopias have the role of creating a space of illusion that denounces all real space, all real emplacements within which human life is partitioned off, as even more illusory.

Michel Foucault, 'Different Spaces' (1967)

This chapter will discuss one of those binary oppositions, subject to an extensive literature and now an essential part of our modern urban mythologies: the separation and contrast

between the urban diurnal and nocturnal and its social and cultural implications. I shall try to determine the relevance of contemporary imagery of the urban nocturnal in relation to the city of Havana, by drawing from mainly literary and cinematographic documents.

I have brought together visual and textual documents that recreated Havana's nightlife during the 1950s, a decade when the city was being greatly transformed by the United States' entertainment industry. This analysis focuses on the cultural debates relevant at the time (the 1950s and 1960s), looking at them alongside hegemonic Hollywood representations. These cinematographic productions, used in part to promote Havana as an ideal holiday destination, had a decisive impact on future representations of the city during the 1950s, particularly among dissident groups in the United States and more recently inside Cuba. The concept of the city of Havana as a place designed for the use and enjoyment of the North American tourist was first positively encouraged by the Cuban and United States' culture-makers, and later taken up by the new Cuban authorities (after 1959) as a sign of cultural decadence and the Island's economic and political submission to the United States.

In the documents analysed in this chapter, I have searched for those dichotomies associated with the divisions between the diurnal and the nocturnal within the city - such as work versus leisure, or lumpen class versus working class - discussing their role in the construction of a particular image of Havana.

From the 1920s to approximately 1961 and the post-1961 closure of privately owned cabarets and nightclubs in post-revolutionary Havana, the existence of a vibrant and transgressive nightlife was the city's main tourist attraction. Most of the cinematographic representations of Havana from the end of the 1920s to 1959 focused on its nocturnal life, around casinos, cabarets and nightclubs. All night music, drinking and gambling would take place in an atmosphere of total permissiveness - in contradiction to the fact that wealthy Cubans were still intimately associated with the Spanish Catholic Church[390]. This development was partly the result of the United States' 'prohibition period', when the manufacture, sale and transportation of alcoholic beverages was banned within the United States for fourteen years, from 1919 until 1933. Coinciding with the beginning of the 'dry years', the Cuban government passed a casino and tourist bill that effectively made

gambling legal on the island. North American investors starting buying and building casinos and hotels, allowing for the growth of a commercially profitable nightlife and the city became a very important tourist resort, one of the more important urban centres in the whole of Latin America, attracting migrants, not only from the eastern parts of Cuba, but also from other Caribbean islands, Spain and other European areas (mainly European Jewish)[391]. Most of the examples analysed below belong to, or more importantly refer to, the decade of the 1950s, when Havana's accelerated urban growth was directly related to the huge investments made by the American entertainment industry.

The representations of Havana during this period coincided with a broader tendency in cinema – particularly Hollywood cinema - that recreated a unique cinematographic imagery of the urban nocturnal in American cities. What I call 'imagery of the urban nocturnal' refers mainly to a corpus of references, visual or literary, that from the end of the nineteenth century created an image of the city at night associated with the existence of an 'other' life, different to daily life, inhabited by an otherwise invisible class and configured also as a different space. Night spaces and their inhabitants would frequently contradict those dominant during daytime, opening the possibilities for transgression and change under the protection of their, sometimes simulated, clandestine existence. This other nocturnal space was partly constructed through an illusionist trick: artificial light and theatrical architecture. Its 'spectacular' qualities resided in the fascination for the unexpected and transgressive, with the strangeness of its settings and visitors alike as central to the spectacle.

The representation of this day/night divide in modern urban spaces has had, therefore, its most prolific outcome in the cinematographic. For example, in films such as *Blade Runner* (1982), the image of the city is *futurised* by focusing on its nocturnal spectacle: the extreme contamination of artificial light at night, its insistence on the permanence of a clear image through lighting and movement which gives the appearance of another world now occupying the space and replacing the diurnal. However, the most relevant examples belong to what has been classified as the film *noir* genre, particularly those productions during the 1950s, which would focus on the criminal to describe North American urban tensions at the time[392]. Will Straw's article on the subject describes the influence of the Kefauver Committee, created by senator Esten Kefauver at the beginning of the 1950s in order to investigate the relations between municipal corruption and organised crime in

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North American urban centres[393]. Films such as *New Orleans After Dark* (1957), *New York Confidential* (1955), *Las Vegas Shakedown* (1955), *Chicago Syndicate* (1955) and others would give cinematographic form to this modern mythology of the urban nocturnal as the space of the criminal: 'Their narratives, nevertheless, are secondary to their cataloguing of vice, and to the formal organisation of those films as sequences of scenes in night-clubs, gambling dens and along neon-lit streets'[394]. When modern urban spaces are represented at night, there is a common reference to an underground, or parallel, criminal class, surrounded by those whose very existence depends on the activities of the former – and among them, the figure of the 'bohemian'. This particular cinematography played a crucial role in later recreations of Havana during the 1950s, as an urban space under the control of North American organised crime with the collaboration and complacency of the local authorities.

First of all, while it is true that the transgressive in many of the examples I shall be discussing is generally generated by or associated with what is normally referred to as organised crime, I consider it important to dissociate the transgressive from the criminal. The mythologies regarding the association between Havana's nightlife and North American organised crime were promoted by those who took political and cultural power after 1959. The nocturnal transgressive in Havana was sometimes 'law-abiding'. Secondly, this investigation is more concerned with those transgressions that made their way into Havana's representations and, therefore, denoted a kind of transformation or relaxation of the moral codes then dominant in the United States and Cuban societies.

The transgressive must be understood in this analysis as a spatial concept, related to the concept of 'trespass', a movement from one space to another where access is restricted to the 'knowledgeable' few. In films such as *Guys and Dolls* or literary fictions such as *Tres Tristes Tigres*, these transgressions refer to the celebration of a world where class and cultural trespasses were common, as long as they only occurred within the delimited temporal and spatial borders of the nocturnal. Inevitably concepts such as the *flâneur* and the *boheme* - in Baudelaire, and later Walter Benjamin - sprang up, as they refer to figures of resistance to the prescriptions of a particular social and economic system where cultural and class divisions determine lifestyles and individual freedoms[395]. However, as this chapter focuses on a very particular period in the history of Havana's representations, the

relevance of these concepts will be determined by the particular historical context in which they make a return. Challenges to the hegemonies of the national and work-centred morality dominant during the period under consideration in this chapter, appear to various degrees in many of the cultural productions where nightlife in Havana is explained or celebrated.

As noted, those aspects of Cuban cultural expressions highly promoted by the tourist industry during the twenty-five year period between 1933 and 1958 were directly related to Havana's reputation as a city that lived at night. Some of them were commonly and openly referred to, such as the quality and profusion of its musical and dance spectacles. Others were only vaguely suggested, especially with regards to the city's sexual accessibility and permissiveness together with its legal flexibility with regard to the gambling industry.

As early as the 1940s, Meyer Lansky, then an important head of North American organised crime in Florida and the Caribbean, had already opened several casinos and nightclubs as the financier to one of the New York families. More than ten years after Francis Ford Coppola and Mario Puzo recreated Meyer Lansky's presence in Havana in part II of *The Godfather* Trilogy (1974), the Cuban historian Eduardo Cirules published in Cuba the book *El Imperio de La Habana*, an investigative work looking at the presence of the Lansky-clan in the Cuban capital, their investments across the island and their relations with the Cuban political power elites:

> Entre 1937-1940, Lansky se instaló de manera permanente en Cuba, para fundar '
> [...] un verdadero imperio: nueve casinos y seis hoteles [...]>>
>
> [...]
>
> La mafia comenzó a operar en el Hipódromo importantes carreras vinculadas al turismo y las apuestas. Quedaron también controlados los juegos populares; se inauguraron los mas delirantes cabarets, y otros centros de esparcimiento y recreación: restaurantes, negocios de usura, hasta conformar una Habana que empezó a ser conocida como 'El Paris del Caribe'o 'el burdel mas deslumbrante de América'.[396]
>
> *[Between 1937-1940, Lansky moved to Cuba permanently, in order to fund [...] a true empire: nine casinos and six hotels [...]*
>
> *[...]*

At the Hippodrome, the mafia began to operate important races, linked to the tourist industry and the betting industry. Popular games were also put under its control; the most delirious cabarets were inaugurated, and other leisure and entertainment spaces: restaurants, usury businesses, until the creation of a Havana which began to be known as «The Caribbean Paris» or «The most dazzling brothel in the Americas»."

This, Cirules's first published work on the subject, was, among other things, an ideological explanation of the power struggles in Cuba during the years leading up to the December 1958 events[397]. It gives an image of the city as 'owned' by United States' organised crime and therefore foreign to the rest of the Cuban nation. This essay won the 'Casa de Las Americas' prize in 1993, one of the most prestigious literary awards now given in Cuba. It is not the scope of this analysis to determine the historical accuracy of Cirules' version of events. The relevance of his essay resides in its contribution to the dominant recreations of the city's cultural history during the 1950s and the recent glamorisation of this decade in Havana - a glamorisation now being openly fomented as much inside as outside Cuba. The differences in emphasis and focus Cirules gave to his second work on the subject, *La Vida Secreta de Meyer Lansky en La Habana. La Mafia en Cuba*[398], published in 2004, responded in part to a switch from an ideological justification of the 1959 Revolution and the historical events that followed, to a nostalgic representation of the economic and cultural splendour of Havana during the 1950s.

In this second work Cirules mentions the sequences in *The Godfather II* fictitiously set in Havana but shot in Santo Domingo[399]. According to Cirules, Francis Ford Coppola tried to give historical accuracy to his filmic version of Mario Puzo's novel, by referring to the presence and influence of Meyer Lansky in Havana during that period (See DVD: *The Godfather II*: Roth and Corleone conversation). Through the character of Rymons Roth in *The Godfather II* – understood to represent Meyer Lansky in real life - Coppola emphasises the crucial role that Havana played in the then extensive interconnections between organised crime and the political elites in the island, as exemplified by the agreements between Lansky and the government of Fulgencio Batista[400]. During his conversation with Mike Corleone, Roth's words sum up the significance of Cuba, and more particularly Havana, for the future of their businesses:

"Here we are protected. Free to make our profits without Kefauver, the goddamn Justice Department and the FBI. Ninety miles away, in partnership with a friendly government...ninety miles. It's nothing. Just one small step for a man looking to be president of the United States and having the cash to make it possible. Michael... we're bigger than US steel".

However, Roth's most revelatory comments in the film refer to Las Vegas, as a city created by a particular individual, the 'artist' who designed a utopian urban space, dedicated exclusively to those pleasure-seeking activities characterised by society as marginal or plainly 'criminal':

> Roth: "There was this kid I grew up with. He was younger than me. Sort of looked up to me, you know. We did our first work together. Worked our way out of the street. Things were good.
> During prohibition we ran molasses into Canada. Made a fortune. Your father too. As much as anyone, I loved him and trusted him.
> Later on he had an idea, to build a city out of a desert stop-over for G.I.s going to the West Coast.
> That kid's name was Moe Greene and the city he invented was Las Vegas...This was a great man. A man of vision and guts. And there isn't even a plaque, signpost or statue of him in that town."

This characterisation of Las Vegas was introduced as a way of emphasising the ambitious plans that Meyer Lansky and his associates, including the Cuban government, had for the city of Havana. In Coppola's and Cirules' versions, Havana is represented as a dreamed project, a holistic work of art – and in many ways, a revolutionary one. Its revolutionary character resided in the will to challenge and transcend the category of the national and give back to the urban its utopian aspirations. Whether or not Coppola read Lansky's biography, he represents him as a man who had a vision for Havana and who saw himself as the creator of a new urban form. This new urban form was ideally situated off North American shores, allowing for no contradictions to the United States' legal integrity. The social commentator and historian Daniel Bell argued in 1961 that North America was then going through a moral and ideological crisis, exclaiming emphatically that: ' Catholic cultures have rarely imposed such restrictions and have rarely suffered such excesses'[401]. In Bell's account, a growing hedonistic and idle culture was precipitating the development of the entertainment industry, where gambling had a central role. Hedonism and idleness seemed to be the type of urban utopianism emergent during the 1950s in the urban centres of the United States. However, looking at the poor evidence produced by the Kafauver

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Committee, Bell also argued that the phenomenon of 'La Mafia' was more a North American myth than a social reality[402]. A myth created by a society frightened and, at the same time, fascinated by organised crime – in Bell's terms not so organised neither so criminal. Bell linked the growth of such a myth with the end of political ideology in North American society after a period of fanatical anti-communism[403]. Myth or not, such fascination with United States organised crime and the lifestyle it represented would in part explain Havana's own mythologies during the 1950s. As a legal paradise for the North American gambler, it would play that *heterotopic* and compensatory role normally associated with the tourist resort. However, it is the specificity of gambling in Havana that I would like to focus on in order to explain the type of heterotopical function the city was at the time fulfilling.

Walter Benjamin's discussion of the meaning of gambling in its paradoxical relation to work casts a light on this compensatory role played by the entertainment industry in Havana. Benjamin tried to understand the connections between the spread of gambling in urban European centres at the end of the nineteenth century and the simultaneous extension of capitalist principles to every aspect of human life. According to Benjamin,

> Gambling invalidates the standards of experience. It may be due to an obscure sense of this that the 'vulgar appeal to experience' (Kant) has particular currency among gamblers [...] Towards the end of the Second Empire this attitude prevailed. 'On the boulevards it was customary to attribute everything to chance'. This disposition is promoted by betting, which is a device for giving events the character of a shock, detaching them from the context of experience. For the bourgeoisie, even political events were apt to assume the form of occurrences at the gambling table.[404]

In an earlier statement, Benjamin asks: 'Where would one find a more evident contrast than the one between work and gambling?'[405]. However, he continues to explain that this contrast really happens between skilled work and gambling. The fact that unskilled work and gambling did not need to refer to experience in order to carry on denoted their common ground: 'This starting all over again is the regulative idea of the game, as it is of work for wages'[406]. However, it is not only in the repetitive character of unskilled work that Benjamin draws his comparison with the nature of gambling. He found that the whole new market ideology had gambling as its symptomatic expression:

> Speculation on the stock-exchange pushed into the background the forms of gambling that had come down from feudal society. To the phantasmagoria of space, to which the *flâneur* was addicted, there corresponded the phantasmagoria of time, to which the gambler dedicated himself. Gambling transformed time into a narcotic. Lafargue defined gambling as a miniature reproduction of the mysteries of the market-situation.[407]

The fact that North American investments in Havana focused their businesses on the gambling industry was due to the high demand for this kind of activity by the primarily wealthy North American. This was a social group that justified their wealth on the work ethic predominant in the United States. Such an ideology would establish that, in a society of equals, only those who worked hard and continuously would accumulate wealth. The 1950s were prosperous years. They meant for many the realisation of the 'American dream', where wealth accumulation - consumption power - and freedom would come to mean the same thing[408]. The poverty of those living on the 'other side', the Soviet block, was a sign of their enslavement. It was more a matter of what they did not have than what they actually could or could not do, though this was also in the equation: what they could not do was to work hard in order to become rich. However, leisure time was one of the items of consumption then most sought after by those who would work hard today in order to go on holiday tomorrow[409]. It was the image of constant leisure of those already wealthy that would animate such an illusion. This image was eminently cinematographic. The aspiration of those who expected to join the forces of the powerful and rich was to accumulate wealth in order to gamble: either on the stock market or in the casinos. What allowed this paradox to pass unquestioned was the classification of gambling as a leisure activity and, therefore, one mainly exercised at night, when 'proper' work was over[410]. The existence of an urban space dedicated to the leisure of the wealthy, as in the case of Las Vegas and Havana during the 1950s, would mean that such contradictions were constrained within not only temporal, but also spatial borders. And again, the concept of heterotopia and its compensatory function as defined by Foucault seems to hold parallels with what Havana came to represent at the time. But what exactly was the type of compensation allowed within Havana? If we accept Coppola's and Cirule's version of events, by the 1950s, Havana represented the leisure-space that would compensate for the climate not only of legal constraints, but also sexual puritanism in the United States.

If, again according to Cirules and Coppola, Havana during the 1950s was Meyer Lansky's own project, this project was marked by a utopianism based on the modern belief that cities can be contained and defined by setting well-delimited borders. There was also the belief that within these defined borders Havana could become a safe haven for those who shared or needed these principles. In this case, those borders were not only legal, but also cultural, relying on the belief that Cubans had a society based on the same pleasure-seeking principles that attracted the North American tourist to the island: a society dedicated to gambling and sexual pleasure in contradiction to the moral hegemony that the Catholic Church was supposed to hold over its inhabitants. This belief was associated with the now traditional cultural stereotyping that has for decades determined the relations between North Americans and so-called Latin Americans. But, as I will argue later, it too had a great deal to do with the particular stereotyping of Afro-Cubans as much within as outside the island.

Since the 1930s, the fascination with Cuban differences among the North American public focused mainly on their sexual availability and their idleness. These characterisations ran parallel to Hollywood filmic traditions when representing its own black and Hispanic populations[411]. In an interesting twist, the representations of Havana's inhabitants in films such as *Weekend in Havana* (1948) and *Guys and Dolls* (1955), repeated these same stereotypes applied particularly to the Chicanos. In *Weekend in Havana*, the two Cuban characters are alternatively represented by a Portuguese and a Mexican - Carmen Miranda and Cesar Romero. These characterisations obeyed the expectations raised by the growing tourist industry, where the sexual forwardness of 'the natives' in the Latin American tourist resorts would have a central role.

An advertising postcard of the tourist industry in Cuba, illustrates such expectations [Illustration 47]. This promotional postcard from 1955, published by the Cuban Tourist Commission, shows a woman wearing a typical *guajiro* (peasant) outfit, particularly the hat, as a representation of Cuba's rurality. Her features correspond to the stereotype of the Latino woman at the time embodied by Carmen Miranda, who would adopt this role in each of her films[412]. This woman represents many of the club dancers employed by Havana's nightclubs and cabarets. The *guajiro*[413] hat refers to her innocence, associated with people from the countryside, whereas her open shirt promises sexual availability. This combination

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makes the image unthreatening and therefore pleasurable. The slogan: 'So Near and Yet so Foreign' restates this strategy: she is at the same time 'near and far', a process by which the 'native' becomes different enough to fit into the idea of the perfect holiday resort. Imagery like this accommodates the native to the place by removing the extremes of 'too similar' and 'too different'. Cultural stereotypes conveniently played this role by eliminating what might threaten the tourist's pleasurable experience. Within the experience of 'travelling', there is not only the aspiration to transcend your own culture, but also that of transcending your own 'class' – you expect to be given access to that 'otherness' which defines what you are, defines your loyalties and social positioning. However, the tourist industry would normally make sure that this otherness can never remind you of that 'other' left at home. Poverty needs to be romanticised, otherwise a pleasurable experience would suddenly become the hell of seeing and knowing too much – namely the universal character of human suffering.

Illustration 47. Postcard promoting Cuba from 1955.

The tourist industry equated travel with leisure and, in so doing, removed from the experience the possibility of recognising others' suffering as similar to one's own. The tourist resort would be strategically designed to accommodate this concept of the 'not too

similar neither too different' in order to make the experience pleasurable and therefore rentable. In any case, it was important that nothing in this experience would remind the tourist of work.

Nine years after the postcard in Illustration 1 was printed, Francis Ford Coppola decided to show the grim side to this unthreatening image of innocence and sexual openness for which the Cuban capital was so popular during the 1950s. Coppola's representation of the sex industry in Havana during those years coincides again with that described by Eduardo Cirules in his essay *El Imperio de La Habana*. The overall picture shows us that Havana, from the beginning of the 1950s, was a city being built not only for the economic benefit of North American organised crime under the knowledge and complacency of North American and Cuban political and economic power elites. It had also become a conveniently close space for sexual encounters with the racially different, while avoiding the accusatory eye of puritan white America[414].

Both Cirules and Coppola coincide on their interpretation of what Havana represented then: its economic and political elites, concentrated mainly in the entertainment industry, were installing a system of moral depravity at the service of an American rich and idle class. To illustrate this fact, Coppola decided to represent in his film one of the many pornographic clubs then springing up in the city (See DVD: *The Godfather II*: Shanghai Cabaret sequence). It is the sequence when Mike Corleone's brother, Fredo, takes a group of American businessmen and politicians to a pornographic spectacle. This spectacle shows a very popular Havana character, Superman, who would exhibit a bigger than normal penis to his eager audience. Although out of camera, this character is supposed to perform sexually with a woman tied to a pole[415]. The spectacle fascinates Fredo's guests who believe it impossible. Mike Corleone stays in the background as a sign of moral condemnation. As he is the character with whom the spectator identifies, we share his moral position. The atmosphere of moral decadency that characterised Havana's night life is explained to us in a visual flash: the close-up of Fredo's expression of lust and sadism while he observes the spectacle. Within the context of the film, Fredo's weakness is described as his lack of moral integrity, which leads him to betray his own brother. However, there is also a verdict on the city. Spectacles such as the one represented in the film were also common in New York and Las Vegas during the 1950s. The difference resided in the complicity of the Cuban

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government thanks to which Havana's nightlife reached a level of permissiveness even greater than that of the major North American cities. An image such as the one in Illustration 1, where the nation of Cuba is represented as a sexualised female body, was the direct result of this state of affairs[416].

However, Havana's major sin in Cuba was its accelerated development as a North American space of leisure, while the rest of the Cuban nation remained in poverty and backwardness. During those years, North American businesses were promoting in the city what was not morally condonable back home. Although we might consider this a sign of social hypocrisy, we could also understand it as a prelude to the moral relaxation experienced by North American society during the 1960s. It is worth mentioning that the opening of gay bars in cities such as New York and Chicago were in many cases direct investments by organised crime, such as Albert Anastassia's and Carmine Fatico's control of most of the gay bars in Greenwich Village. Although many members of gay circles voiced their discontent with this fact, there is no doubt that organised crime contributed a great deal to the creation of spaces where the gay-rights movement flourished[417]. Years after the Stonewall riots in New York, the police justified their raids on gay bars as a clampdown on mafia businesses. The leaders of the 1959 Revolution used this same reasoning in order to suppress any public expression of sexual freedom outside the traditional heterosexual couple. Seen in this light, the 1959 Revolution meant for many simply a moralist and repressive backlash. Among those who suffered such repression were many of the intellectuals and artists who had openly supported and later worked for the new government. Such moralistic backlash brought about the first major division among those who were supposed to represent the same political and social interests in Cuba[418].

The predominantly moralistic reading of Havana during the 1950s exemplified in both works - *The Godfather II* and Cirules's *El Imperio de La Habana* - correspond to the knowledge that there was then a moral battle being fought between different sectors of North American and Cuban societies. At the core of this battle was that persistent modern ideology that has for nearly two centuries divided and confronted the urban with the rural. The 1950s exemplified the new challenge to the utilitarian and puritan moralities, rooted at the heart of the North American rural groups, a morality based on the work ideology introduced by the first colonisers, where pleasure-seeking activities were conveniently

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repressed or restricted to the private space of the home. The concept of the urban has been the recipient of numerous modern utopias: a work-free society is a persistent one within European and North American traditions. How could the urbanity described by Friedrich Engels in *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* possibly be the recipient of such utopianism? It is in Baudelaire's response, as described by Walter Benjamin, that we find the rural/urban dichotomy deployed as the confrontation between an ethics based on work and another based on pleasure[419]. Further, there is the question of how the dichotomy between work and pleasure was established in the first place. In his seminal work, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, Dean MacCannell understands this division as one established between work and culture:

> Industrial society elevates work of all kinds to an unprecedented level of social importance, using as its technique the rationalization and deculturisation of the workplace. As this new kind of rationalized work got almost everyone into its iron grip, culture did not enter the factories, offices and workshops. The workday world is composed of naked and schematic social relations determined by raw power, a kind of adolescent concern for 'status' and a furtive, slick sensualism all cloaked in moralistic rhetoric. Culture grew and differentiated as never before, escaping the elite groups that had previously monopolized it. It became popular, but it receded ever further from the workday world.[420]

Pleasure and work would apparently only be reconciled in the arts and through artists. The work/pleasure divide as it is now understood was not possible before the modern concept of the artist - the bohemian class - was invented by those already immersed in the urban. It was at the heart of this separation between work and pleasure that the tourist industry found a space in the market with its creation of places dedicated exclusively to leisure activities. The relaxation of moral codes that this operation required, in order to create a clear distinction between work and leisure, made the fact that Havana was not on North American soil a very convenient asset. For the Cubans who did not live in Havana and did not know its complexities or enjoy its pleasures, the city was an unproductive parasite bleeding the rest of the island's population dry. In 1958, when a government air raid against the rebels in the rural town of Sagua, Eastern Cuba, killed several civilians and destroyed numerous houses, a member of the rebel army wrote a message on one of the bombed buildings' walls before fleeing: 'Habana murió en Sagua. De la Columna 17' [*Havana died in Sagua. From the 17ths Column*]. This message was published in the magazine *Bohemia*

the next day, for the Havana's citizens to see [Illustration 48]. Their city was being made responsible for the suffering of others and this message read as a death-threat.

Illustration 48. Photograph of writing on wall left by the guerrillas after the bombing of Sagua. It reads: 'Habana murió in Sagua. De la Columna 17' [*Havana died in Sagua. From the 17th batallion*].
Published in *Bohemia,*año 51, No. 5, Febrero 1, 1959.

Eduardo Cirules' second text is presented as a faithful transcription of his conversations with Sebastián Casiellas, the then chauffeur and companion of Meyer Lansky, during the years when he was already head of organised crime in Havana and Florida. This text, published in Havana in 2004, refers constantly to the city as the 'splendorous Havana' and, particularly, Havana at night: casinos, cabarets, night-clubs and pornographic theatres. His descriptions of this otherness, a pleasure-seeking world of leisure, gambling and permissive sexuality, corresponds to the more discreet image of Havana created by Hollywood between the 1930s and the 1950s.

La Habana ahora se mostraba más que fascinante. Se habían construido avenidas.
Lo que hoy conocemos por la calle Línea y los dos túneles que cruzaban por debajo

del río Almendares y salían a la calle 31 y a esa extensa Quinta Avenida, con flores, con palmas, con árboles, con mucho encanto y esplendor.

En unos cuantos días, disfruté lo que nunca antes había podido hacer. Comencé por visitar los sitios que solo conocía de referencia. Entré como un gran señor en el cabaret Tropicana [...]

La Habana del gatillo alegre había cambiado. Era ahora La Habana del gatillo organizado. De las perseguidoras, de las vigilancias policíacas; de los centros nocturnos por excelencia, las casas de putas más refinadas del Caribe. Una ciudad que, entre luces, imponía su imagen. Una ciudad donde los días se fundían con las noches; y uno tenía la impresión de que la vida comenzaba realmente a las diez de la noche. Una Habana alejada de los barrios marginales.[421]

[*Now Havana would be shown at its most fascinating. Avenues had been built. What today we know as Linea Street and the two tunnels crossing underneath the Almendares River and would exit to 31st Street and the broad Fifth Avenue, with flowers, with palm trees, with its charm and splendour.*

In a few days I enjoyed what I had never been able to. I began by visiting the places I only knew by name. I entered as a great gentleman the Tropicana Cabaret.

The happy-triggered Havana had changed. She was now the Havana of the organised trigger. Of the chasing police cars; of the greatest night centres; the most refined brothels in the Caribbean. A city that, among lights, would impose its own image. A city where the days would melt with the nights; and you would have the feeling of your life commencing really at 10 o'clock at night. A Havana far away from the marginal neighbourhoods.]

This paragraph seems to have been partly authored by Cirules, rather than being a direct transcription of Casiellas's oral account. While Casiellas first alludes to his nostalgia for the wonders of Havana at night, he soon emphasises the separation between this world and the marginality of the poor classes in the city, to which Casiellas was supposed to belong. References to the *barrios marginales* (marginal neighbourhoods) seem to correspond to Cirules' worries regarding the possible reactions to this work by those who considered Havana's nightlife just a sign of social decadence and proof of the city's total submission to North American economic domination. The whole essay reflects this ambiguous approach: mourning for a disappeared 'splendorous' city and moral condemnation of what that city represented. The restoration of once luxury hotels and the need to make the city again a tourist attraction has brought into the city's cultural arena many of those cultural signs from the 1950s long vanished due to the economic measures introduced by the revolutionary

government. Cirules's last essay corresponds to this trend, and its appeal seems to reside in Casielles's supposedly first hand experience with Havana's underworld during those years.

It is unknown how much of this tale can really be attributed to Casiellas and how much of it is a new ideological attempt to interpret Havana during the 1950s under the light of the 1959 Revolution. In any case, the very fact that Cirules decided thirteen years after the publication of *El Imperio de La Habana* to publish Casiellas's direct account seems to conform to a new sensibility not only within the island, but also in the North American and European context. This new sensibility corresponds to the contemporary interest in the cultural shift experienced during the 1950s in the United States and Europe after the post-war economic recuperation. This cultural shift was in part the result of, or at least coincided with, the important weight that the entertainment industry was acquiring during that decade. The growth of available leisure time for the upper and middle classes, together with the moral relaxation after years of puritan McCarthysm resulted in the opening of new and very lucrative leisure markets. The tourist and gambling industries were making record profits and building economic empires. What is now called Havana's decadency during the 1950s, and our contemporary fascination with it, responds to a time when a new urban utopianism was being enacted among the better off social groups: the search for the pleasurable and a city created to that end. This is precisely what the neo-conservative historian Daniel Bell denounced in his book *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976)[422].

On the other side, to many Cubans the possibility of leaving a life of hardship and poverty was the rationale for joining the spectacle and becoming night entertainers. Thousands of immigrants were entering the city to create such a possibility. The flourishing of cabarets, nightclubs and pornographic shows in Havana from the beginning of the 1940s to January 1959 meant the surge of a subclass, a nocturnal proletarian, whose livelihood was threatened soon after January 1959. The city also attracted North American performers wanting to break into the market using Cuba as a launch platform. Even though they were not musicals, nearly every film shot in the city from the 1930s to 1959 would continue the tradition of the cabaret in the city by inserting musical acts between scenes. However, there seems to exist very little visual material representing those other spaces of mainly Cuban clientele where up and coming artists would try their luck. Of these, there are mainly literary references, such as Guillermo Cabrera Infante's descriptions of his nights at the

low-key cabaret Las Vegas during the 1950s. Cinematographically, it was the Hollywood musical *Guys and Dolls* (1955) that attempted to represent those other spaces off the tourist trail, alluding to their edginess and relations with criminal life.

The musical *Guys and Dolls* was a product of a newly growing cultural demand. Its representation of Havana as the ideal leisure resort coincided with the years when the North American tourist industry was realising its bigger investments in the island - particularly the opening of three big hotels, with their respective casinos and cabarets: the Capri, the Riviera and the Hilton. As such, this film, and specifically the sequences set in the Cuban city, can be catalogued as a historical document and cultural product of a specific economic period: a period marked by the 'democratisation' of the tourist and entertainment industries, now available to the middle classes and widely promoted on TV and, particularly, in cinema. However, I consider that there is more to *Guys and Dolls* than it seems at first sight. Without denying the abundance of racial and cultural stereotyping deployed during the sequences set in Havana (I will discuss this issue later), *Guys and Dolls* brings into play a series of dichotomies that responded to the moral battles characteristic of the 1950s in North America and Cuba. These battles were not only the result of traditional divisions between social classes, nor are they just a reflection of cultural differences as determined by national and ethnic origins. The separation between the nocturnal and the diurnal - the pleasurable and cyclical character of the first and the industriousness and linearity of the second - will serve as the visual trope that metaphorically illustrates these moral confrontations.

Guys and Dolls - a Hollywood musical directed by Joseph L. Makiewicz and released in 1955 - was set in the Broadway of the 1940s, an urban area then supposedly inhabited by professional gamblers, theatre performers and Salvation Army members. The plot revolves around a bet made by gambler Nathan Detroit (Frank Sinatra) with Sky Masterson (Marlon Brando), another well-known gambler who has just informed Nathan of his intentions to go to Havana on his own for a few days. Although he never specifies what he is going to do in Havana, collective knowledge regarding the Cuban city as a gambler's legal paradise made this detail unnecessary. Nathan bets Sky $1000 that he won't be able to convince Sarah Brown, a very prudish member of the Salvation Army, to go with him to Havana. Sky accepts the bet and finally manages to take Sarah Brown to Havana, where they fall in love.

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The plot was based on a short story by American writer Damon Runyon entitled 'The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown'[423]. It was a plot that had already been adapted for a Broadway musical in 1950 by George S. Kaufman, which opened under the final title 'Guys and Dolls' at the 46th Street Theatre. It was in this first adaptation of Runyon's story to theatre that the sequences in Havana were introduced by Abe Burrows, and later faithfully included by Sam Goldwyn in the Hollywood production. It was not by chance that the two stars chosen by Goldwyn to incarnate the two main male roles were great connoisseurs of Havana, Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando; as was the case for most wealthy North Americans during the 1950s.

During his first visit to Havana in 1956, Brando spent his nights at the *garitos* in the area of Playa, listening and dancing to live Afro-Cuban rumba[424]. In his biography he explains the big impact Afro-Cuban music had had on him the first time he heard it in New York[425]. Brando's knowledge of Havana's main night-clubs and *garitos*, such as the one featured in the film, was at the time giving him a certain notoriety[426]. Concerning Sinatra, the singer had been visiting the city since the beginning of the 1940s, thanks to his relationships with important heads of one of the New York families[427]. When the representatives of the five families met at the National Hotel in 1947, Frank Sinatra was the main musical attraction, singing on the first night. His close connections with the mafia were then widely known and, what is more important, highly glamorised. The sequences set in Havana functioned as an excellent marketing campaign for the tourist industry investing in the city.

By 1955, Havana had already acquired its reputation as, not only a sunny and romantic holiday resort for the North American rich, but also a type of Sodom and Gomorrah, a paradise for the sinner and the criminal. For the *Guys and Dolls* spectator, Havana's nightlife appears as that other space of danger and pleasure, introduced to them by the experienced character Sky Masterson. Havana's nights are, in *Guys and Dolls*, glamorised as a space of 'otherness', at the same time feared and desired. Following the strategy of 'neither too different nor too similar' deployed by the tourist industry in order to make the destination attractive, Havana's nightlife in *Guys and Dolls* possessed a new marginal and adventurous taste corresponding to the growing fascination of those who enjoyed the wonders of the urban at night. As with the rest of the film, the Havana sequences were all shot in studio sets, including the exterior sequence by the cathedral, which added to the

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aesthetic glamorisation of the city. Such glamorisation of the city's night-life has been in part the work of those many film *noir* shot in American cities since 1945, where the space of the night-club and those who frequently visited it or worked in them were either represented in a threatening or decadent light, or glamorised as that other world at the margins of daily-life routine. Nicholas Christopher explains the role of the night-club in *noir* film as this paradox:

> There was a boom of such clubs [night-clubs and casinos] in American cities after the war, emblematic of the new night life – stylish, flashy, often frenzied. And more often than not paradoxical: in the noir city, the nightclub can serve as a glittering, silvery-black mirror reflecting the after-hours diversions of the postwar economic boom, and at the same time can appear to be no more than a sordid, gloomy watering hole for life's losers.[428]

Sky Masterson as a professional gambler and connoisseur of the criminal introduces the spectator to this underworld, to be finally morally redeemed by the innocent Sarah Brown. However, identification and complicity between the audience and Sky Masterson in the Havana sequences were established to the detriment of Sarah Brown (See DVD: *Guys and Dolls* tracks). the only character in the film who does not seem to be aware of what Havana represented for the professional North American gambler. The period of time covered by these sequences is a whole night, until both characters fly back to New York at dawn. They are set in three different locations: the surroundings of the Cathedral area in old Havana, the interior of a restaurant and the interior of a night club, or *garito* – a low-key club with a mainly Cuban clientele.

The Havana sequences in the film can be divided into the two polarities also represented by the characters of Sarah Brown and Sky Masterson. The first introduces the nostalgic feelings of the American tourist for Europe, through Spanish music and architecture. This is the myth of the romantic city, embodied in the striking beauty of the old colonial architecture. More importantly, it also represents the puritanism of the Spanish Catholic Church and its influence on middle class white Cubans, embodied by the character of Sarah Brown. This association between Sarah Brown and the Spanish Catholic tradition in the city is visually played out during the first Havana sequence around the Cathedral, with the incorporation of two characters, a widow (dressed completely in black showing her catholic devotion) and a catholic priest talking by the Cathedral's stairs. Carol Reed also used this

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visual pun in his cinematographic version of Graham Greene's novel *Our Man in Havana* (1959) again to comment on the moral paradoxes of the Cuban city.

The second polarity contradicts the first and refers to Havana converted into a paradise of constant leisure, entertainment and sexual availability for the North American male tourist. It is also the Havana where there is a bigger African presence, away from the Catholic church's moral control which otherwise exercised a strong influence on the Cuban white upper classes– though the characters supposedly representing the Cubans at the night-club are of Hispanic origin and not black Africans. This Havana is identified with the Sky Masterson character. Well into the spirit of the 1950s, he is a man outside the moral restrictions traditionally associated with Christianity. He represents the new North American pleasure consumer - morally unsound, though highly glamorous.

Again the film makes use of a visual pun to emphasise Havana's paradoxes: several lottery number boards hang on the walls on each of the different Havana's scenes, reminding the spectator of the city's gambling obsession. During the pre-1959 years, lottery numbers would be enlarged and hung outside lottery stalls, so prospective customers would know whether that particular stall had his/her chosen number. Due to the great number of this type of stall in Havana from the beginning of the twentieth century, this image was very common and became unique to the city. As an image, it came to stand as sign of Havana since Walker Evans recorded it during his first and only trip to the city at the beginning of the 1930s [Illustration 49]. It is interesting to note that it was very rare for a Cuban film shot before 1959 to make use of this image at all. If Joseph L. Makiewicz was acquainted with Cuban political upheavals at the time he made *Guys and Dolls*, he was probably also aware of the connections between the Cuban National Lottery, political corruption and the relations between the Cuban government and United States organised crime. Looking at what is now classical Cuban historiography, that nearly thirty-year period from the 1930s to 1959 was characterised by political corruption, with the role of the National Lottery and the dishonest adjudication of its revenues as one of the most controversial aspects[429]. Therefore, the imagery of the lottery numbers on the city's walls comes to stand for something other than merely the city's obsession with gambling. It was also a visual equation between the political class in Cuba and the North American petty criminal, embodied in the character of Sky Masterson.

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Illustration 49. Walker Evans' photograph of lottery stall in Havana (1933)

Sky Masterson will be morally 'redeemed' at the end of the film, when he renounces his criminal life. However, it is Sarah Brown's moral fundamentalism that is ridiculed and challenged in the story. In Damon Runyon's short story 'The Idyll of Sarah Brown', the character of Sarah is far more streetwise and less of a prude than the Sarah Brown of *Guys and Dolls*. Abe Burrows, in adapting Runyon's story for Broadway, perversely exaggerated Sarah's innocence by bringing her to the sexually charged and hedonistic atmosphere of Havana's nightlife at the time. She needed to shift scenarios for her moral stiffness to be challenged: what was wrong in New York seems to be right in Havana. Her righteous attitude appears anachronistic next to Havana's moral relaxation. There is no doubt about the charged eroticism mixed with the transgressive satisfaction this scene might have provided for the liberal North American viewer.

Nearly eight years before *Guys and Dolls'* release, the movie *Weekend in Havana* had also promoted the Cuban city to the North American tourist. However, the nature of the scenarios – also studio sets - chosen to show Havana to its prospective visitors was completely different to *Guys and Dolls*. Both films seemed to be addressing two different types of visitor to the city. *Weekend in Havana* takes us to the luxury rooms at the Plaza Hotel, through whose windows one saw the monumental architecture of the Capitolio and the National Theatre (See DVD: *Weekend in Havana*: Havana hotel sequence). This is the sequence where Lisa, the New York shopkeeper on her dream holiday to Cuba, shows her room to Mr. Constant. In her conversation with the bellboy at the hotel, she asks him to recommend a nightclub. He talks her out of going to the Méridi, as that is the place where

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"only tourists go", and strongly recommends the Casino Madrileño: "I've never been myself, but I have noticed that guests from the hotel who go there, normally come back later at night and get up later in the morning". When Mr. Constant suggests taking her to the Méridi, she quickly rejects his offer with the bellboy's same comments: "But that's the club where all the tourists go" and demands to be taken to the Casino Madrileño. Once there, the club seems to be placed in a luxury building. The musical spectacle is distinctively of a 'Hollywood style', with Carmen Miranda as the main performer (See DVD: *Weekend in Havana*: Club Madrileño sequence). As in *Guys and Dolls*, this is an all-night sequence finishing at dawn when both characters are transported to their hotel on the back of a peasant's cart.

Putting aside the similarities in the plot, Havana's nightlife presented in *Weekend* lacks the edginess of the *garito* in *Guys and Dolls*, its locality. It is a nightlife not too different to the one enjoyed by wealthy Americans in the United States. The Cuban woman who sits next to Sky Masterson at the *garito* in *Guys and Dolls* lacks the modesty of Sarah Brown and definitely the modesty of the clientele at the Casino Madrileño in *Weekend in Havana*. Her class and her ethnicity allow her to be so. She is understood to be a sex worker. In any case, she is the type of woman who would frequent such a *garito*. Sky Masterson knows of such places because he is a criminal and, as in Walter Benjamin's digressions on Baudelaire in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century, there is much in common between the criminal and the *flâneur*:

> Baudelaire wrote no detective story because, given the structure of his instincts, it was impossible for him to identify with the detective. In him, the calculating, constructive element was on the side of the asocial and had become an integral part of cruelty. Baudelaire was too good a reader of the Marquis de Sade to be able to compete with Poe.[430]

What made the character of Sky Masterson at the same time a criminal and a *flâneur* had much to do with the reaction against the new industrial society that Benjamin identifies in Baudelaire, as 'the *flâneur* who demanded elbow room and was unwilling to forego the life of a gentleman of leisure'[431]. It was a reaction that after a period of wars and restrictions was surfacing again on the other side of the Atlantic. The character of Sky Masterson appears to behave and use the language of a gentleman, a member of the privileged class,

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though his origins are supposed to reside in the lower classes. These attributes made the character particularly appealing to the Broadway public. Abe Burrows comments in his biography *Honest Abe* how the fact that Sky Masterson was a member of the lower classes behaving like a dandy would be lauded by the critics as an amusing and attractive feature in the musical[432]. Marlon Brando's interpretation of Sky in the Hollywood version emphasises this aspect even more due to his reputation in North America as a star and a 'bad boy' – a privileged man indulging in a life of leisure.

Although it is true that just by comparing two different films from two different periods we could not make assumptions regarding the value transformations experienced by a culture during that same period of time, I would like to argue that the change in sensibility shown by the differences between the two films relates to a shift in the expectations of the 'new leisure class'. For the world frequented by Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* is an underground world not even known by wealthy and puritan Cubans – apart from those wealthy Cubans belonging to the 'bohemian' class. Sky Masterson in *Guys and Dolls* and Marlon Brando in real life are cultural and class transgressors, 'middle class heroes'[433]. Among those in the cabaret he is the one who knows most, and is therefore the most powerful. His power resides in his capacity to experience the pleasure prohibited to 'us' by social laws, and the ones prohibited to 'others' by economic laws. If a character such as Sky Masterson was so attractive to the North American and European spectator in the 1950s, this was due to a desire to transcend one's own class, to transcend the social divisions that stop us from enjoying life to the full – the utopian dream of a world where work and pleasure would not necessarily be separated and where the concept of leisure time would lose its contemporary meaning. In North America and Europe, transcending one's class would, in many cases, be equated with transcending ones ethnicity by having access to marginal African-American cultures[434]. In representing Havana, these cross meetings between class and ethnicity in Cuba are even more complex, due to the island's much higher representation of African descendents in the overall population.

Even though most of Havana's population are classified as white, the night-life that was then characterised as Havana's 'edginess' was nearly always associated with Afro-Cuban cultural expressions, particularly in music and dance. This was due in part to the actual spatial and economic segregation still existent in Havana and the rest of Cuba during the

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1950s. One of the Afro-Cuban dominated spaces, frequented by the male liberal white middle-classes, was the group of clubs and bars in the area of Playa, also infamous for the presence of many Afro-Cuban female sex workers. These spaces, such as the Rumba Palace, had a clientele and staff composed of mainly Afro-Cubans of poor background. *Guys and Dolls* gave to the North American spectator a first glimpse of what a Havana *garito* was purported to look like. However, it stopped short of representing the 'blackness' of its protagonists. Their Hispanic looks obeyed that Hollywood-promoted taboo against representing blackness in mainstream cinema. The Havana of *Weekend...* in 1948 would be attractive to the North American tourist due to its European cultural hegemony and its reputation as the place where rich Americans would spend their leisure time. The Havana in *Guys and Dolls*, seven years later, responded to a different sensibility: a growing taste for the culturally different and the exoticism of poverty.

Hundreds of *garitos*, like the one represented in *Guys and Dolls*, had already been or were flourishing all around Havana when the three high-rise hotels along the Malecón were inaugurated – the Capri, the Riviera and the Hilton. These *garitos* were frequented mainly by Afro-Cubans, and young middle or upper class Cuban and non-Cuban white males. These last were also commonly seen in brothels and pornographic theatres. Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Julio García Espinosa and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea were among the many Cuban intellectuals who enjoyed Havana's nocturnal trangressions.

From a cultural point of view, the correlations between what was happening then in Havana and what was happening in many United States cities are numerous. Differences are also numerous. While the mainly white rural peasants[435] carried on with their subsistence routine, the city could afford a vibrant cultural life, quite an important part of which would be staffed by an underprivileged sector of Havana's society, now economically boosted by the heavy investments enjoyed by the city. A whole underground culture was nourished through the presence of American organised crime on the island. This is not to say that before the first important investment during the 1940s this underground culture did not exist. What did happen was that the cultural and economic contradictions between Havana and the rest of Cuba grew ostensibly. The ideological dichotomy between the urban and the rural, embodied in the visual symbols of the modern and the traditional, the new and the old, were transformed into a moral battleground between 'revolutionaries' and 'decadents':

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those who believed in the progressive nature of history and the crucial role played by human action, and those who opted for the utopian belief of a work-free society devoted to the search for pleasure and, like the European dandy, of beauty. It is important to emphasise that this division does not necessarily refer to confrontations between different social groups. They were present at the heart of what has been called the revolutionary forces, between individuals and, more importantly, within individuals. Many of the musicians, dancers, performers, writers, photographers, painters and others linked to the Cuban cultural scene at the time, emigrated from the Cuban provinces to the capital in order to explore Havana's vibrant cultural life –on many occasions, a life restricted to the nocturnal[436]. To most of those artists there was no doubt that such a 'Havana Renaissance' was due to the increasing North American presence in the island through its businesses and cultural products, primarily Hollywood productions.

For those who were against this North American cultural infiltration, the Cuban capital was perceived during the 1940s and 1950s to be rapidly moving away from the nationalistic rhetoric that celebrated the heroism and independence of the island in its struggle against first Spanish and later United States political and economic dominance. Its cosmopolitanism, linked to North America's own urban development at the time, was highly resented by the populations outside the capital, particularly those in the poorer eastern areas. Havana during the 1950s was revealing a crack in Cuban national unity. It brought about an insoluble contradiction: while it 'represented' Cuba, it was quickly becoming its 'other'. For the 1959 Cuban peasant and supporter of the Revolution, Havana represented the evils of a decadent society that tried to imitate the American way of life, sometimes in contradiction to the national aspirations of some of the wealthy, and mainly Euro-Cuban, ruling groups. However, the imported North American way of life was not equivalent to the Calvinist work ideology still dominant in provincial North America. It was a Hollywood production – a fictional recreation of the North American upper class, its lifestyle, tastes and aspirations. Hedonism and pleasure seeking activities were restricted to the heterotopical spaces of Havana, Miami and Las Vegas, where Hollywood's glamour was recreated in order to fulfil the cinematic fantasies of the growing North American middle classes. These classes were now wealthier and enjoyed more leisure time. The tourist industry after the Second World War had them in mind, while during the 1930s and 1940s its customers would often be drawn exclusively from among the very wealthy[437].

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The character of Lisa in *Weekend...* is a clear example of such a new approach. She is a shopkeeper who has been able to save for her dream holiday in glamorous Havana - something that middle America would have found difficult before the Second World War. Within Cuba, only Havana's inhabitants would see the benefits of this growing industry.

If the desire to break free from the hardships of rural life brought peasants to the cities, the dynamics between the rural and the urban were as much cultural as economic. They would be a response to what was perceived as the Americanisation of the island. The revolutionary movement headed by the 26 of July members presented itself as a national movement, an anti-imperialist force that would free Cuba from North American economic and cultural dominance. This nationalist rhetoric, common among the hegemonic groups in ex-colonised countries, had to confront Havana's apparent aspiration to break free from the restrictions of Cuban national mythologies, held by those who defended the city's cosmopolitan character and the modernity of its cultural life. Cosmopolitanism versus nationalism would take the form of the urban against the rural, the metropolis against the periphery.

During the days that followed the end of Batista's dictatorship, the Havana magazine, *Bohemia*, published numerous photographs representing Havana's citizens attacking *garitos* and gambling houses [Illustrations 50 and 51]. In one of the captions describing the images the newspaper wrote:

> Una mesa patas arriba. Pero no es una mesa cualquiera. Junto a ella se pasaban horas muchos incautos, tratando de dominar el curso de una bolita, y en ella dejaban también muchos medios y dinero, además de horas perdidas, que debieron emplearse en el trabajo o en el estudio.[438]

> [*A table with its legs upside down. But it is not just any table. By it there were many imprudents, trying to dominate the course of a small ball, where they would leave amounts of resources and money, apart from the lost hours, which should have been used at work or studying*]

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Illustrations 50 and 51.
Photographs of Havana
citizens attacking casinos and
other spaces for gambling in
the city. Published in *Bohemia*,
año 51, n. 2, Enero 11, 1959.
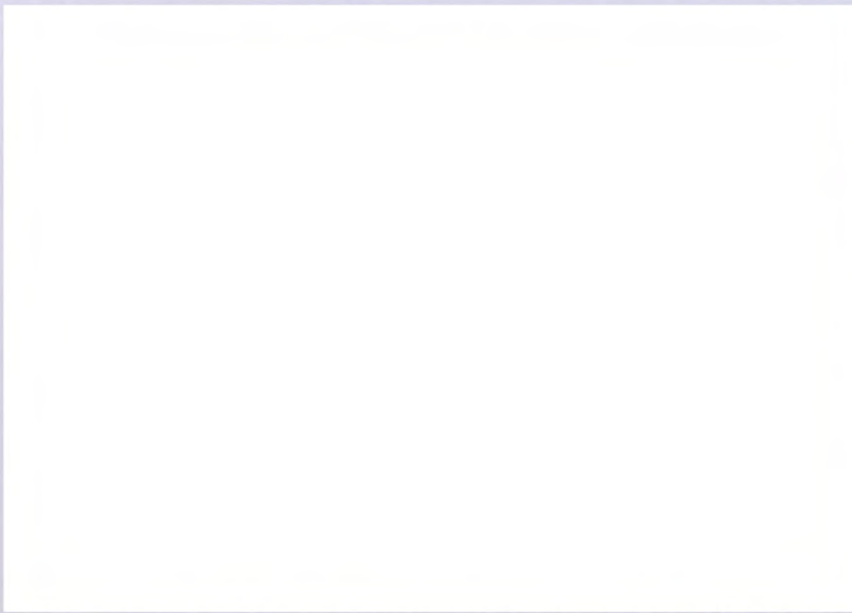
A working city, where individuals work and study, was now coming to replace the 'playing
city' - a city dedicated to others' leisure and unproductiveness – glamorised in *Guys and
Dolls* and *Weekend* ... and demonised by the new authorities as a parasite. The Cuban
Revolution was soon represented as the victory of the Cuban countryside over urban
Havana. Enma Álvarez Tabío describes the 1959 revolution as essentially an anti-urban
movement:

El carácter urbano que animaba a la utopía Americana, en una civilización eminentemente rural, es negado por una revolución antiurbana que se retrotrae a las simplezas del falansterio: el 'hombre Nuevo' se convierte entonces en una versión del 'buen salvaje'.

[*The urban character that would inform the American utopia, in an eminently rural civilization (sic), is negated by an anti urban revolution which retreats to falansterians simplifications: the 'new man' turns then into a version of the 'good savage'.*][439]

For Álvarez Tabío, therefore, the rejection of American urbanism was related to nineteenth century utopianism, a return to the pre-capitalist natural state described by Rousseau in his *Émile, Ou L'education* (1762). It was also related to the thought of socialist utopians such as Saint-Simon or Forestier. The image of the 'good savage' used by Álvarez Tabío to describe the dominant rural character of the 1959 Revolution relates to postcolonial theorisations of the western romantisation of the non-westerner by alluding to its pre-industrial character - its innocent nature posed against the moral decadency and materialism of the West. This romanticism was now applied to the rural and poor classes in Cuba, who would be represented as the victims of North American imperialism. However, those Cuban peasants now heralded as representatives of the 'real Cuba' were mainly white of Spanish origin. The traditional *guajiro* has been, according to authors such as Robin Moore and Cécile Leclercq, a figure of Cuban nationalism since the beginning of the first Republic that has commonly served to create a sense of national identity separated from Spain without having to situate the Afro-Cuban tradition at the centre of this identity[440]. Guerrilla groups entering towns and urban centres after the fall of Batista's government would fashion themselves in guajiro hats, with the Cuban flag attached to them. This image of the Cuban Revolution as a peasant revolt has since become widely recognisable, fitting the anti-urban (or anti-Havana) rhetoric described by Álvarez Tabío above. Raul Corrales' photograph of the rebel army entering Havana by horse was animated by this same rhetoric [Illustration 52]. After the Revolution, hundreds of peasants, wearing their hats, were brought to Havana as an act of national reconciliation [Illustration 53], apparently between Havana and the rest of Cuba. However, this figure cannot be heralded as representative of the post-1959 recreations of the Cuban national identity. It did not include an important sector called to align themselves behind the Revolution: the Afro-Cuban and Euro-Cuban Havana population. As I will explain in the next chapter, the new national discourses that came out of the post-1959 negotiations were intimately related to the cultural productions of the

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Afro-Cuban poor in Havana[441], while this image of the *guajiro* gradually disappeared from the nationalistic rhetoric.
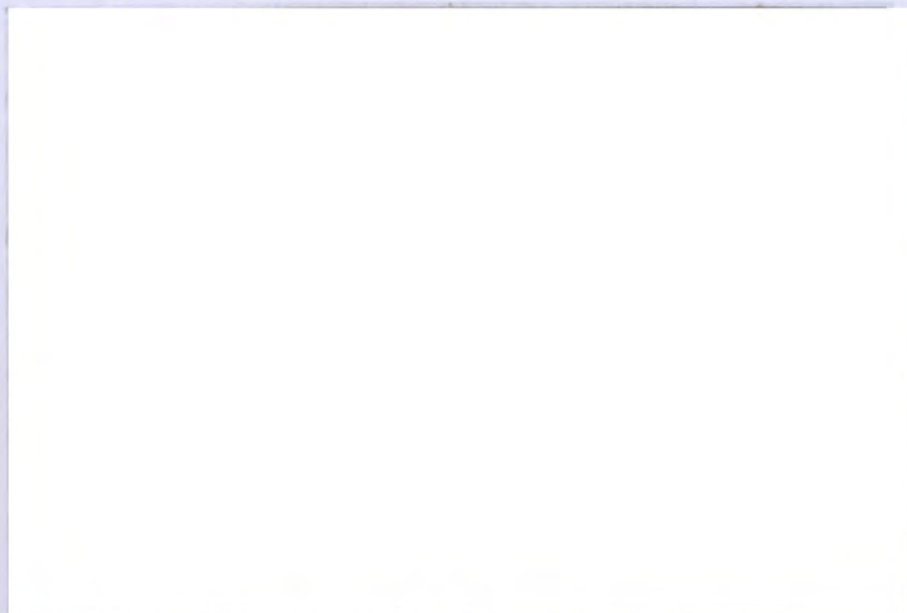

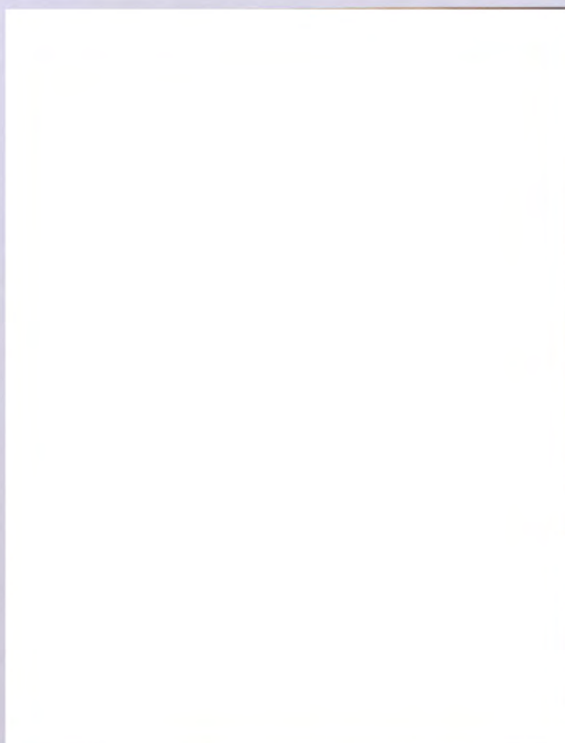Illustration 52. Photograh of the Rebel Army with *guajiro* hats by Raúl Corrales.

Illustration 53. Promotional advertisement welcoming Cuban peasants to Havana. Published in *Bohemia,* Año 51, n. 30, Julio 26, 1959.

For a long time Havana has been at the heart of these cross-national battles. It is not a matter of only describing its inhabitants as inserted within the category of the post-colonial 'other', literally and visually defined in opposition to a western society. Nor can we merely see it as representative of the competitions between the different cultural groups in the

island. Its 'otherness' in this analysis relates to its status as a hedonistic enclave, created to fulfil one of the many aspirations raised by the modern urban utopia: a life lived creatively once it has been freed from the restrictions imposed by religious morality and the hardships of a life dedicated to work. The aspirations to turn Havana into a 'productive' city, with the promise of its rapid industrialisation, meant the attempt to remove the centrality of those economic sectors that had defined it as a 'tertiary city' – namely the tourist sector. Such an attempt was at the heart of the new authorities' policies in the capital[442]. One utopia was replaced with another - from the mythical pleasure haven, Havana moved to the promise of a future socialist city, and the transformation of its citizens - from caterers and entertainers to urban workers. Therefore, the anti-urbanism of the 1959 revolutionary leaders focused mainly on the symbols of the city's nightlife and their 'unproductive' character. They would mainly refer to the prostitution of Cuban women and the spread of gambling. There were also references to 'moral depravities', such as homosexuality and drug taking[443]. For a period of time, from January 1959 until the closure of the cabarets and nightclubs in 1968, the clashes between the diurnal and the nocturnal in Havana would result in a prolific and paradoxical body of works, primarily in literature and cinema. I will dedicate the next chapter to identifying the cultural paradoxes and conflicts in this particular group of works of mainly Cuban origin.
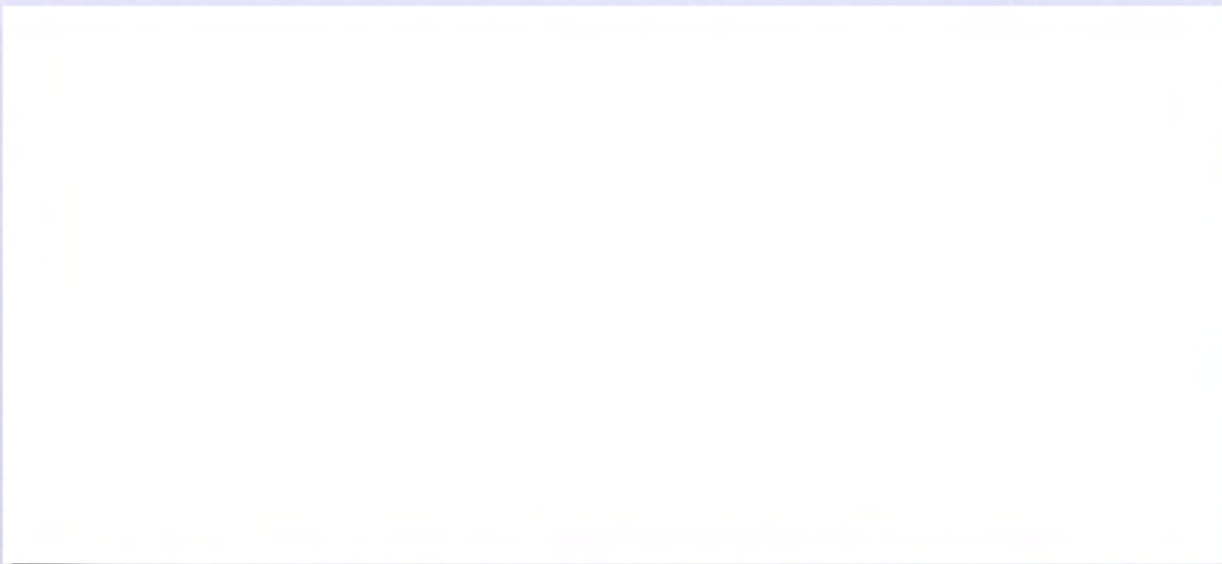
Illustration 54. Film still from *Guys and Dolls* (1955). *Garito* in Havana.
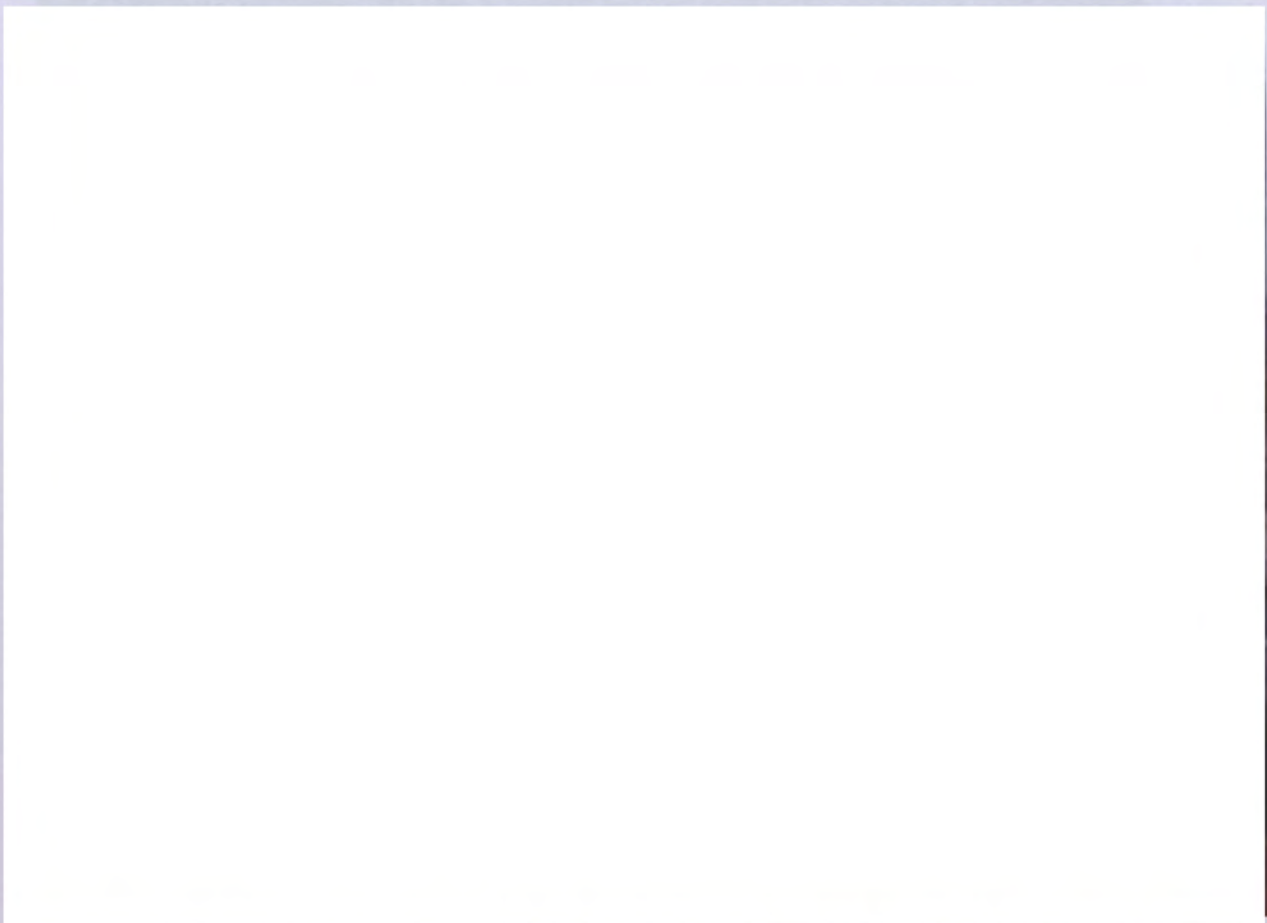
Illustration 55. Film still from *Weekend in Havana* (1941) showing the outside of the *Casino Nacional* in Havana.
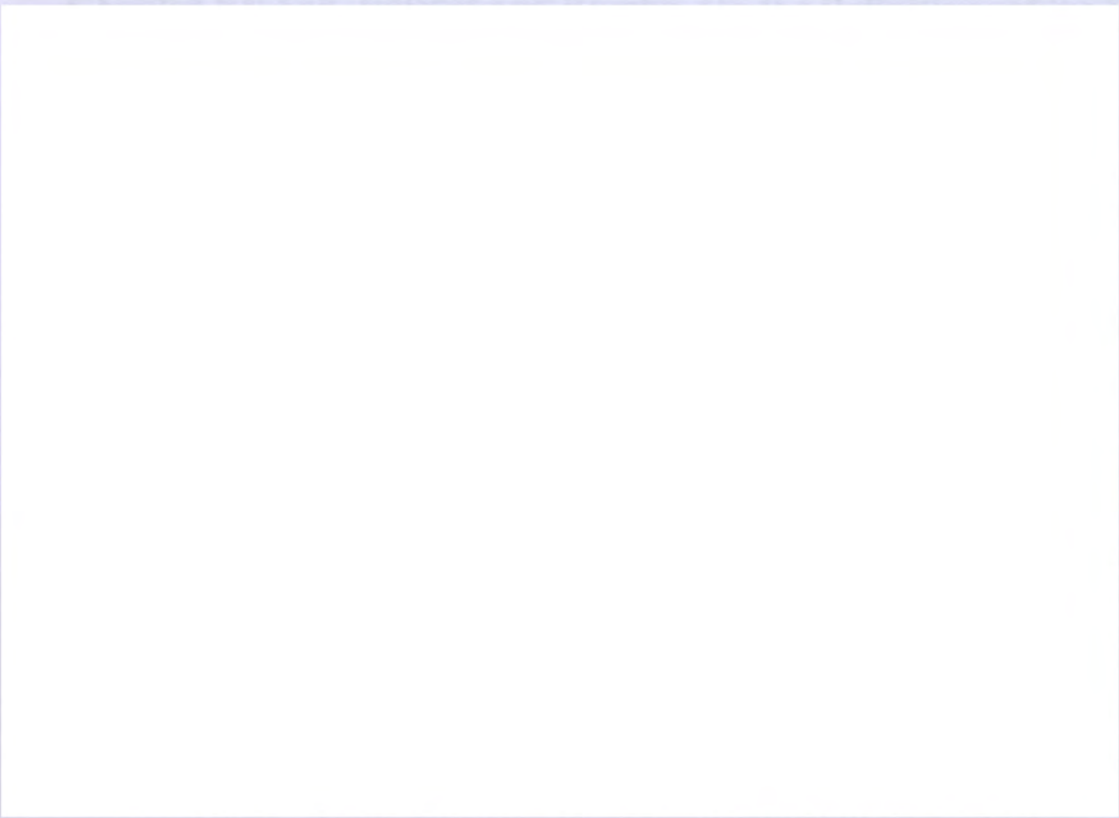
Illustration 56. Film still from *Weekend in Havana* (1941) showing the inside of *Club Madrileño*.

Illustration 57. Film still from *Weekend in Havana* (1941). Carmen Miranda's performance at *Club Madrileño*.

Chapter VI: <u>Son, Boleros and Rumba. On the Definitions of the 'Popular'</u> <u>(Guillermo Cabrera Infante and Julio García Espinosa)</u>

The eroticism of the city is the lesson we can draw from the infinitely metaphorical nature of urban discourse. I use the word eroticism in its widest meaning: it would be pointless to suppose that the eroticism of the city referred only to the area reserved for this kind of pleasure, for the concept of the place of pleasure is one of the most tenacious mystifications of urban functionalism. It is a functional concept and not a semantic concept; I use eroticism or sociality interchangeably. The city, essentially and semantically, is the place of our meeting with the other.

Roland Barthes, 'Semiology of the Urban' (1967)

The <u>right to the city</u> cannot be conceived of as a simple visiting right or as a return to traditional cities. It can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed <u>right</u> <u>to urban life</u>.

Henri Lefebvre. Right to the City (1967)

This chapter continues the thematic of chapter V regarding the mythical character of Havana's nightlife during the 1950s and how it was re-interpreted after 1959. This time I have focused on the work of two Cuban authors, filmmaker Julio García Espinosa and writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante. Havana's nightlife culture influenced and was reflected in their work in different ways. However, they shared a view of the nocturnal as the heterotopical space and time where the divisions between high and low art could be transcended. I have centred this analysis primarily on Cabrera Infante's novel *Three Trapped Tigers* (1964) and García Espinosa's films *Cuba baila* (1963) and *Son o no son* (1977). Havana's nightlife is presented here outside the simplistic 'good versus evil' polarities established by the new Cuban authorities and the mainly Miami-based dissident groups[444]. Neither 'decadent' nor 'luxurious', neither 'exploitative' nor 'paradisiacal', Havana at night appears as a source of innovation and, more importantly, as the space of encounter between 'others'. The cultural manifestations and exchanges occurring in these documents reflect the tensions and negotiations between groups and individuals peculiar to Havana's urbanity and its development. Both authors, García Espinosa and Cabrera Infante, often put the emphasis on the influence of the traditional cabaret genre in the cultural productions of the city. García Espinosa presented cabaret as an expression of 'popular culture' in opposition to the formal and ideological homogenisation coming from 'mass cultural' productions. For Cabrera Infante, it is Havana's cultural nightlife, expressed in the

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cabaret form, that would function as the temporal and spatial constraint within which artistic innovation was possible. Both authors are also Euro-Cuban intellectuals from middle class backgrounds who positioned themselves with respect to the transformations initiated by the 1959 Revolution. The significance of their productions within the scope of this analysis resides precisely in this positioning, what made them similar and what different, as a case study of the cultural conflicts that marked those years (mainly the decade of the 1960s) among individuals who came from very similar backgrounds. I have also included other cultural documents from the same period and preceding periods that exemplify the historical and social context within which these authors were producing.

In 1961, the painter Saba Cabrera Infante and cinematographer Orlando Jiménez Leal produced a very short documentary that soon became the reason for the first important rifts among the Revolution's cultural leadership. The documentary was titled *PM* standing for Post Meridian, alluding to the exclusively nocturnal character of its images. It was just a series of documentary images showing a group of Havana's citizens enjoying a night out in the city around the areas of Havana's port and Playa (See DVD: *PM*). The film made it to Cuban TV that same year thanks to the intervention of one of the authors' brothers, the writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante, who was then the director of the magazine *Lunes de Revolución*[445]. This film's innovative character not only resided in its 'free-style' (hand-held camera, absence of voice-over and coherent editing), but more importantly in its unusual subject. Until that point Cuban TV and cinema had never shown this side of Havana: the more marginal nocturnal life running parallel to the main tourist centres in the city. However, the ICAIC – by then the institution with sole control of the film industry in the island- denied permission for the documentary to be shown in the cinema houses of the city. The refusal of this institution to issue the permission meant that the film could not find any other opportunity for public screening and the film never made its way into the Cuban cinemas. Its representation of a still enticing and marginal nocturnal life in Havana was considered inappropriate by the new cultural authorities and denounced as ideologically against the principles of the 1959 Revolution. Michael Chanan collected Alfredo Guevara's version of this issue in his essay *The Cuban Image*. Alfredo Guevara was at the time director of the ICAIC and had been a decisive figure in the polemics around *PM* censorship. On these polemics Guevara explained to Chanan:

"We knew," says Alfredo Guevara, "through our intelligence services, that we were going to be invaded. So there were the mobilisations of the people, the creation of the militia, the military training, the civil defence. In this heroic climate there appeared a film which did not reflect any of this. It showed the Havana of the lower depths, the drunks, the small cabarets where prostitution was still going on, [...] *PM*, in only fifteen minutes, showed a world inhabited by the mainly black and mulatto lumpenproletariat. Obviously it wasn't made out of feeling of racial discrimination, but the presentation of these images at this time was nonetheless questionable".[446]

To these comments by Guevara, Chanan sums up adding: 'In short, it presented black people in roles associated with the state of oppression from which they were in process of liberation.'[447] It was, therefore, the representations of Afro-Cubans in their association with the nocturnal life of the city that was used as an excuse to censor the film in Havana's cinemas[448]. What was 'questionable', according to Guevara, was that Afro-Cubans would appear not as heroes and workers, but as lumpen and parasitic. As I explained in an earlier chapter, the increasing demonisation of Havana's nightlife during those years was crucial to the justification of the whole revolutionary process. As the tone of *PM* was hardly one of condemnation, its release and distribution by the ICAIC[449] would have contradicted the new government's historical rewriting of what Havana represented before the advent of the revolutionary process. At the same time, there was a whole sector of Havana's population, including the thousands of immigrants from the eastern areas of the island, who were willing participants, as staff or customers, in this nocturnal life, and who had enjoyed the relaxation of the moral rules at night-time. This is not to imply that such moral tolerance would also apply to the political arena. The political repression exercised by Batista's dictatorship would mean that such a relaxation of moral rules was not translated into its equivalent set of new political liberties, such as racial and gender equality or freedom to express sexual orientation without the threat of social repression[450]. A documentary such as *PM* would have been equally denounced by the political and cultural powers prior to 1959. However, so long as it did not threaten the political status quo, its existence and diffusion would not have been perceived in the same light. The authors of this documentary knew that the concept of individual freedom promoted by the new political powers, and particularly Che Guevara's writings on the 'new man'[451], did not coincide with the aspirations of an important social minority, tightly immersed in Havana's urbanity.

In one of his last accounts of these events, García Espinosa, who had a crucial role in the censorship of *PM* as one of the main authorities in the ICAIC, interpreted it as a conflict between those true revolutionaries, in the Marxist sense of the term, and those who were just reformists[452]. However, what seemed to be at stake was more related to the type of urbanity those now in charge aspired to and its contradictions with what was already there. Guillermo Cabrera Infante made a very short account of this affair in his collection of essays *Mea Cuba*[453]. In the English version he entitled the chapter dedicated to *PM* as 'P.M. Means Post Mortem', alluding to the end of Havana's night-life as he had known it at the end of the 1950s. This short documentary 'was converted into a document' as he explained in this essay, a document that testified to the existence of a dying world, one that had characterised Havana until then.

As Yolanda Izquierdo explains in her work *Acoso y Ocaso de Una Ciudad* (*Harassment and Sunset of a City*), it was the prohibition of *PM* that prompted Guillermo Cabrera Infante, brother of Saba Cabrera, to write his narration 'Ella Cantaba Boleros', which later would become the novel *Three Trapped Tigers*. First published in Spain in 1967, this novel has been seen by many as a celebration of Havana's 'moral decadency' during the 1950s. The social decadency described in the novel was for Havana's critics related to the permissive character of the city's nightlife which consisted, as I argued in Chapter IV, of the two main trades then associated with North American organised crime: gambling and the sex industry. However, *Three Trapped Tigers* does not focus on them, although they are mentioned. The novel can be seen as a kind of obituary, responding to Cabrera Infante's urge to document Havana as it was. The final version was published when Cabrera Infante had already exiled himself in Europe, after having first worked as the director of the new Film Institute and - following the application of official censorship to other cultural productions - as a cultural attaché for the Cuban diplomatic body in Brussels. In his chronology, published in the final version of *Three Trapped Tigers*, Cabrera Infante refers to the creative processes this novel underwent before reaching its actual form:

> [el manuscrito] ya en galeras y rechazado por la censura española. La procedencia de este rechazo no le impide ver que el libro es un fraude, que cuando lo compuso, su oportunismo político, una forma de ceguera picaresca, pudo mas que su visión literaria – y se entrega al revisionismo antirrealista, rescatando a los verdaderos

héroes del *lumpen* de entre el maniqueísmo marxista: completa *TTT*, devolviendo al libro no solo su título sino su intención original.[454]

[The manuscript] now in galleys and rejected by Spanish censorship. The origin of this rejection did not stop him from realising that the book is a fraud, that when he composed it, its political opportunism, a kind of blind picaresque, was dominant over its literary vision – and he dedicates himself to an antirealist revisionism, rescuing the real heroes of the lumpen among Marxist Manichaeism: he completes TTT, giving back to the book not only its title but also its original intention.]

Those true *lumpen* heroes mentioned in the paragraph above are the ones who lost their autonomy during the unifying political processes of the revolution. Robin Moore describes how, after the closure of the casinos and the dramatic decrease of tourism, the numerous cabarets and nightclubs of Havana got into financial difficulties in the same year as the Revolution. The new authorities reacted by nationalising them and putting their management under a newly created state institution: the National Institute of Tourist Industries (El Instituto Nacional de la Industria Turística, or INIT)[455].

Havana's nightlife, as described by Cabrera Infante in *Three Trapped Tigers,* was populated by bolero singers, musicians, dancers, writers, sex workers, photographers, wealthy tourists and aspiring actresses and models. They meet and befriend each other, visit different cabarets, casinos and clubs until dawn, their language and behaviour being the result of this nocturnal intoxication[456]. The choice of the word *lumpen* to describe them works as an ironic comment on the industrialising aspirations of the revolutionaries, now led by the Communist Party. Cabrera Infante made use of a Marxist term to describe an insoluble contradiction. Havana's inhabitants were a type of proletarian hardly imagined revolutionary in traditional Marxist literature[457].

The Revolution's first cultural crisis only apparently ended with Fidel Castro's speech 'Palabras para los intelectuales' (*Words for the Intellectuals*) in June 1961[458], which meant the isolationism of all those intellectuals and artists who criticised the new system's interventions in the cultural life of the island as an attack on their freedom of speech[459]. For Cabrera Infante, it was mainly the attacks on the nocturnal and the new system's aspirations to control and constrain it that would mean an impoverishment of the city's cultural life and its final reduction to political propaganda. Cabrera Infante's literary work after his final move to London had the Havana he knew during the 1950s as its main protagonist. This

obsessive recreation of nocturnal Havana can be seen as much as a product of his condition as an exile in another city as of his attempt to rescue a world he thought to be in extinction.

The first city Cabrera Infante chose as his residence in exile was Madrid. It was there he decided to revise the more politicised version of *Three Trapped Tigers*. The Madrid he found gave him a glimpse of what a city without a nocturnal drive might look like. In 1960s Spain there were already signs of a relaxation of the repressive moral rules imposed by the military dictatorship of Francisco Franco under the ideological leadership of the Spanish Catholic Church. However, Madrid's nightlife was still non-existent, as those places where moral codes could be challenged without fear of repression, such as nightclubs and cabarets, were absent or existed clandestinely. The novel *Tiempos de Silencio* (1962) by Spanish writer Luis Martín Santos, describes such isolation of Madrid at night during the military dictatorship. In this novel, it is in the clandestine brothel that men had the only opportunity to meet women freely[460]. For Cabrera Infante, a self-confessed sex predator, it is this lack of sexually liberated women that denotes Madrid's moral stiffness:

> 1966: Se muda en Madrid, de la vecindad del Museo del Prado a la alegre ribera del Manzanares, pero esta mudada no le impide ver que vivir en Madrid es habitar el patio de un convento – y nunca ha tenido fantasias sexuales con monjas.[461]

> [*1966: He moves in Madrid, from the neighbourhood of Museo del Prado to the Happy Manzanares Riviera, but this movement does not stop him from seeing that living in Madrid is to inhabit a convent backyard – and he has never had sexual fantasies about nuns.*]

His final place of exile was London, which he contrasts with Madrid in this same chronology, alluding again to women's moral status within the city:

> Es verano y el Swinging London acaba de comenzar su balanceo carnal. Se queda tan encantado con aquella visión – el espejismo de un harén en medio del desierto doméstico – de muchachas inglesas desveladas contrastando con las mujeres madrileñas casi veladas, que decide escoger Londres como su hábitat.[462]

> [*It is summer and Swinging London has just begun its fleshy swing. He is so pleased with that sight – the mirage of a harem in the middle of the domestic desert – of young English girls revealed in contrast to Madrid's women nearly veiled, that he decided to choose London as his habitat.*]

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In Cabrera Infante's interpretation, it is women's visibility that seems to determine the degree of moral leniency enjoyed by a city. During the 1950s, their visibility at night as co-participants in the nocturnal festival, principally as workers but also as customers, would be one of the major breakthroughs in terms of the strict gender divisions in Havana. It is this experience of living in other cities as an exile - and the vivid contrast he found between Madrid and London - that made him rethink his life in Havana, freed from the filter of his previous political affiliations. The result was a literary recreation of the cultural dynamism brought about by Havana's nocturnal growth.

Yolanda Izquierdo's analysis of *Three Trapped Tigers* has as its focus Havana's musical scene during 1957-58 as represented in the novel. According to Izquierdo, the character of 'La Estrella', an Afro-Cuban bolero singer at the marginal nightclubs, exemplifies the bohemian class in Havana: 'El bohemio se caracteriza por su marginalidad y por su indefinición como clase social' (*The bohemian is defined by his marginality and by his/her ambiguity as social class*). However, it is the spatial location of this bohemian class that is more relevant to the purposes of this study. With the exception of Tropicana:

> Todas las calles, clubs y cines que aparecen en la novela – y cuya enumeración sería demasiado prolija – están localizados en el sector situado en las calles L y 23 (La Rampa) de El Vedado, que comprende principalmente, las calles M, N y O, y las paralelas a 23.[463]
>
> [*All the streets, clubs and cinemas that appear in the novel – and whose enumeration would be too prolific - are located in that sector between the L and 23 Streets (La Rampa) from El Vedado, which consists principally of the M, N and O Streets, and all the parallel streets to 23.*]

The significance of these spatial constraints in the narration alludes to the historicity of that particular sector of Havana, La Rampa, which had been highly developed during the years preceding the 1959 Revolution. This area is situated nearly on the border that separates Centro Havana from El Vedado. El Vedado as a whole, due to its architectural influences and the close links of its inhabitants with North America, functioned as sign of the progressive Americanisation of the city and of wealthy Cubans' aspirations to emulate their American counterparts.

During the years in which the narration in *Three Trapped Tigers* is set, this area was a commercial centre with numerous shops, cinemas, restaurants, cabarets and nightclubs oriented towards the tourist population[464]. In 1958 the promotional documentary *El Broadway Habanero* was shot, showing a car trip along La Rampa, while a voice-over described its development as a sign of Havana's modernity and economic upheaval. It also shows the interiors of hotel rooms, luxury restaurants and cabarets. This documentary was addressed to the Cuban spectator as proof of the economic success facilitated by Batista's government and its connections with North American businesses. However, Cabrera Infante's nocturnal narrations take place in the basements, beneath this first layer of North American economic expansion. His scenarios differ from that predictable imitation of Hollywood glamour, visually represented by La Rampa. The main characters in the novel visit those low key clubs and cabarets that had sprung up as a result of these economic developments. Among the main characters we find the writer, the photographer and the bolero singer - the literary, the visual and the musical that complete the nocturnal urban spectacle, now free of those restraining borders that separate high art from low art. It is through the encounters between different social groups, divided mainly by class and ethnic boundaries, that Cabrera Infante describes Havana's modernity in connection with the North American urban modernity at the time. These encounters would happen nearly exclusively during the nocturnal urban spectacle and its heterotopical time.

In *Three Trapped Tigers* the nocturnal experience is presented as unique. No Havana night is the same as any other because it did not correspond to the cyclical repetitions of daily routine. A night happens at once. Nocturnal time contradicts the twelve-hour daily linearity that takes us from morning to midday and then afternoon to evening. In the passage below, he describes a consecutive line of events supposedly occurring from the beginning of one night to dawn. However, by inserting a time referent, we are prompted to believe that only half an hour has passed between events:

> ... so I said I must split because I had to get to bed early, which was true, and we returned, Rine and I, to Havana and on my way back I thought of La Estrella but I didn't say anything not because it was uncanny but because it was unnecessary. Anyhow, when we got to the center of town which is La Rampa of course and we got out to have a coffee and so to bed, we met Irenita plus some nameless friend of hers who were just leaving Fernando's Higeaway and straight to be so we invited them to go to Las Vegas where there wasn't a show or a *chowcito* or anything by

now, only the jukebox and some very distant relatives so we only stayed there for about a half-hour drinking and talking and laughing and listening to some unknown records and it was almost dawn when we took them both to a hotel on the beach.[465]

The temporal references in this paragraph, the lack of punctuation allowing for uninterrupted narrative, and the disaffection in which events are related have a distinctive cinematographic quality: events unfold without the emotional introspection of the author. Cabrera Infante's literary approach to Havana's nocturnal transgressions has that cheerful resignation of those who see things passing by their eyes without being filtered through their diurnal morality. His account of Havana's nightlife during the 1950s has no victims, or oppressors - only and alternatively, entertainers and entertained. Those who join the city's nocturnal life will, at some point, fulfil each of those two roles and feel they belong to this world as fully entitled nocturnal citizens. This description of the nocturnal as a holistic spectacle, where everyone is at the same time spectator and spectacle, is exemplified in the following paragraph:

But first, with the excuses of my kind audience, I would like to welcome some old friends to this palace of happiness ... Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we are honoured by one famous and lovely and talented guest ... *la bella, gloriosa, famosa estrella del cine, madmuasel Martín Carol! Luces, luces? Miss Carol, tendría la amabilidad ...? Gracias, muchas gracias, señorita Carol!* As they say in your language, Merdsi Bocú (Asyouhaveseenmydearaudienceitisthevisitofthegreatstarofthescreenthebeautifulgla morousMartínCarol!) Less beautiful but as rich and as famous is our very good friend and frequent guest of Tropicana, the wealthy and healthy (he is an early riser) Mr. William Campbell, the notorious soup-fortune heir and world champion of indoor golf and indoor tennis (and other not so mentionable indoor sports – ha ha ha!). William Campbell, our favourite playboy! Lights (Thank you, Mr. Campbell), lights, lights! Thanks so much, Mr. Campbell! Thank you very much! (*Amableypacientepúblicocuanoes Mister Campbell elfamosomillonario herederodeunafortunaensopas*)[466]

Madame Martine Carol and Mr William Campbell –in the novel they are not really the film star and the soup millionaire, they just happen to have the same names – become part of the spectacle and they are introduced as such to the Cuban spectator and performers. The constant cinematographic references in the novel have much to do with this spectacle/spectator transgression. Cabrera Infante's memories of Havana are related to the city as spectacle, a spectacle that had its origin in the cabaret genre as the cultural set of artistic inter-disciplinarity and social and political satire[467]. The nocturnal is represented as

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the spatial and temporal dimension where the cultural scene of the city emerges and develops. In Havana's case, the particularities of this cultural scene had music and dance as their central focus, due primarily to economic reasons: the tourist industry on the island would mainly promote musical manifestations as they were the ones demanded by North American tourists. However, Cabrera Infante's record of this cultural renaissance - with the form of the *Bolero*[468] as one of its achievements – relates more to what it meant to the intellectual working in Havana, as well as his or her creative achievements[469]. In *Three Trapped Tigers* Cabrera Infante uses different city-slangs, according to who is speaking. At times, the writing draws from the tradition of *Bolero*'s lyrics. On other occasions he uses the distinctive languages of different Cuban authors. This eclectic exercise seems to be founded in the belief that the cultural life of the city, including literature and cinema, depends not only on the encounter between different disciplines, but also between the different groups cohabiting in the city itself.

As Cabrera Infante narrates in *Three Trapped Tigers*, Havana's nocturnal spectacle acted as the battlefield where the different cultural and social groups met and, on occasion, were reconciled. However, in his writings there is never the suggestion that the city as a whole embodies the utopia of the culturally diverse. Such reconciliation would happen only at night, within the safe borders of the nightclub or cabaret, and would be a fragile and temporary challenge to the gender, sexual, class and racial inequalities experienced by Cubans at the time. From 1965 to 1967[470], when the new Cuban government decided to arbitrarily arrest and imprison all those accused of 'homosexuality', prostitution and the euphemistically termed 'deviant conduct', it was made manifest that Havana's nocturnal transgressions were the real challenge to the construction of the 'new man' as imagined by the new rulers. Cabrera Infante explained it in these terms: 'They were dissidents... Dissidents to that petty bourgeoisie's morality that gives priority to the institution of the family'[471]. As Cabrera Infante understood them, they represented the other frustrated revolution, the one designed to overcome the moral hegemony of the family, once economic and cultural dependency on the United States were removed from the island.

In his 1996 novel, *Ella Cantaba Boleros* (She Would Sing Boleros), Cabrera Infante alludes nostalgically to the pre-revolutionary times when he was part of the group of intellectuals and artists living in Havana who would dream of a new Cuban cultural

renaissance under the influence of European and North American filmic avant-gardes. His description of an encounter with Titón, the affective nick-name given to the Cuban filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, reads as the lament of a man who has been betrayed by his best friend:

> Pero cuando regresó Titón de Italia, convertido en un cineasta diplomado, hablando de Roma y de ruinas [...], pude decirle, conocedor: «*Est rerum facta pulcherrima Habana*« y enseñarle a él, un nativo mi Habana viva.
>
> [...]
>
> Esta muestra de La Habana invisible para Titón, exiliado en su casa con su piano y sus patentes [...][472]
>
> [*But when Titón came back from Italy, turned into a certified filmmaker, talking of Rome and ruins [...], I could tell him, knowledgeable: «Est rerum facta pulcherrima Havana«[473] and show to him, a native, my live Havana*
> [...]
>
> *This revelation of the invisible Havana to Titón, exiled in his house with his piano and his inventions* ...]

The 'Habana viva' that Cabrera Infante claims to have shown to one of the most important Cuban filmmakers of the Revolution is presented as a revelation. The hidden city never known to Gutiérrez Alea appears as the other to Rome, the eternal European city from which the filmmaker draws his traditions (and the mention of his piano is also a reference to this cultural distance from those other cultural traditions present in Havana). The fact that Gutiérrez Alea went to Italy to learn the theoretical and technical precepts of the, then, very influential, Italian neo-realism acquires, therefore, a significant meaning[474]. Titón looks at Havana with new eyes, the eyes of a neorealist filmmaker trying to represent his city in a completely different manner -breaking with the *clichés* and Hollywood mannerisms practised by his predecessors. The 1959 Revolution gave him the opportunity to do so, with the financial and promotional support of the Cuban State. *La muerte de un burócrata* (1966) and *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968) were definitively set in another city, far from the Hollywood recreations of a North American playground[475]. However, these post-1959 films also show the director's Europeanization and his alienation from Havana's nocturnal life, expressed by Cabrera Infante in the paragraph above. In the opening sequence to *Memorias* ..., where the image of Afro-Cubans dancing is equated

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with the idea of underdevelopment (see Chapter IV), resonates with the polemics around *PM.* Nocturnal life appears as the site of the criminal and the Afro-Cubans who inhabit it as its lumpen class.

The Cuban filmmaker Julio García Espinosa presented a much more complex take on the city's nocturnal and cultural life. Although ideologically aligned to the 1959 Revolution, he made a film in 1977 called *Son o no son*, containing references to that Havana nightlife spectacle becoming extinct, in a very similar tone to that used by Cabrera Infante in exile. Some of the Cuban dissident groups living in Miami have explained the lack of distribution of this film in Cuban cinemas as another case of official censorship[476]. However, García Espinosa in his interviews with Michael Chanan, contested this interpretation[477]. In his version of events, the film was never finished and therefore could not reach the main Cuban film theatres. He admitted showing it only to a small group of friends and experts. However, we should explore why this film and its lack of distribution in the main Cuban theatres would be understood by some as a threat to the political power of the Cuban ruling groups. Politically, the closure of many of the cabarets and nightclubs that had sprung up in the city, thanks to the touristic boom of the 1950s and the existence of a group of now unemployed night entertainers, was associated with the marginalisation of that social minority classified at the time as 'deviants' or practitioners of 'improper behaviour'. Such improper behaviour not only refers to sexual practices outside the heterosexual couple, but would also include all those who did not conform with the post 1959 revolutionary rhetoric of the 'new man', that 'heroic revolutionary' described by Che Guevara as the ideal social type in a truly socialist country[478].

The cultural traditions recovered by Julio García Espinosa in *Son o no son* were common in the city's cultural life prior to the revolutionary period. However, they rarely shared the same space. 'High Art' forms mingle with the more 'popular', traditionally associated with Havana's night-clubs and cabarets. There is poetry, classical theatre, dance, stand-up comedy, popular dances such as the son to which the title refers, cabaret troupes and cinematographic drama. García Espinosa purposely looked at the musical tradition in Cuban filmography in order to shoot this film. Films shot in Cuba before the 1959 Revolution, regardless of the nationality of their productions, had only represented mainstream cabaret spectacles, such as those in shown at the Parisienne or at the Tropicana.

On the screens, only performers of European origin[479] would be represented and in a style borrowed from the Hollywood traditions. However, separations between African and European cultures in Cuba are highly problematic. For the intellectuals and artists of the 'left', such as García Espinosa, the problem consisted in a matter of recognition: popular music and other artistic manifestations had in many cases originated from the cultures brought by the ancestors of the Afro-Cubans. There were, and still are, a very high proportion of Afro-Cubans among the poorest sectors of the Cuban population. The separation between popular culture and high culture in Cuba was as much a question of race as of social class. Popular cabaret, in contrast to the so-called firs-class cabarets[480], was quite often 'staffed' by Afro-Cubans, who would also constitute an important proportion of its clientele, particularly at the low-key *garitos*[481].

Questions of national identity, popular culture and cultural differences within Cuban theatre had resulted in figures such as the trilogy of 'el gallego', 'el negro bozal' and 'la mulata', a three-character theatre-spectacle, humoristically representing the birth of the Cuban Nation: the Spanish emigrant, the African descendent of slaves and the mixed race woman. This cabaret tradition in Havana was depicted by Enrique Pineda Barnet in his 1989 film *La Bella de Alhambra*, alluding to its racist connotations, being the African character normally represented by a white man, whose face has been painted black and who would speak and behave in a stupid manner. This theatrical figure, who would make fun of the African as much as the Spaniard (the distinctive Galician accent and outfit were synonymous with provincialism and rural naivety to the *criollo* population), came to function as a negative metaphor of the Cuban national identity. The figure of 'la mulata' would be its 'positive', always standing for the ideal of the Cuban Nation. She would invariably be a sexually forward woman, a female nation containing both the African and the Spanish male 'seeds'[482]. However, in cinematography these representations were very rare. Afro-Cubans, playing themselves or being parodied by a white person, hardly ever appeared on screen and references to Afro-Cuban elements in Cuban culture would normally refer to the idea of the African as primitive, irrational and sexually excessive[483].

Before the foundation of the ICAIC in 1959, Cuban cinematographic productions were rare and unoriginal – in many cases they were co-productions with Mexico or Argentina, countries which enjoyed stronger film industries. Although they were not musicals, their

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musical numbers were abundant and would normally play a central role. There existed close links between the Cuban cabaret tradition and these films. What is more, both industries would normally share the same economic interests as the tourist industry. Most of the musical numbers were shot in the interiors of Havana's luxury cabarets and nightclubs, many of them situated inside the newly erected hotels. A film such as *Estampas Habaneras,* made as early as 1939, successfully equated the diversity of Havana's musical scene with the distinctiveness of Cuban national identity, constituted by the cultural traditions brought by the city's *criollos* and immigrant populations. This film was shot at a time of extreme social tension, after the political upheavals of 1933 and while the city was still experiencing important waves of immigration from Spain and the eastern parts of the island. It was also a time when North American cultural influence was consolidating its hegemonic role over the Spanish, due to the now total control of the Island's economy by American businesses[484]. However, this film, in part thought to alleviate the social tensions brought about by the changing circumstances of Cuban's main urban centre, refused to embrace openly such cultural dominance by the United States.

Social apartheid and subsequent racial tensions were therefore part of the historical context in which an apparently 'innocent' film such as *Estampas Habaneras* contributed to later associations of the city of Havana with the symbols of the national. The relevance of such a film was the fact that it represented one of the first times before January 1959 when questions of racial differences and contributions of Afro-Cubans to the constitution of a Cuban national identity were approached in mainstream cinema.

In the following passage, a cinema critic in Havana described the Cuban character of one of the main musical number sequences in the film in the following terms:

> Rodríguez y su conocimiento del sentido criollo. La ejecución de los números musicales a cargo de A. Ma. Romeu, señor del danzón, que nos ofrece uno de sus mayores éxitos y de la nota de máxima cubanidad a una de las principales escenas del film, que su hijo y su esposa de este se encargan de completar bailándonos el clásico danzón tal como es.... Después que el simpatiquísimo y formidable bailarín excéntrico 'puppy' Campillo, diera una cómica y desbaratada interpretación del danzón. El espléndido coro que canta y baila el Ilenko Ilembe, danza de Gilberto Valdés, en que figuran como solistas María Regina Rivero y Alfredito Valdés, ...[485]

[Rodriguez and his knowledge of the criollo sensibility. The execution of the musical acts by A. Ma. Romeu, master of the danzón, who offers us one of his biggest successes, giving the character of high cubanity to one of the main sequences in the film, that his son and wife will complete by dancing the traditional danzón... Afterwards, the fantastic and very funny dancer, excentric 'puppy' Campillo, gave a comic and chaotic interpretation of the danzón. The marvellous choir who sings and dance the Ilenko Ilembe, dance of Gilberto Valdés, where the dancers Maria Regina Rivero and Alfredito Valdés appear,..]

A contemporary reading of this review, in comparison with the sequences it uses as its referent, gives us an understanding of the cultural battles characteristic at the end of the 1930s in Havana. Where Afro-Cubans are represented in this film, they, firstly, occupy a different space to Euro-Cubans: the main characters look through a window that separates them from the space occupied by black Cubans or merely stand by the door without entering the different room[486]. Secondly, they are represented performing a supposedly African dance, the *Ilenko Ilembe*, which was a reinterpretation of the 'sanitised' exoticism practised at the time by Hollywood when bringing non-white cultures to the screen (See DVD: *Estampas Habaneras*: representations of Afro-Cubans). Neither the music nor the dance in this sequence corresponded to the reality of Afro-Cuban cultural manifestations at the time, still practised in the black-only spaces of the city and practically barred from film representation[487]. However, by including black Cubans and, though distorted, their cultural manifestations, this film aspired to reach its Afro-Cuban audience in order to include them in the national rhetoric of the time. At the end of the sequence, the Mexican and Galician characters are shown an Afro Cuban altar with the explanation that differences in form do not count as differences in content and, therefore, Afro Cubans' religious practices correspond to the same religious faith as that of their white compatriots: Catholicism. The Mexican and Galician react with laughter, finding the altar amusing. A black man standing by the other side of the door stares gravely at them, having taken offence. The Mexican and the Galician respond fearfully, while the white Cuban with them expresses his disapproval. This scene was supposed to send a complicit nod to the Afro-Cuban audiences, making them feel part of the patriotic celebrations played out in the film. It was also an attempt at reconciliation, implying that the racist and ignorant attitudes brought by the new white emigrants into the city could easily be resolved in peaceful cohabitation through mutual understanding of each other's differences. However, identification by black audiences

could not be possible while their cultural manifestations were either distorted or 'sanitised' or otherwise appropriated and represented on the screen by white artists.

The critic who wrote the above review, probably only aware of the dominant Spanish traditions in the island, describes the performance by the dancer Puppy Campillo as a 'comic and chaotic interpretation of the *danzón*', a type of dance practised at the time by the mainly white and wealthy groups in Cuba (See DVD: *Estampas Habaneras*: Puppy Campillos' performance). In reality, Puppy Campillo was parodying Afro-Cubans performing[488]. Even though Afro-Cubans very rarely made it to the screen, they performed often in the city's main clubs and cabarets, as musicians and dancers. According to Robin Moore and Rosalie Schwartz, the overrepresentation of Afro-Cubans in these performances was mainly due to the North-American visitors' demand for 'authenticity'[489]. However, such 'authenticity' had much to do with what had happened in Paris during the 1920s, the stereotyping of a supposedly 'primitive' African culture into cultural forms that would conform to such expectations. Petrine Archer-Straw, in her book *Negrophilia* from 2001, comments on how Afro-American performers would play out these stereotypes in order to obtain recognition:

> Although it may have suited white Parisians to believe that the blacks with whom they associated were authentic Africans, this was usually far from the case. These blacks, eager to enter white society, accentuated the more entertaining aspects of their culture by exploiting their abilities to sing and dance and to appear comical; at the same time they also diluted their 'otherness' in order to gain acceptance. The blacks with whom Paris flirted twisted themselves 'outside in' to meet the needs of white audiences.[490]

To illustrate her point, she inserts a photograph of Josephine Baker, adopting a very similar position to that of Campillo in *Estampas* [Illustration 58]: 'Josephine plays the 'homegirl' country bumpkin. Twisting her body into a pose that looks more animal than human, she crosses her eyes in stupefied mock innocence.'[491]
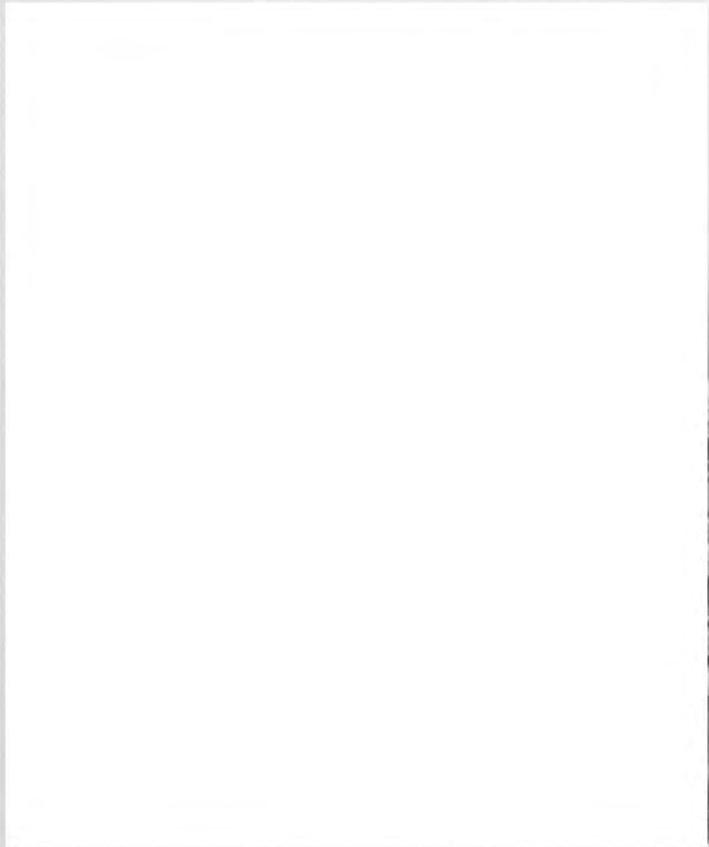
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Illustration 58. Photograph of Josephine Baker performing the character of 'bumpkin'. Published in Petrine Archer-Straw's *Negrophilia: Black Culture and Avant-Garde Paris* (2001)

This similar type of stereotyping of Afro-Cubans and Afro-Americans was hardly surprising because, since the beginning of the city's tourist industry, the high-key cabarets and night spectacles in Havana catered mainly for the North American market. However, as Robin Moore explains, this influence worked two ways. Afro-Cuban-influenced musical forms had been already popularised abroad by Cuban musicians and dancers and had been taken on by Afro-American performers[492].

By January 1959, Afro-Cuban artist Benny Moré was already internationally renowned and a national symbol, and living proof to Afro-Cubans that social recognition was possible at least in the musical field[493]. For the 1959 leaders, the inclusion of Afro-Cubans within the revolutionary process was essential, and recognition of their contribution to the constitution of the Cuban nation, through new cultural policies, became one of their first objectives[494].

Son o no son was created in 1977 as part of the cultural debate regarding national identity initiated by the 1959 Revolution (See DVD: *Son o no son*). As a musical drawn from the traditions of the Cuban cabaret, it had as referent the Cuban filmography prior to January 1959, with films such as *Estampas Habaneras* (1939) or *Sucedió en La Habana* (1938). In

collaboration with Cuban composer Leo Brouwer, the film can also be seen as an attempt to claim the Afro-Cuban aspects of Cuban popular culture, as exemplified by its music and dances. The following synopsis was written by García Espinosa in order to justify the relevance of the film in the cultural processes initiated by the 1959 Revolution:

El Son es uno de los géneros mas auténticos y populares de la música cubana. También la palabra son, en español, es la tercera persona del plural del verbo ser. De ahi que el titulo de la película *Son o no son* resulte, en otro idioma, difícil de entender en su doble significado. Este juego de palabras expresa el sentido esencial de la película. *Son o no son* no es propiamente una comedia musical. Sin embargo la música y la comedia están presentes en todo el film. *Son o no son* trata de decir en broma algunas cosas que resultan muy serias. La película comienza mostrando el ensayo de una comedia musical. Ante las dificultades que presenta, para un país subdesarrollado, hacer un musical al estilo de Hollywood, el film prácticamente se interrumpe y propone una serie de reflexiones sobre el tema, sin perder su carácter humorístico. Los espectáculos, el cine, la radio, la televisión, los comics, es decir, todos aquellos medios relacionados con la llamada cultura de masas, son cuestionados en su fase actual de banalizacion y deformación de las culturas nacionales. *Son o no son* es finalmente un llamado a nuestros artistas para hacer de estos medios un uso mas autentico y verdaderamente popular.[495]

[*The Son is one of the most authentic and popular genres in Cuban music. Also, the word son, in Spanish, is the plural third person in the verb to be. That is why the title of the film results in another idiom, difficult to understand in its double meaning. This word-play expresses the deep meaning in the film.* Son o no son *is not exactly a musical comedy. However, music and comedy are present in the whole film.* Son o no son *tries to joke about very serious matters. The film starts showing the rehearsal of a musical comedy. Because of the difficulties that an underdeveloped country faces when trying to create a musical in Hollywood style, the film is practically interrupted and proposes a series of reflections on the subject, without losing its humoristic character. The spectacles, cinema, radio, television, comics, in short, all the media related to the so called mass culture, are questioned in its trivialisation and misrepresentation of national cultures.* Son o no son *is finally a call to our artists to give to this media a more authentic and popular use.*]

This first explanation of the objectives and meanings of the film fitted García Espinosa's ideological stand in the post 1959 cultural debate regarding the role of the arts within the revolutionary process[496]. He defined this role in his essay *Por un cine imperfecto*, mentioned in Chapter IV. At a time when national film industries in Latin America were struggling to survive due to the overwhelming advantages of North American productions, García Espinosa defended the Revolution's attacks on Cuba's economic dependence on the United States, as the first opportunity Cuban filmmakers had of developing a national

cinema industry outside Hollywood's cultural monopoly. A national cinema meant, in the first instance, a more 'authentic' and 'popular' cinema:

> El arte popular no tiene nada que ver con el llamado arte de masas. El arte popular necesita, y por lo tanto tiende a desarrollar el gusto personal, individual, del pueblo. El arte de masas o para las masas, por el contrario, necesita que el pueblo no tenga gusto. El arte de masas será en realidad tal, cuando verdaderamente lo hagan las masas. Arte de masas, hoy en día, es el arte que hacen unos pocos para las masas.
> ...
>
> El arte popular es el que ha hecho siempre la parte más inculta de la sociedad. Pero este sector inculto ha logrado conservar para el arte características profundamente cultas. Una de ellas es que los creadores son al mismo tiempo los espectadores y viceversa. ... El arte culto, en nuestros días, ha logrado también esa situación. La gran cuota de libertad del arte moderno no es más que la conquista de un nuevo interlocutor: el propio artista. ... Esta situación mantenida por el arte popular, conquistada por el arte culto, debe fundirse y convertirse en patrimonio de todos. Ese y no otro debe ser el gran objetivo de una cultura artística auténticamente revolucionaria.
>
> Pero el arte popular conserva otra característica aún más importante para la cultura. El arte popular se realiza como una actividad más de la vida. [497]

> [*Popular art has nothing to do with the so-called mass-culture. Popular art needs, and therefore tends to develop the personal, individual taste of the people. An art of masses or for the masses, on the contrary, needs the people to be tasteless. A real art for the masses will happen only when it is truly done by the masses. An art of masses, nowadays, is the art made by a few for the many. ...*
>
> *Popular art is the one traditionally made by the un-educated sections of society. But this un-educated group has managed to keep for the arts highly cultured characteristics. One of them is that creators are at the same time spectators and vice versa. ... Cultured art today has also reached this point. The high level of freedom in modern art is really the conquest of a new interlocutor: the artist himself/herself. ... This situation maintained by popular art and conquered by modern art must blend and become the patrimony of everyone. That is the objective of an authentically revolutionary artistic culture.*
>
> *However, popular art maintains another feature even more important for our culture. Popular art is exercised as just another life activity.*]

Therefore, García Espinosa equates popular art's fusion with life with modern, and mainly European, art's achievement: an art that has stopped being at the service of the ruling groups to now serving the interests of the individual who creates it. Only that in an 'authentically revolutionary artistic culture' those who create will be everyone: the masses

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as a whole. Popular art and modern art are equated to real life, while mass culture is described as just alienated ideology, constituting the polarity 'popular culture = authentic' versus 'mass culture = inauthentic'. Loyal to his Marxist background (as a member of the Communist Party of Cuba), García Espinosa would equate mass culture with the ruling economic groups concentrated in the United States. Mass culture in this context has as its objective to perpetuate the ideological justification of United States' cultural domination over Latin America. Hollywood would present as 'natural' what is just 'ideological' by hiding from the spectator the technological character and visual conventions of film practice, the technological perfection that gives the impression of 'naturalism' in cinema[498].

In what sense does *Son o no son* work as a visual essay exemplifying such theorisations? It does so by equating the popular in Cuba with its cabaret traditions and giving to the film the artificial look and acting characteristics of the cabaret genre, particularly those developed in Havana. The film is set in the Tropicana cabaret, located in the neighbourhood of Marianao, probably the most famous Cuban venue inside and outside the island. *Son o no son*, in its temporal and spatial discontinuities and ruptures has a night-time quality, although it was set and shot during daytime. Its cabaret form - the different acts follow each other without narrative continuity – alludes to the influence that this genre has always had on Cuban music, dance and cinema. It was thought of as a visual and musical essay on Cuban popular culture and as a recognition of the central role that Afro-Cubans have played in its constitution. However, if it is true that such a task was taken over by the intellectual and artistic groups in the island in accord with new government cultural policies, the fact that García Espinosa chose the cabaret genre to carry them out explains the unsettled ground on which the film came to land. Most of the cultural forms deployed were not those commonly associated with that classified as Afro-Cuban 'folklore' by the new cultural authorities: mainly traditional rumba, and dances derived from Santería and Abakuá religious rituals[499]. Even though some of them drew from these traditions, they were developments of the cabaret and club culture of a tourist-orientated Havana[500]. Together with these forms, García Espinosa also included the tradition of cabaret stand-up comedy, with the presence of, at the time, well-known Cuban comedians.

In his conversations with Víctor Fowler, García Espinosa ventured another explanation for *Son o no son*, allowing for a veiled criticism of the government's cultural policies at the end

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of the 1960s. Although his films and writings have normally been positioned as ideologically on the side of those in power after 1959, this film seems to relate to Cabrera Infante's celebrations of the nocturnal and its expression of the cabaret genre.

> ... *Son o no son* es también un producto de mi obsesión por el cabaret. En 1968 organizo un espectáculo de cabaret en el hotel Habana libre para los asistentes al Congreso Cultural de La Habana. En Marzo de ese mismo año cerraron los cabarets. Se entendió entonces que bares y cabarets estaban aglutinando al lumpen y estimulando el ocio y la bebedera mas allá de lo que las fuerzas de un país subdesarrollado podían permitirse. Pues el caso es que se acabó el show....Y así iría surgiendo la idea de *Son o no son*. Es decir, que años después haría el film que, como tú sabes, se desarrolla en el escenario del cabaret Tropicana, pero un Tropicana de día, sin afeites, sin plumas ni lentejuelas, invitando a una reflexión sobre la cultura popular. Y es que siempre he pensado que, en nuestro país dado su fuerza musical, el cabaret debe estar llamado a ser jerarquizado artísticamente para que juegue un papel determinante en nuestra cultura y, en particular, en el desarrollo de nuestra música popular.[501]

> [... Son o no son *is also a product of my obsession with the cabaret genre. In 1968 I organised a cabaret spectacle at the Habana Libre Hotel for the audience at the Havana Cultural Congress. In March of that same year all the cabarets were closed. It was understood then that bars and cabarets were gathering the lumpen and encouraging idleness and drunkenness beyond what an underdeveloped country could afford. The fact was, the show was over... And that is how the idea for* Son o no son *was born. I mean, years later I made the film that, as you know, is set at the Tropicana stages, but a daily Tropicana, without the perfumes, the feathers, the sequins, inviting a reflection on popular culture. I have always thought that, due to the musical strength of this country, the cabaret must be artistically raised in order to play a fundamental role in our culture and particularly, in the development of our popular music.*]

Although García Espinosa refused at the time to criticise openly the decision to close Havana's cabarets and clubs, his interest in the cabaret genre, as an expression of what he understood by popular culture, compeled him to covertly defy such a decision by bringing a cabaret spectacle to the screen, and by setting it in the symbolic space of Tropicana. Symbolic because Tropicana came to represent Havana before the social changes brought about by the revolutionary process, the economic and cultural splendour of its nocturnal life. As in Cabrera Infante's explanation of events, García Espinosa uses the term *lumpen* to describe the antisocial behaviour the government was attempting to repress through the suspension of the city's nightlife. It is true that the above comments could have been understood primarily as justification of the government's policy - an attempt to understand

the motives that led not only to the closure of cabarets and nightclubs, but also to the ban on rock music, as the music of the 'imperial powers'. However, they are also a sign of the cultural battles being fought at the time between those who saw such *lumpen* as that underclass of unproductive and idle social 'parasites' nurtured at night, and those who believed it to be an important source in the development of new forms of culture. Neither the closure of cabarets and nightclubs nor the ban on rock music lasted for long. The absurdities of such policies, which put the Cuban regime at odds with the 1968 flourishing of the European and North American left groups and their identification with the new young cultures meant they were easily dismissed after a few months[502].

In 1995, after the renewal of Havana's tourist promotion which encouraged new revivals of the cabaret culture during the 1950s, García Espinosa theorised again on the subject:

> Hay una base viva que continúa manifestándose y a la cual se hace imprescindible concederle el máximo de importancia. Están los bailes y están los centros nocturnos o cabarets. Focos, en nosotros, todavía potenciales de un acto vivo. Ni unos ni otros pueden concebirse como zonas donde el pueblo acude a disipar el cansancio. Unos y otros deben se escenarios donde el pueblo se exprese y sea expresado.[503]

> [*There is a living foundation which still manifests itself and to which we must concede high importance. They are the festivals and the nocturnal centres or cabarets. Focus, among us (sic), still possibilities of a living act. Neither of them can be conceived as zones where the people go to rest their tiredness. Each of them must be the spaces where the people express themselves and are expressed.*]

The expression 'el pueblo' is the equivalent to 'the people' in English, a generic term that within the rhetoric of the left, essentialises and differentiates those in positions of power, particularly economic power, from the rest, as if this 'rest' was a unified category. In his earlier film *Cuba baila* (1962), shot while many of the 1950s nightclubs and cabarets were still open in Havana, García Espinosa had already visually contrasted what he defined as the popular with the then understood elitist cultural manifestations, such as the salon dances and music, common among the wealthy white groups in the city. *Cuba baila*[504] was supposedly set in the years prior to the 1959 events. However, it addressed those white middle class groups still resident on the island after the revolutionary economic changes and who resisted the possible loss of their ethnic and class privileges[505]. The protagonists, a family of white Cubans of low economic level, are divided by their ethnic and class

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loyalties. The wife wishes to imitate the lifestyle and customs of wealthy white families, without being able to afford them. The husband looks for refuge in the spaces where the mainly poor black groups meet and express their culture. The sequence shot inside one of the many small night-clubs existent at the time in the area of Playa, shows a spectacle of Afro-Cuban music and dance, being enjoyed by a mixed clientele – Afro-Cubans, Euro-Cubans and North American tourists (See DVD: *Cuba baila*). The presence of a sexual worker and a couple of North American tourists alludes to the pre-revolutionary moral decadency of the city. However, the vibrant energy of the spectacle, a type derived from traditional rumba performed by an Afro-Cuban dancer, works as a positive contrast to the moral stiffness of the island's wealthy groups, previously shown dancing to a classical *vals* in a luxurious environment. The open sensuality and forwardness of the dancer at the cabaret comes to represent that expression of the popular that García Espinosa claimed as 'the spaces where people express themselves and are expressed'. However, in *Cuba baila*, the city space that comes to epitomise a more integrated concept of the popular is not the cabarets in Marianao, but the outside entertainment area of La Tropical, a space dedicated mainly to daytime popular dance, with a bigger mixture of Afro-Cubans and Euro-Cubans belonging to the lower social groups. This is how Michael Chanan interprets *Cuba baila*:

> Here the film comes close to suggesting a different paradigm to neorealism, that of the French Popular Front films of the 30s, where songs and dancing also play an important and positive role in portraying the social cohesion of the popular classes.[506]

Cabrera Infante's celebration of Havana's nightlife before events in January 1959, did more than just recognise the cabaret genre as an expression of the 'popular', (whatever that term comes to mean). In his account, these were the spaces where he could 'transcend' the moral constrictions of his origins, his provinciality[507]. What he defined as 'the real heroes of the *lumpen*' were those who challenged such ideologies at night, while hiding and conforming during the daytime. Cabarets and nightclubs were not only spaces for the expression of the popular but also the spaces for sexual and political contestation by a minority. Being 'revolutionary' and revealing the 'popular' were not part of this nocturnal *lumpen*'s objectives. Their aspiration was to open spaces out of the diurnal moral tyrannies: a life dedicated to work and family. This was the case before and after the 1959 revolution. The difference was that the economic and social reforms introduced by the new government,

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their insistence on the construction of a self-righteous society at any time and in any place, made such transgressions a criminal offence.

In the post-1959 cultural struggles in Cuba - once North American economic influence was removed - the debate stopped short of challenging the moral hegemony of those proclaiming the family and the national state as the basis of Cuban society. In short, any attempt to shake the moral grounds of such ideology, particularly within the arts, would meet with censorship and repression. The city of Havana was the main ground where such battles were fought. Cinema and literature came to the rescue of a genre threatened by extinction, which could not continue to develop under the new political circumstances. Havana had been represented as the city of cabaret and nocturnal transgression. Those who talked about North American and Cuban society's moral decadency managed to associate Havana's nightlife with the criminal, a significant aspect of that 'capitalist' society the socialist revolution was supposed to suppress. As a consequence, the criminal together with the nocturnal 'disappeared' from most of the post 1959 representations of the city[508].

Another set of images that became emblematic of 1950s Havana were made by the Cuban documentary photographer Constantino Arias. His most representative work was produced in two emblematic spaces: the National Hotel in Vedado and the Rumba Palace in Marianao[509]. As the official photographer throughout the decade of the National Hotel and the cabaret in its basement, The Parisienne, he managed to leave a very extensive photographic archive of probably the most elitist hotel in the city at the time. There are shots from the casino, portraits of its most famous guests, (mainly wealthy North Americans), images of the white-only performers and entertainers at the cabaret with its also white-only clientele [Illustration 59]. At the same time, he would often go to the cabarets and night-clubs in the area of Playa, where performers and clientele were predominantly Afro-Cubans. Among his images of the Rumba Palace there are several showing the timbal player Chori, one of the better-known Afro-Cuban performers at the time, together with Benny Moré. Many of the intellectuals later promoted by the new authorities as cultural leaders, would frequent 'El Chori', the Rumba Palace and the other similar night-clubs and cabarets in the area of Playa in Marianao [Illustrations 60 and 61].

Illustration 59. Constantino Arias' photograph of North American tourists in Havana (1950s)
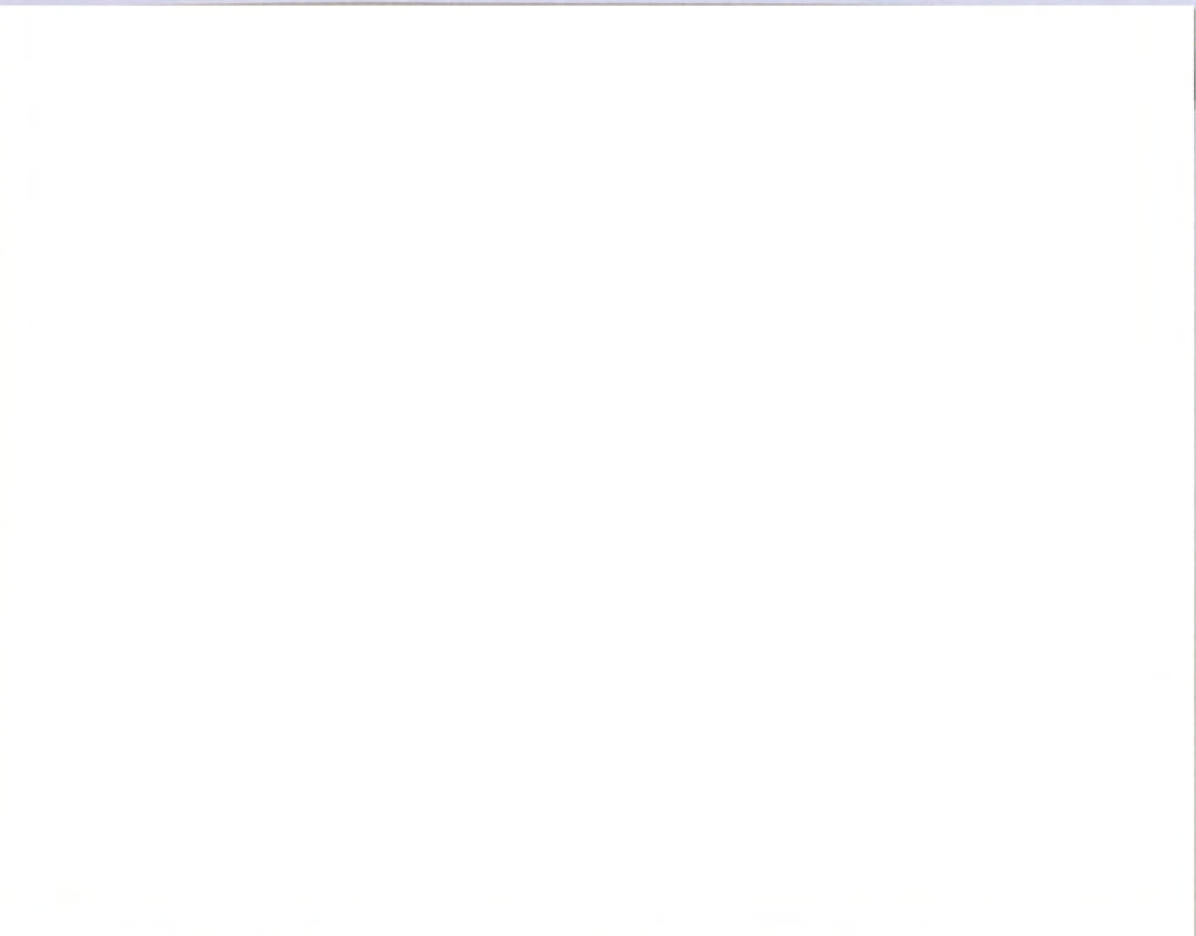
Illustration 60. Constantino Arias' photographs of women at the Rumba Palace (1950s)

Illustration 61. Constantino Arias' photograph of 'El Chori' and others at the Palace Bar (1950s)

As I explained before, exposure to and knowledge of Afro-Cuban cultural expressions, was an essential condition of their political affiliations among white left-wing intellectuals and artists in Cuba. The apartheid policies of the city's tourist industry were mainly attributed to the North American economic powers in the island by those who took over power after 1959. Euro-Cubans who were ideologically against segregation visited those spaces where the presence of black Cubans in the city was predominant. However, the other main reason why there would be white males in these spaces was sexual access to black women. García Espinosa scripted in 1978 the documentary *La Rumba* directed by Oscar Valdés. In this documentary he alluded to the origin of the concept *rumba* in Spanish as a term that designates 'una mujer de rumbo', a wandering woman (See DVD: *La Rumba*). As it is again explained in Valdés's documentary, the name *rumba* is a generic term that, in Cuba, refers to a diverse group of Afro-Cuban dance and musical expression (among them, the better known *guagancó*). This association between the spaces where Afro-Cubans would

gather at night and the sexual availability of black women has been a constant in the perceptions of the white Cuban middle and upper classes.[510]

The photograph taken by Arias of Afro-Cuban women sitting and standing, while enjoying the spectacle at the Rumba Palace, would seem innocently banal if it were not for this association between race, nightlife and the sex industry. However, that they were sex workers is just an assumption. It was inconceivable for the white and black upper and middle classes at the time that women who were not sex workers should be in such places on their own, exposed to male gazes and advances. These women would normally be catalogued as 'prostitutes' even when there was not evidence of sexual trade.

The sequence described above in García Espinosa's film *Cuba baila* was shot in one of these night-clubs in the area of Playa. According to García Espinosa, the lack of identification of the main character with what is going on in the club, his feeling of being 'out of place' in the spaces dominated by the Afro-Cuban poor, is key to understanding the dynamics in this sequence. This feeling 'out of place' is in part autobiographical[511]. As he has also commented, before 1959, he would often go to places like 'El Chori' but as a spectator, a client, not as a participant[512]. In my interview with García Espinosa he calls the space he would normally visit in Playa, 'El Chori'[513] instead of the 'Rumba Palace'. Both names refer to that same space where Constantino Arias took the above images. The documentary *PM* also includes images from this nightclub, with an older-looking 'Chori' performing [Illustration 63]. The famous night-clubs and cabarets in the Playa area were also linked to the slums of Las Yaguas, described in the second chapter. For the white male Cuban who would attend them in search of musical and sexual difference, it was the equivalent of entering a 'foreign' land[514]. For García Espinosa, they were also the spaces where 'authentic' popular music in Havana was then developing[515]. This characterisation of Afro-Cuban's cultural expressions as 'authentic' by Euro-Cubans relates to the same exotisation of Afro-Americans by the white, and mainly wealthy, Europeans at the beginning of the twentieth century – an exotisation that Archer-Straw defines as 'negrophilia':

> The process of 'othering' allowed both partners to act out myths and fantasies. For whites, the negrophiliac relationship provided a space for rebellion against social

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norms. They naively considered blacks to be more vital, more passionate and more sexual. Their fantasies were about being different, even about being black. Living out these ideas involved 'getting down' with black people. No social evening was complete without black musicians and dancers. ... For some whites, the fantasies went beyond 'high jinks and dancing' and involved flaunting taboos by dating blacks.[516]

In the case of Cuba, it was the search for a sexual encounter with Afro-Cuban women that would take many Euro-Cuban men to the night spaces in Marianao. The mythology of the Spanish man and the African woman meeting and falling in love as the metaphorical origins of the Cuban nation has been played out recently by mainly Spanish-Cuban co-productions[517]. However, examples of what this relation in Cuba have been largely based on – power, rape and exploitation, particularly during the times of slavery – are practically absent from Cuban cinematography[518]. Also absent is the taboo that existed during a long period on the sexuality between the white woman and the black man in Cuba and nearly everywhere else where the institution of slavery was prominent.

These spaces where the axes of racial, gender and class differences would cross and become visible as an urbanity constituted by conflict and exclusion are the ones García Espinosa described in *Cuba baila*. The film's conclusion, with the entire family and their guests celebrating the daughter's fifteen years at La Tropical, is that by eliminating such axes, particularly those associated with class and racial differences, the conflict would also disappear, leaving space for the constitution of a new type of urbanity. As in *Memorias del subdesarrollo*, *Cuba baila* was an attempt to describe a present in the process of extinction. However, those who were missing from these representations of Havana's social groups were the Afro-Cuban middle-classes. What according to Moore was a more radical measure than the nationalization of the cabarets and night-clubs, was the closure of what had been until then Cubans' main spaces for socializing, the 'sociedades de recreo' (recreational societies). However, not all of them were closed. The government allowed some of those based on ethnicity to continue: societies of Spanish Gallegos, Asturians, also the ones formed by Jews and Arabs. However, the goverment closed the *sociedades de color* (societies of coloured people), such as Atenas and Minerva, which had been since the beginning of the century, the main gathering space for successful Afro-Cuban professionals. The Cuban authorities alleged that these societies encouraged racial divisions, explaining that wealthy Euro-Cubans' private clubs, such as the Havana Country

Club, had also been closed[519]. As these were societies based not only on 'race' but also on 'class', their existence contradicted the socialist ideology of those now in power. In order to initiate a cultural policy that would reconcile the ideologies of nation and socialism, they focused on the poor Afro-Cubans[520].

Those recreational spaces of poor Afro-Cubans in the area of Playa described above disappeared together with the slums of Las Yaguas, at the end of the 1960s. The (at least) apparent end of the sex industry in the island after 1959 and the search for loyalties among poor blacks by the new ruling groups, meant a shift in post-1959 perceptions of Afro-Cuban cultural expressions. According to David Brown, the creation of the National Folkloric Group (Conjunto Folklórico Nacional, CFN) and popularisation of their spectacles were evidence of this shift. Performers at CFN were mainly Afro-Cubans from poor backgrounds who had been practising traditional cultural forms such as Afro-Cuban drumming, singing and dancing (Rumba, particularly the Guaguancó, Santería and Abakuá music and dance, and others) for a very long time, often as part of Afro-Cuban religious rituals. Brown argues that 'forms' were there, but definitely not their previous religious and philosophical content. This 'folklorisation' of the Afro-Cuban belief systems, apart from proving the new authorities' disregard for this knowledge, also helped to remove from these traditions those aspects that would clash with the social unity new cultural authorities were trying to create[521].

Overall there was the assumption, following from the Marxist education of those newly predominant in the cultural sector, that the poor classes on the island formed a homogenous and coherent cultural group. The argument followed that, taking the concept of class from the Marxist literature as a factual determinant in the production of culture, once classes are eliminated or integrated into just one class-group, the nation's cultural unity would be possible once and for all. It would also mean the end of racist attitudes among white Cubans and, therefore, discrimination against Afro-Cubans. The 'popular' as described by García Espinosa, was immediately associated with the Afro-Cuban. However, this association still contained the myth of *mestizaje*: that the Cuban nation had been formed through the encounter, exchange and mixing between Africans, Europeans and, at a lesser scale, the island's indigenous population prior to the conquest. In *La Rumba*, García Espinosa and Oscar Valdés emphasised this cultural syncretism between Spanish and

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African traditions (See DVD: *La Rumba*: Opening sequence). In this documentary, commercial rumba, the one often shown in Hollywood films, is described as 'inauthentic'. 'Authentic' rumba is shown as the one exclusively practised by the Afro-Cuban poor in Havana and Matanzas[522]. The latter is upheld as an expression of national popular culture, the former as a product of cultural imperialism. Rumba is here understood as a syncretic dance form that had taken and transformed the style of the traditional Spanish rumba. This is the aspect that makes it Cuban and not just West African. However, it is a form very rarely practised by Euro-Cubans. According to Yvonne Daniel, it was the most promoted dance form after 1959, against two other forms most popular among whites and blacks: *conga* and *son*[523]. In her analysis, this was due to the fact that it fitted more easily with socialist ideas, against the individualistic nature of the other two[524]. However, it is in its relation to the cultural forms of Spanish immigrants from the poorest sectors of society during the nineteenth century that made it more adequate to the discourses of *mestizaje* in the formation of the Cuban nation. Many of those cultural forms represented in Cabrera Infante's novel *Three Trapped Tigers* and García Espinosa's film *Son o no son* belonged to a different narrative. They were forms that, as in the case of the commercial rumba, had been intimately associated with Havana's particular development during the 1950s. This was a narrative based more on diversity than synthesis. Far from adding to the study of cultural syncretism in Cuba, the documentary *La Rumba* seemed to have as its agenda the integrationist policies of the new authorities. At the end of the documentary, the narrator expresses this intention: 'La Rumba es una forma de ser del cubano. La Rumba no es algo que sólo bailan algunos cubanos. La Rumba somos nosotros. Todos nosotros' [La Rumba *is an expression of being Cuban*. La Rumba *is not just something that only a few Cubans dance. We are* La Rumba, *all of us*] (See DVD: *La Rumba*: closing sequence).
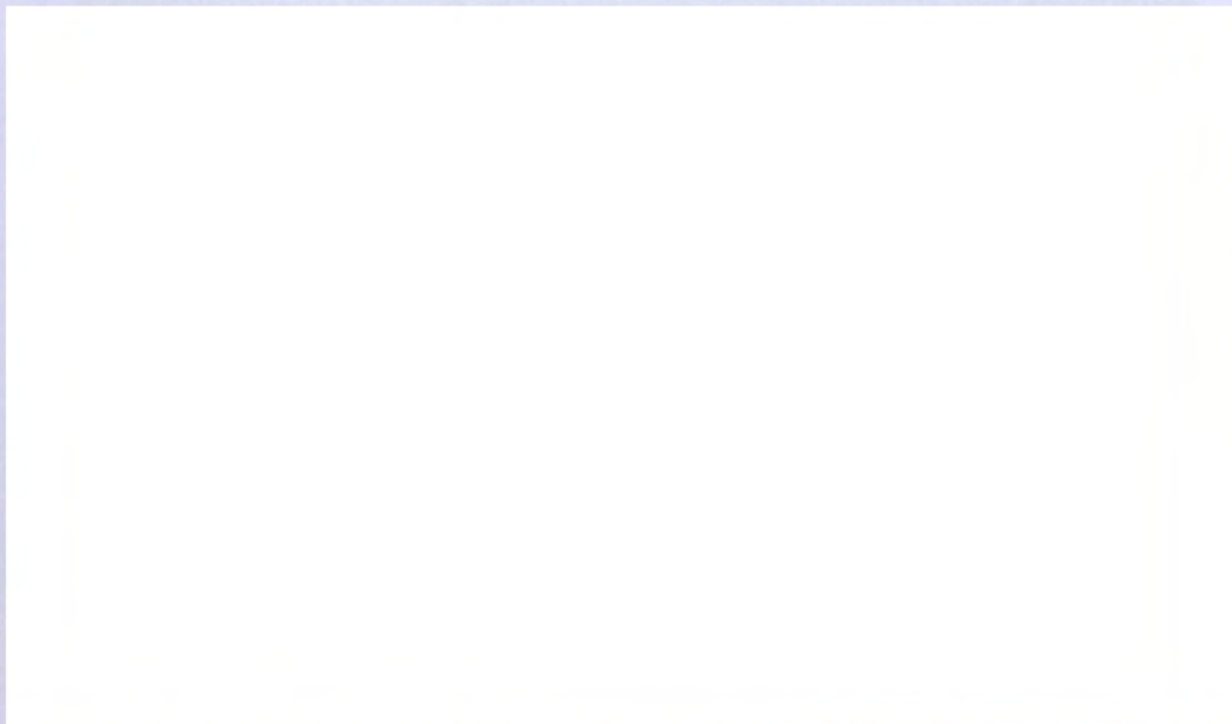
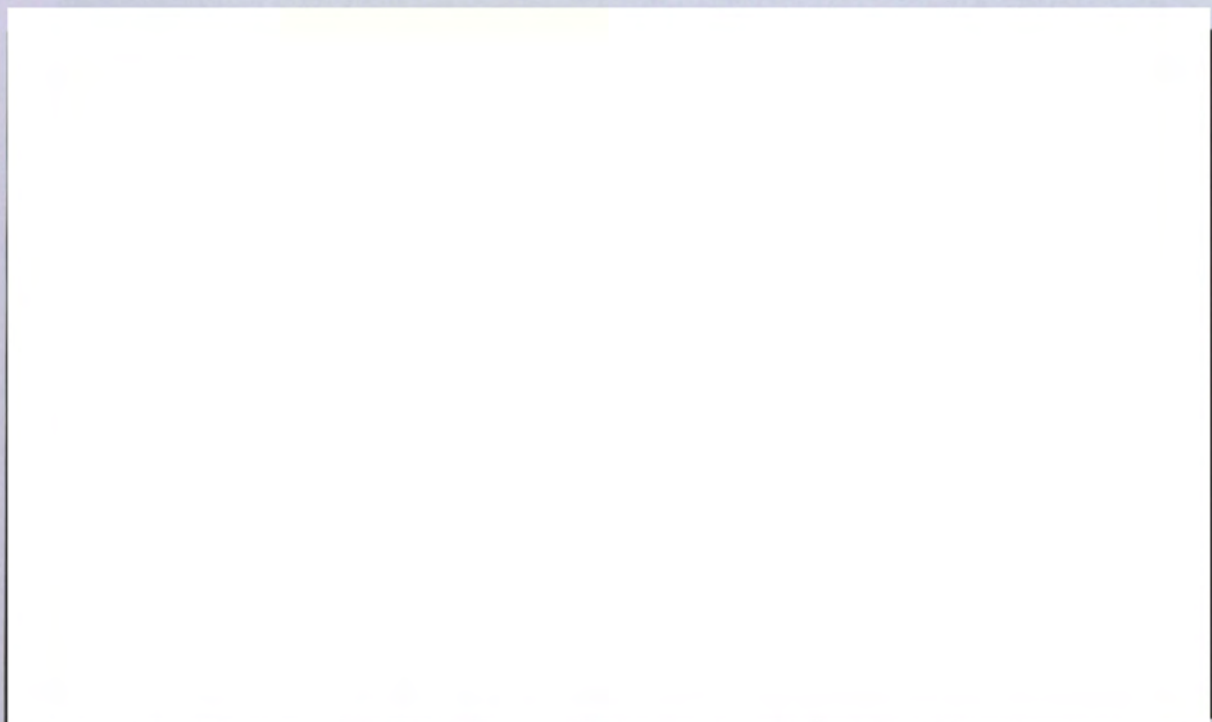Illustration 62. Film still from *PM* (1961)

Illustration 63. Film still from *PM* (1961) showing 'El Chori' playing at the nightclub also called 'El Chori' in the area of Playa in Marianao.

Illustration 64. Film still from *Son o no son* (1978). Dancers

Illustration 65. Film still from *Son o no son* (1978). Aerial view of Tropicana Cabaret.
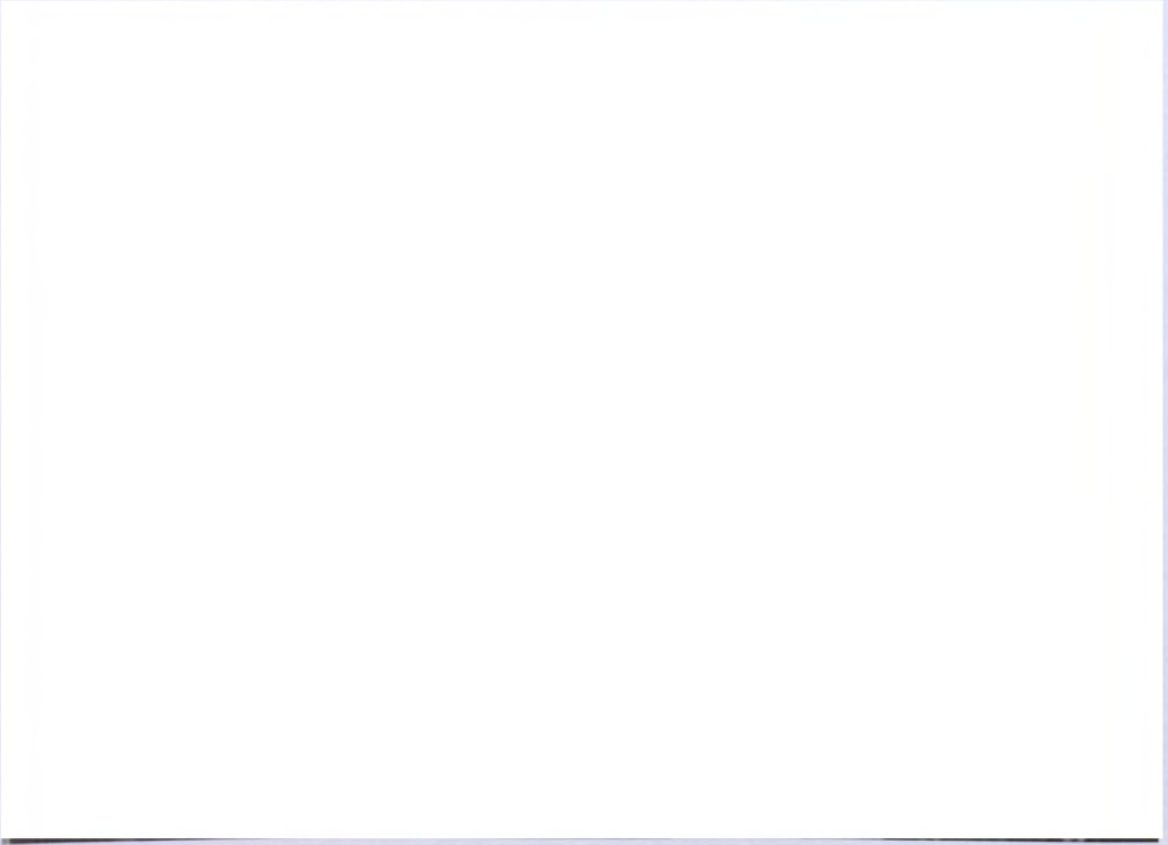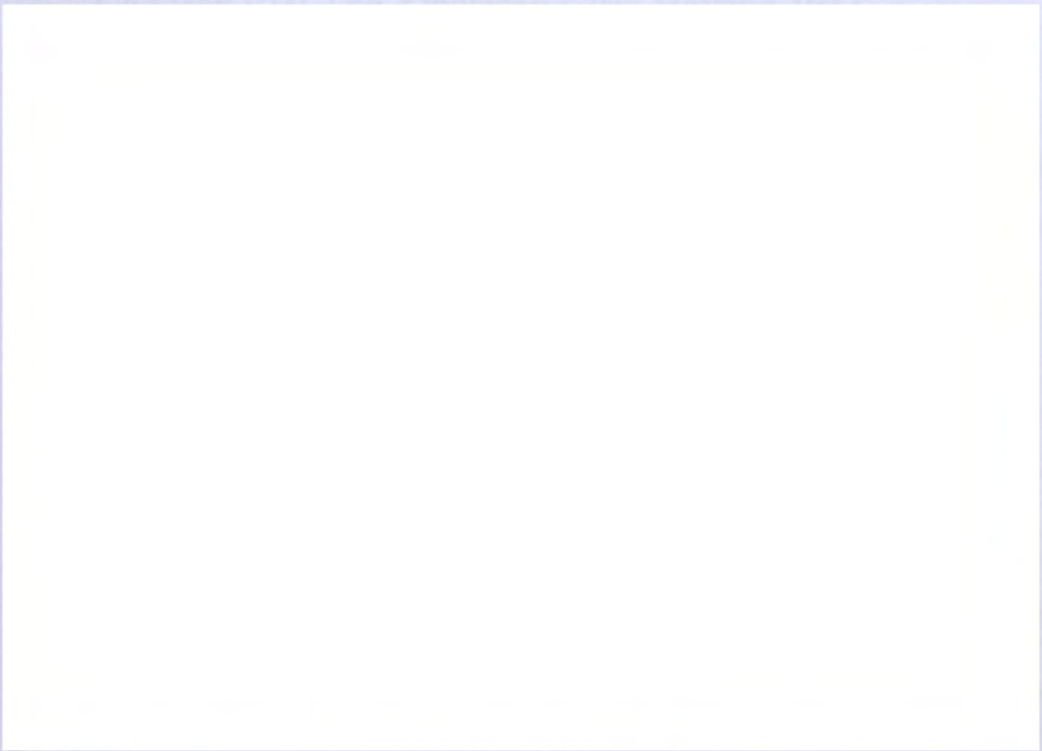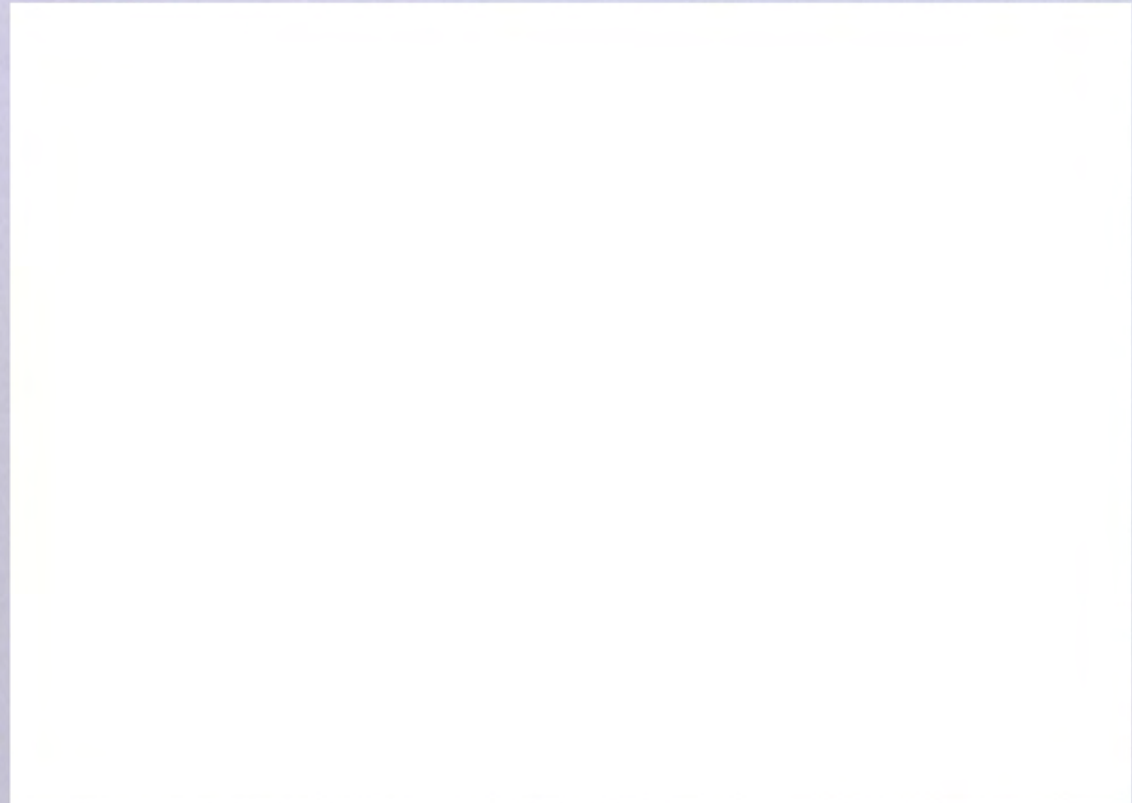
Illustration 66. Film still from *Son o no son* (1978). Comedians

Illustration 67. Film still from *Son o no son* (1978). Leo Brouwer talking about the similarities between different popular music forms.

Illustrations 68 and 69. Film stills from *La Rumba* (1978). The 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' rumbas.

Chapter VII: <u>The American City: Havana 1933</u>

> *who am I*
> *that I go again through the streets, among 'orishas'*
> *through the dark and corpulent heat,*
> *among school children reciting Martí,*
> *among the cars, the hidden niches of the streets,*
> *the summer screens, into the Plaza of the people,*
> *among the blacks, through the 'guardacantones'*
> *through the parks, the old city,*
> *the old, old neighborhood of Cerro,*
> *and my cathedral and my port*
>
> *Here I say again: love, attributed city*
>
> Nancy Morejón, 'Love, Attributed City' (1964)

> *Only the analysis of relations of inclusion-exclusion, of belonging or not*
> *belonging to a particular space of the city enables us to appreciate these*
> *phenomena for a theory of the city.*
>
> Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on Cities* (1996)

In this final chapter I discuss the relevance of the images that the North American photographer Walker Evans took of Havana during his three-week stay in the city in 1933[525]. Walker Evans was one of the initiators of the type of urban photography that helped to visually construct the characteristic image of what has been called the 'American City'. I have focused on Evans' recreations of the urban context prevalent during the decade of the Great Depression in the United States and how they compare to what he chose to represent of Havana.

My focus is on these images' role in the photographic recreations of the 'American city', as forming part of the imagery used during the following decades in constructing the United States' national narratives. I have tried to retain the indexical character of these images[526] in order to understand the context in which they were taken: particularly the cultural context in Cuba and the United States. At the same time, my analysis also attempts to elucidate what made Evans' Havana an 'American city' and what diverged from it at the time. Some of Evans' images from his Cuba series later acquired status as works of art and were inserted into the tradition of the 'documentary style' in photography and the visual arts in

Europe and North America[527]. This last chapter focuses mainly on one photograph, *Citizen Downtown Havana*, an image that in its contemporary reception visually plays out many of the utopianisms described in earlier chapters. Even though this image was taken in 1933 and, therefore, preceded many of the other documents analyzed in this thesis, it speaks of the continuities in the discourses on the city not only across periods but also between both the Cuban and the United States' national projects.

The Havana series was the result of a commission accepted by Evans in 1932 to illustrate a book entitled *The Crime of Cuba* by North American political writer Carleston Beals. Beals was a left-wing author with close ties to the Communist Party of North America and with an interest in the economic and cultural impact of United States' dominance over Latin America. He had already visited Mexico and written a similar essay on United States' intervention and its consequences in the central American country[528]. *The Crime of Cuba* was an attempt to denounce the United States' support for the then dictator of Cuba, Manuel Machado, in order to consolidate and extend the economic dependence of the island[529]. Therefore, Walker Evans had as his mission to document a crime, that of the misery of Cuba as a consequence of United States' policies. However, as I shall explain, Evans' intentions regarding the possibilities of the photographic medium in order to describe urban change and modern life also influenced the outcome of this project.

Before traveling to Havana, Evans was already well connected with New York's intellectual circles as well as very influenced by the European avant-gardes. The avant-gardism of Evans's first images of New York's new architecture resided in a straightforward formalistic link with European modernism in the visual arts (cubism, futurism and, particularly the Russian avant-gardes), with modern artists also using photography profusely [Illustrations 70, 71 and 72]. What he imitated was these movements' emphasis upon the technological appearance of the developing cities of Europe and the United States, where the new urbanity and the idea of modernity associated with it appeared dependent on and equated with new technology[530].

Illustrations 70 and 71. Lászlo Moholy-Nagy's
Notre Dame de Paris (1925) and Aleksander
Rodchenko's *Untitled* (1926-1927)

Illustration 72. Walker Evans' *Brooklyn
Bridge* (1929)

It was after coming into contact with the work of the French photographer Eugène Atget, that Evans distanced himself from his first stylizations of the photographic and fascination for the technological as a formal problem[531]. At the time he photographed Havana, Eugène Atget was already recognised among the intellectual groups in Europe and the United States as a precursor of the new artistic possibilities opened up to the photographic[532]. Even though Evans studied in Paris between 1926 and 1927, at a time when Atget was still taking photographs of the city, it was not until he returned to New York and began to take his photographic career seriously that he came into contact with Atget's images of Paris[533] [Illustrations 73 and 74].
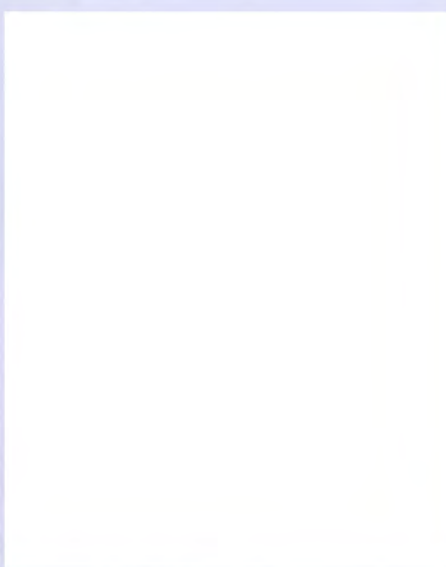
Illustrations 73 and 74. Eugéne Atget's images of Paris during the 1920s

In 1932, just before Evans traveled to Cuba, Walter Benjamin's essay entitled 'A Small History of Photography' discussed the differences between the pre- and post-industrialisation of the medium, later supporting the crucial role Atget had had in the reconsideration of the photographic within the visual arts, through the Surrealist group in Paris. He argued that it was thanks to Atget's 'achievements that Surrealist photography sets the scene for a salutary estrangement between man and his surroundings.'[534] The 'surroundings' were the modernity of Paris, and its accelerated transformation, which had led the Surrealists to describe themselves as 'Le Paysans Parisiennes', the peasants of Paris, as Aragon would explain in the title to his Parisian essay[535]. Although these images were only ten years old, the Surrealists in Paris and Evans in New York felt that they testified to a world in the process of extinction. However, for Evans and other photographers working in the United States during the 1930s, Atget's images of Paris had different connotations to the ones drawn by the Surrealists. According to Alan Trachtenberg, what Evans found in Atget was the realization of the specificity of the medium in the urban context of 'so-called advanced countries'[536]. When, for example, Evans entitled one of his photographs of New York's new architecture *New York in the Making*[537] [Illustration 75], there was implicit the notion that the North American city was still a project in construction, in contrast to the already historically charged European urban centres such as Paris and London. Atget's images recorded what was bound to disappear through urban change.

Illustration 75. Walker Evans' *New York in the Making* (1929)

However, in his photographs there was not only the vanishing of an old world but also the absence of a new one, then developing on the other side of the Atlantic. Such lack was not exclusively due to the absence of new architecture, but to the specificity of New York's cultural development[538], a city made of relatively new immigrant groups, each upholding the specificity of their different cultural backgrounds. However, Evans' documentary account of what he thought of as the 'American city' really started with Havana as a paradigm, as it was during this trip to Cuba that he set out to record what was peculiar to American urbanity, in contrast to the European[539].

Immediately before he departed for Cuba, Evans had taken a trip of several months to the Pacific islands (later passing through the Panama Canal and also visiting Jamaica) from which he produced a discreet group of works. They are the images of a North American tourist encountering his 'other', the non-urban, non-technological: a 'disappearing world', as Evans lamented in a letter to his friend Skolle:

> The sadness of the Marquesans is indescribable. Strange beauty of landscape and vegetation, yes; there up to the hilt of imagination. But evidence of the death of the native race too painful and infuriating to look at for long. I say this not only because I have read of it again and again, and have been prepared in advance to find it; but because the reality is ten times more powerfully drawn than this acquired knowledge.[540]

We can see here how concerned Evans already was with what he perceived to be disappearing and what would come to replace it. The images he took of the Pacific islands would represent their wild landscapes and the 'primitive' looks of its inhabitants [Illustrations 76 and 77]. They were the image of the 'non-urban', geographically very close to the growth of American urbanity.

Illustrations 76 and 77. Walker Evans' photographs from Tahiti (1932)

When years later, already considered as the photographer who had contributed to the creation of the modern image of America, he was questioned regarding his Havana series, he warned the interviewer that they were just a commission, just paid work, as if to imply that their 'artistry' should be put into question.

> It was a job. It was commissioned. You must remember that this was a time when anyone would do anything for work. This was a job of a publishing house publishing a book about Cuba, and a friend arranged that I should do the photography. So I grabbed it.[541]

However, as if to contradict himself, he also commented that before taking this commission he had insisted on two conditions:

> I did make some conditions. I said I wanted to be left alone. I wanted nothing to do with the book. I'm not illustrating a book. I'd like to just go down there and make some pictures but don't tell me what to do. So I never read the book.[542]

Carleston Beals' text was plagued with moral undertones, making reference to the commoditized image of the Cuban city as a pleasure Mecca:

> Aside from the exaggerated number of policemen, soldiers and mounted patrols, none of the effects of the ferocious gang-war now going on in Cuba is visible to the tourist. Thousands of them visit Havana each year. Nature made Cuba a tropical paradise. Apparently the climate is as balmy, the city as romantic...The liquor and the prostitutes are as acceptable as ever.[543]

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Therefore, the expectation was that Evans' images would depart from this sensualised view of Havana, making visible to North Americans the acute poverty and violence suffered by Cubans as a consequence of United States' policies. Evans' lack of interest in Beals's book is significant. In a period when the role of the photographic within the fine arts was still being negotiated[544], Evans asserted his authority as an artist, a producer of high art and culture, and not as one of those commercial photographers working for various industries and governmental campaigns in the United States. However, in a later interview, he confessed to being unsure whether his photographic images of Havana – and the ones he had already taken in New York - were really 'art' or just self-evident appearances of reality. Speaking with an interviewer in 1971, he specified:

> I was doing some things that I thought were too plain to be works of art … I knew I wanted to be an artist, but I wondered if I really was an artist. I was doing such ordinary things that I could feel the difference, but I didn't have any support.[545]

It is difficult to establish whether it was Atget's image of Paris or his first hand experience of poverty in New York that Evans had in mind when traveling to Cuba. However, the Cuban photographs were the result of two apparently contradictory intentions: on one hand, the documentary intention to record Cubans' poverty and the extreme violence exercised by a ruthless dictator, with the support of the United States' administration; on the other hand, the artistic intention of creating an image of the modern city, constructed as a 'projection' of himself, the artist. In a later interview, Evans even stated that he was not only recording history, he was also making it, as 'social history'[546].

Once in Havana, and by contrast to his images of New York and Tahiti, he represented the beggars in the street, the breadlines, the homeless sleeping in parks and the signs of the social unrest then experienced in the city [Illustrations 78, 79, and 80]. He also took note of the unofficial poor and self-built villages housing the immigrants pouring into the city [Illustrations 81 and 82]. The *Unofficial Village of Havana's Poor* was one of the thirty-one photographs that Evans chose to illustrate Beals' essay. The image of the slum was at the time, like that of the skyscraper, a sign of urban growth. It had also been an early photographic subject in Europe and North America[547]. This image is now the familiar

representation of the so-called Third World city or the cities of impoverished regions, particularly in Latin America, such as the infamous *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil or the large slums surrounding Mexico D.F. However, this was one of the first times that this image of social 'cancer' growing at the edges of urban capitalist growth, had been used to question the economic system exported from the United States to the rest of the American continent. In many ways this was Havana in the making, equivalent to the *New York in the Making* described above.

Illustrations 78 and 79. Walker Evans' photographs of beggars and breadlines in Havana (1933)
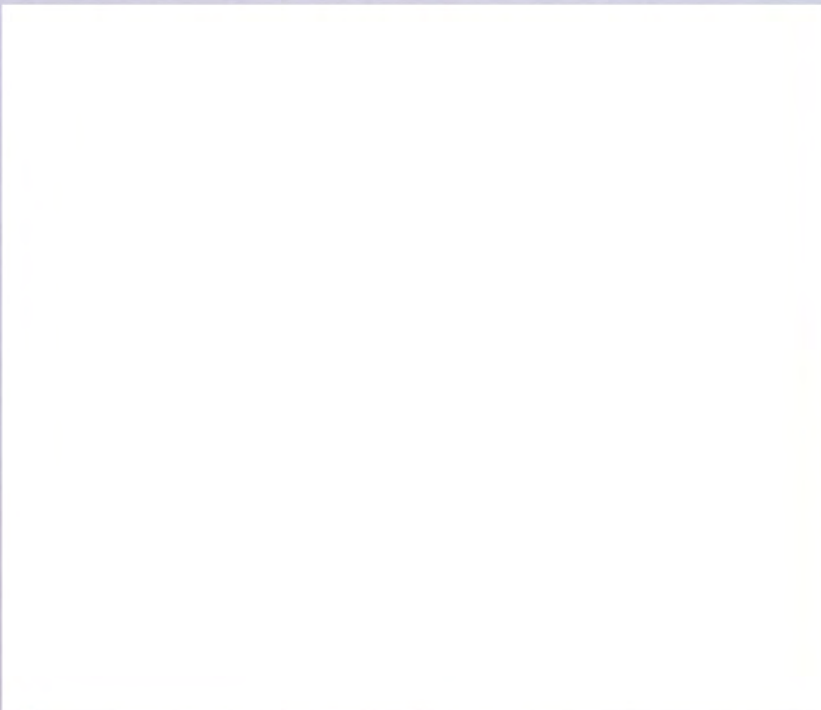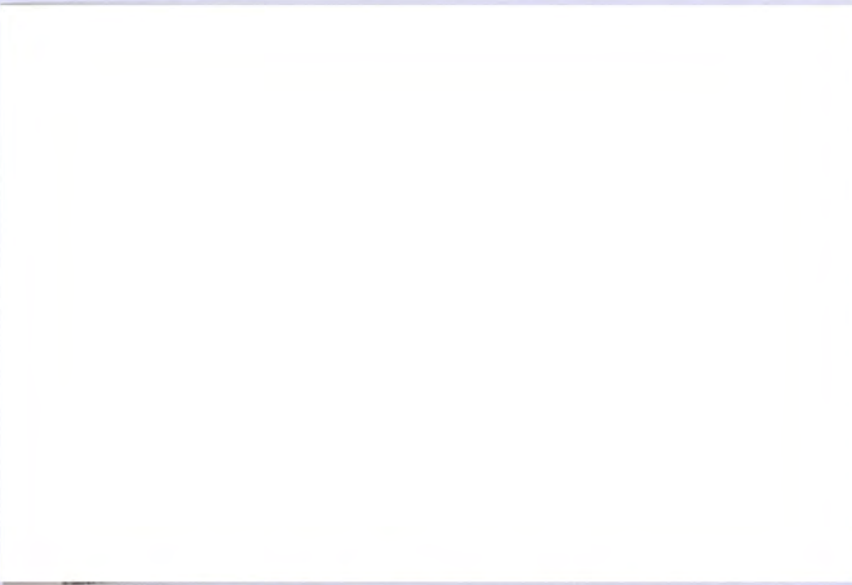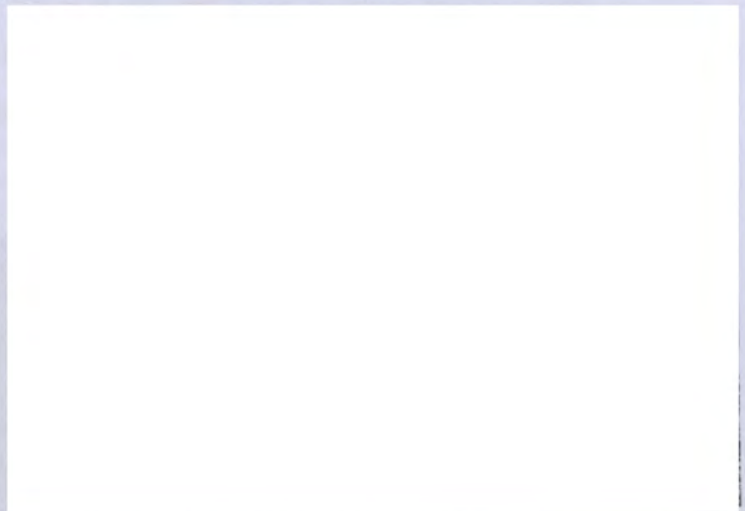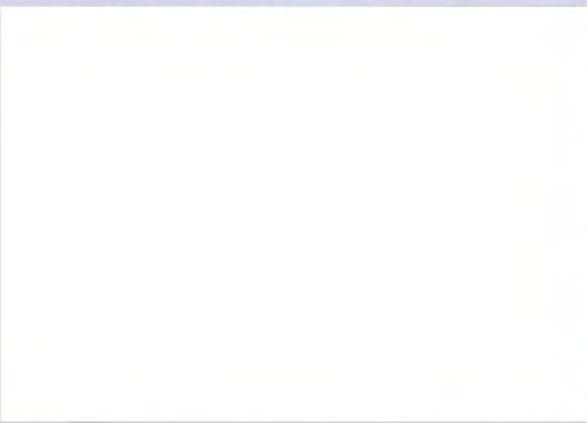
Illustration 80. W. Evans' photograph of political
wall-writing in Havana (1933)

Illustrations 81 and 82. W. Evans' *Unofficial Village of Havana's Poor* (1933)

Two years after his Cuban trip, Evans was again commissioned to represent 'poverty', this
time as staff photographer for the FSA (Farm Security Administration), a government
agency created in order to improve the conditions of farmers living in extreme poverty as a
consequence of the economic crisis termed as the Great Depression[548]. The image of
Havana slums described above has not been shown or properly reproduced in the two main
exhibitions and their catalogues dedicated to Evans's series in Cuba[549]. It is possible that
they do not look 'American' enough and would not therefore represent 'Evans', even
though this slum was contemporary with the skyscraper, and therefore, can also be
considered an image of urban modernity in North America. The images shot by Evans and

others on United States' soil have come to be associated with a particular period, the Great Depression. However, these images of the poor in Havana are now seen as the universal and never changing poverty of the world, its 'naturalness', isolated from their historical specificity. Moreover, Walker Evans' photographs have not become part of the imagery contributing to Cuban national narratives. When Cuban authors have referred to Evans' images of Havana, they have, more often than not, alluded to his representation of the modern city outside the particular social and political circumstances of the island when the photographs were taken[550]. In contrast to the post-1959 image of Las Yaguas in film and photography, images of Havana's slums during the Great Depression were never used to re-define the Cuban national narratives, as was the case in the United States.

Those images from the Havana series that are now recognized as forming part of Evans' particular take on America urbanity - and therefore, have now the status of documents of high art - are the ones that remind the viewer of New York's visuality during the same years (Illustrations 83, 84, 85 and 86).
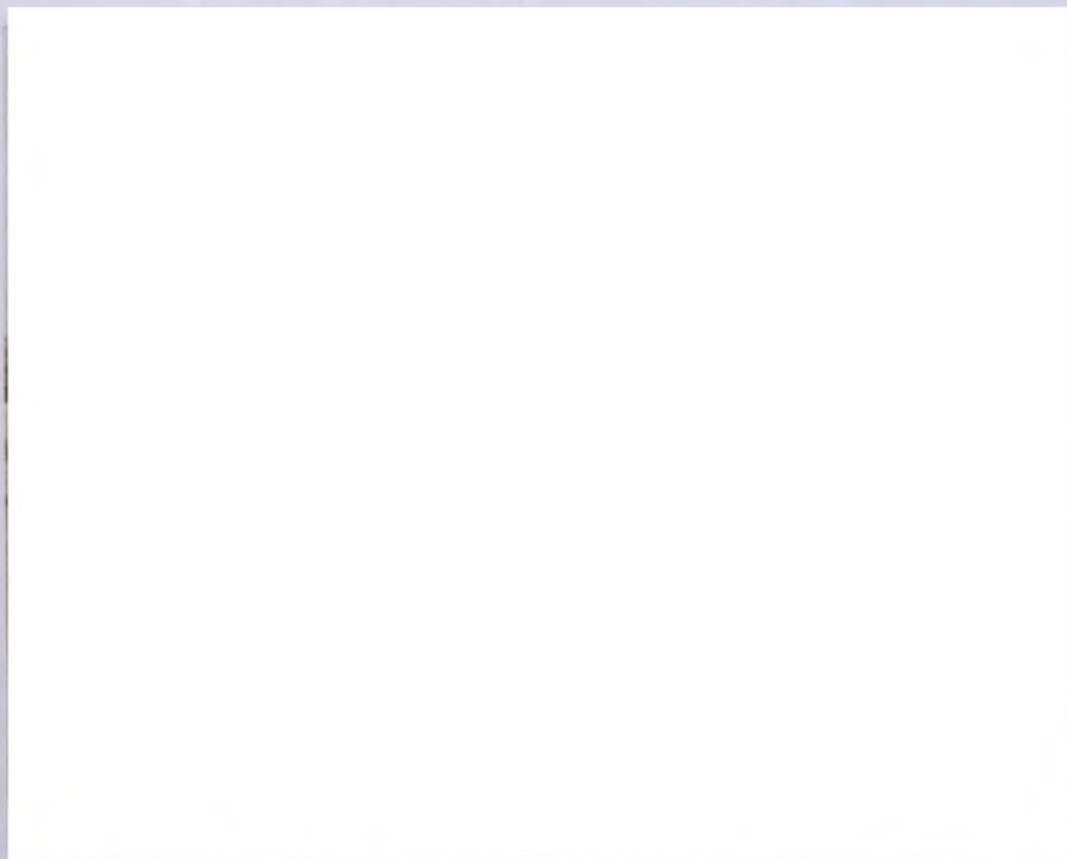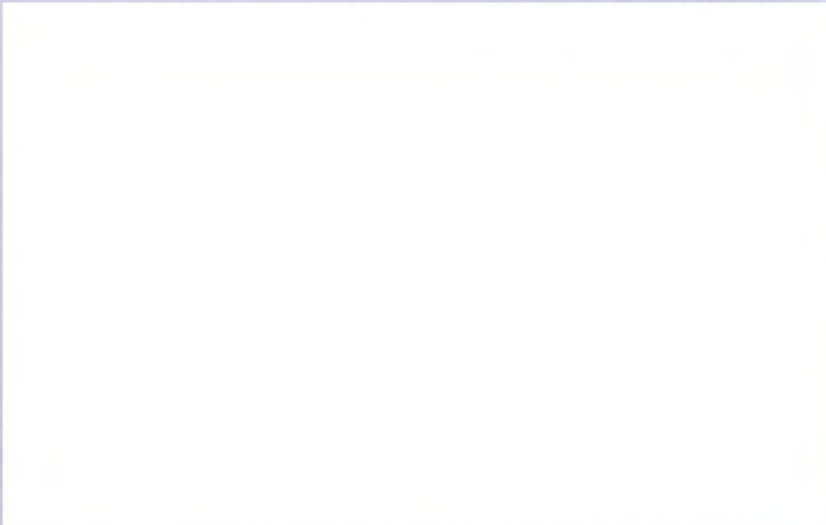

Illustration 83. W. Evans' *Havana City People* (1933)

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Illustration 84.W. Evans' *Citizen Downtown Havana* (1933)

Illustrations 85 and 86. W. Evans' *Havana Movie Theatres* (1933)

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Those of Evans' images of Havana that played a part in the United States' redefinitions of its past were, therefore, associated with the 'Americanisation' of the city. These narratives were at the same time intimately linked to the specificity of urban cultural development in North America at the time. On his arrival in Cuba, Evans wrote of Havana as 'a frontier town'[551]. According to his biographer, James R. Mellow, this was an understatement, as Havana in 1933 was already a developed urban centre, following the United States'

trend[552]. The expression 'frontier town' was used by Evans to describe Havana as a city in transition – to give the idea that there was a disappearing old city being replaced by a new and more 'American' one. This expression had also been used to refer to the nineteenth century wild-west towns, related to the westward expansion of Europeans colonizers, involved in the genocide and dispossession of the Native Americans. In recent years, the expression 'frontier town', particularly when applied to cities on the Mexico-United States border, has been often associated with the concept of cultural hybridity[553]. Evans' record of Havana was mainly animated by a perception of Havana as being the 'other' and the 'same' as the United States' city. In his introductory essay to the book *Walker Evans, Havana 1933*, Gilles Mora comments:

> Evans seems to be more receptive to the Americanization of Havana than to its exoticism....
> ...Havana differs very little in its human environment from certain immigrant neighbourhoods in New York that he will treat in almost identical fashion in 1938.[554]

According to Mora, therefore, Evans seemed to be more concerned with representing the new North American urbanity and what was peculiar to it, than describing the particularities of Havana. Evans expressed his intention - to capture the peculiarities of North American urbanity - only after he had already been to Havana. In a letter to his friend Ernestine Evans from 1934, he spelled out what he meant by 'American city':

> American city is what I'm after. So might use several, keeping things typical. The right things can be found in Pittsburgh, Toledo, Detroit (a lot in Detroit, I want to get in some dirty cracks, Detroit's full of chances). Chicago business stuff, probably nothing of New York, but Philadelphia suburbs are smug and endless:
> People, all classes, surrounded by bunches of the new down-and-out.
> Automobiles and the automobile landscape.
> Architecture, American urban taste, commerce, small scale, large scale, the city street atmosphere, the street smell, the hateful stuff, women's clubs, fake culture, bad education, religion in decay.
> The movies.
> Evidence of what the people of the city read, eat, see for amusement, do for relaxation and not get it.
> Sex.
> Advertising.
> A lot else, you see what I mean.[555]

Evans seemed to believe there was such a thing as 'The American City', developing just over the border with Mexico, with anything outside it being 'the countryside'. However, Havana appears in Evans' images as also forming part of this conceptualization of the 'American City' as a unique urban form.

Citizen in Downtown Havana, 1933, one of the most widely recognized photographs from the Havana series [Illustration 84], was not chosen by Evans as one of the thirty-one images to illustrate Beal's essay. However, he did include it as part of a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1938[556]. For this exhibition, he selected from his already prolific collection a group of 87 photographs, shown together and in a sequential order. The exhibition was finally titled by Evans *American Photographs*. This show was divided into two sections. The first included two photographs from the Havana series, *Citizen Downtown Havana* and *Coal Dock Worker* from 1933 [Illustration 87], although Evans only specified in the first case that the image had actually been taken in Cuba and not the United States.
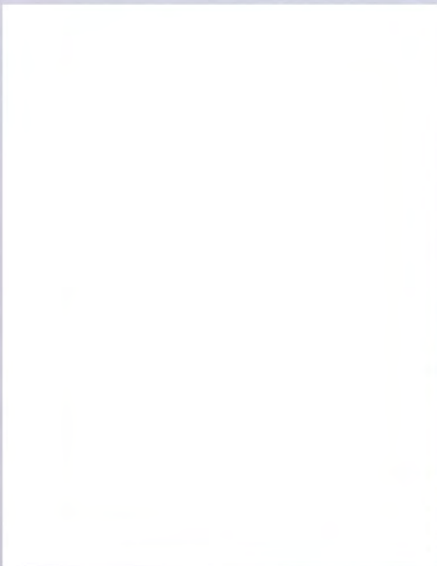

Illustration 87. W. Evans' *Coal Dock Worker*, Havana (1933)

Together with these two images there were others representing, for example, some of his well-known FSA photographs, that had already become symbolic images of 'real America' – that is, representations of poor white peasant families in the rural areas of the United States, affected by the economic hardships of the Great Depression[557]. There were also the signs of North American culture, such as the automobile, the monuments to the country's military history and its ethnic diversity [Illustrations 88, 89, 90, 91, 92 and 93]. The second

section was dedicated mainly to architecture, showing the different traditions that had taken hold in the United States thanks to its ethnically diverse population (Illustrations 94 and 95).

Illustration 88. W. Evans' FSA photograph from *American Photographs* (1938)

Illustration 89. W. Evans' *Garage* from *American Photographs* (1938)

Illustration 90. W. Evans' *Parked Car* from *American Photographs* (1938)
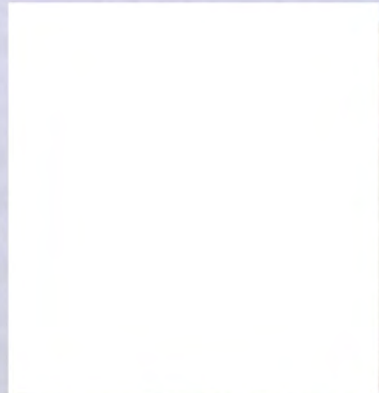
Illustration 91. W. Evans' war monument from *American Photographs* (1938)

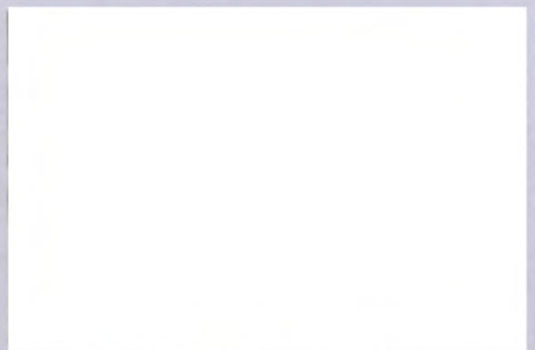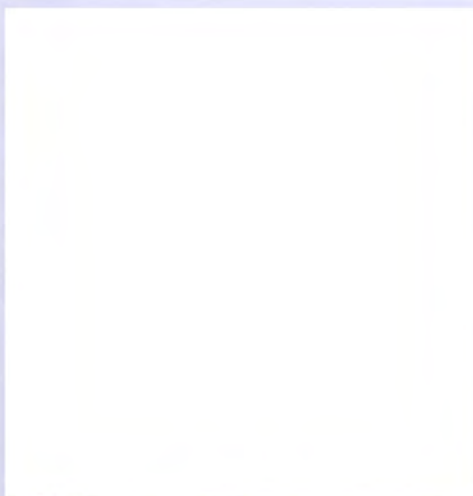Illustration 92. W. Evans' *42nd St.* from *American Photographs* (1938)

Illustration 93. W. Evans' *Faces, Pennsylvania* from *American Photographs* (1938)

Illustrations 94. W. Evans' *Negro Church* from *American Photographs* (1938)

Illustration 95. *Greek Doorway NYC* from *American Photographs* (1938)

In the catalogue to this exhibition, Lincoln Kirstein, who was a good friend of Evans and also the organizer of the exhibition, wrote an essay discussing how these photographs were supposed to give an image of the Great Depression in the United States:

> Walker Evans is giving us *the contemporary civilization of eastern America* and its dependencies as Atget gave us Paris before the war and as Brady gave us the War between the States […]
> […]
> […] In the reproductions presented in this book two large divisions have been made. In the first part, which might be labeled 'People by Photography', we have an aspect of America for which it would be difficult to claim too much. […] *The physiognomy of a nation* is laid on your table. In the second part will be found the work of Evans which refers to the continuous fact of *an indigenous American expression* […] that native accent we find again in Kentucky Mountain and cowboy ballads, in the compositions Stephen Foster adapted from Irish folk-song and in contemporary swing-music.[558] (my italics)

By 'an indigenous American expression' Kirstein was referring not to the whole continent, but just to that of the United States. However, he considered, together with Evans, that Cuba was also part of this cultural unity, sharing the same teleology. What was initially a reflection on photography's ability to retain, to freeze into an image a past at a moment of becoming, of changing, as Atget had previously done in Paris, later became an image of national identity, not of Cuba, but of the United States, with Cuba as an element of it.

The role of the Cuban images within the overall national mythologies deployed in *American Photographs* is not clear as Evans did not specify his reasons for choosing each

particular image. However, it seems the nature and sequentiality of these images had for him the character of a visual essay attempting to discuss the creation of a national myth: the years of the Great Depression as the turning point in the configuration of a new type of nationhood that, apparently contrary to the European nations, was constituted by the encounter with 'others'.

That the image *Citizen in Downtown Havana* is now considered a work of art by the *artist* Walker Evans and the *Unofficial Village of Havana Poor* just an image of a Latin American slum by the *documentary photographer* Walker Evans, has been a post-interpretation. This interpretation was made possible once documentary photography of United States' urbanity, including the United States' poor, gained high art status through the intervention of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and with the contribution of subsequent bibliography[559].

Many of the theoretical revisions on the status of documentary photography during the 1980s challenged the conception that photography could be used to give us a truthful representation of past social reality[560]. Among other theories, John Tagg's Foucauldian approach to the photographs of working class housing and slums in the city of Leeds at the end of the nineteenth century addressed this issue[561]. In Tagg's theorization, photographs are neither representations of reality nor the result of the photographer's intentions, and therefore her or his projections. They are documents fulfilling a discursive function. In the case of the FSA photographs, he writes, they accomplished:

> ... a particular social strategy: a liberal, corporatist plan to negotiate economic, political and cultural crisis through a limited programme of structural reforms, relief measures, and a cultural intervention aimed at restructuring the order of discourse, appropriating dissent, and resecuring the threatened bonds of social consent.[562]

Following Tagg's interpretation, the *American Photographs* exhibition likewise fulfilled a discursive function, that is, to contribute to those processes involved in the 'othering' of the past needed for the contemporary recreations of United States' national narratives. It does so because it manages to dilute the historical particularities and specificities of each of these images, by presenting them under the umbrella of the American nation. It also used mainly those aspects that were peculiar to the visuality of the United States' urban centers

and suburban spaces. This identification between the constitution of an American national identity[563] after the Great Depression and the specific urban development experienced then by the main cities within the United States is now commonly recognized[564].

Apart from this contribution to the discourses of the national, these images came to fulfill other discursive functions. For example, within the artistic institution, they also contributed to the canonization of the documentary style in photography. A canonization that was later deconstructed by artists such as Sherrie Levine in 'After Walker Evans' or Jeff Wall's photographs from the 1980s, 'imitating' the documentary style. However, there is a third set of discursive functions accomplished by the images taken in Havana and later shown under the rubric *American Photographs*. They refer to the indexical nature of the *Citizen Downtown Havana* and the portrait of Havana's coal dockworker in *American Photographs*. After all, during those months of 1933, Havana was going through a period of intense social and political tensions that ended the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado and, according to modern Cuban historiography, changed the course of the island's history[565]. It was also, and for the purposes of this analysis, more importantly, going through an intense period of cultural self-definition that I shall discuss later.

The reason why Evans decided that the image of the *Citizen Downtown Havana* would so conveniently fit into his idea of the American alongside the other images in the exhibition, resided in the particular concept of modernity contained in this image. A modernity that he understood as also characterising United States' urbanity during the 1930s.

Evans was acquainted with the vibrant and different culture Afro-Americans had produced in Harlem during the 1920s[566]. Euro-American artists such as Evans, who thought of themselves as modern, were obliged to relate to what was then called 'Negro Art', the art of that 'other', then fantasized and romanticized as 'primitive'[567]. *Citizen Downtown Havana* reminded him of Harlem in New York, which had experienced during the 1920s a cultural renaissance thanks to its mainly immigrant African American population[568]. He had previously taken images of those areas around Harlem where a considerable number of middle-class Afro-Americans had concentrated by the end of the decade. One of these images, *42nd Street,* was also included in the exhibition *American Photographs* [Illustration 92][569].

Possibly unknown to Evans, during the 1920s Havana had been undergoing a cultural renovation very similar to New York's Harlem Renaissance. It was a time when Cuban society in general and Havana in particular were coming to terms with the reality of Afro-Cuban culture, that is the cultural productions developed by those of African descent in Cuba, until then considered marginal, backward and even by some un-Cuban[570]. This fact was one of the many modernities Havana then shared with New York. Such black cultural renaissance greatly affected the political identities and cultural identifications of those involved and defined by the two national projects. In Havana this renaissance involved the popularization of the musical form of *son*[571] and the productions of Afro-Cuban intellectuals such as Gustavo Urrutia and Nicolás Guillén, and, in the next decade, the visual artist Wilfredo Lam. On the other hand, Fernando Ortiz and Alejo Carpentier were the first Euro-Cuban intellectuals to write on the centrality of Afro-Cuban culture in the constitution of the Cuban nation.

The Afro-Cuban cultural renaissance during those years has been extensively discussed by North American cultural historian Robin D. Moore in his book *Nationalizing Blackness. Afrocubanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940*. For Moore, the 1920s and particularly the 1930s and 1940s in Cuba were of seminal importance regarding the volatile recreations and re-negotiations within the cultural elites in Cuba in their attempts to pin down and define what was to be understood as a *Cuban national identity*[572].

According to Moore, during the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, when Evans traveled to Cuba, Afro-Cuban cultural expressions, mainly music and dance, were slowly taking a central position in Cuban national narrations, the mythology of the Cuban Nation, which separated Cubans from the others. However, as I explained in Chapter I, Moore also argues that such insertion of Afro-Cuban cultural productions into the discourse of the national was performed by mainly Euro-Cubans[573]. The desire of the Cuban white elite to differentiate themselves as 'Cubans' from those of the old metropolis, that is, the Spanish, facilitated this gradual re-positioning from marginality to centrality in the national discourse of those cultural expressions and productions with a predominant Afro-Cuban character[574].

The war against Machado and his defeat in 1933 gave rise to strong nationalist sentiment. Anger over the previous administration's support of North American foreign policy, viewed as having contributed to Cuba's economic crisis, became more focused and intense. During the conflict and for a short time after its resolution, the country's intellectual elite attempted more actively to promote uniquely Cuban cultural forms. The sudden prominence of African-influenced music and dance in Cuba owed much to these events. The arts of socially marginalized blacks, for centuries ignored or dismissed by Cuba's middle classes, took on new significance as symbols of nationality.[575]

Far from isolated, this cultural development in Cuba coincided with what was also happening in parts of the United States and Europe. Moore situates the Afrocubanist movement, using as its background this cultural trend for anything 'black' and its link with the African continent - or its western myth - in Europe and the United States:

The 1920s precipitated a crisis in Europe bourgeois art internationally, from which many maintain it has never recovered (Hobsbawm 1987, 219). This was a time of fundamental change in the commercial music of nearly all Western countries, driven partly by technological innovation in the form of radio broadcasting and sound recordings [...]

The most obvious manifestation of such changes in the production and consumption of music involved concession to blue-collar and non-Western aesthetics on an unprecedented scale. This was the era of the tango, the 'jazz craze', 'bohemian' Paris, the Harlem Renaissance, the primitivists, the fauvists, naïve *kunst*, and a host of related movements drawing inspiration from non-European traditions.[576]

As I explained above, as a member of the artistic circles in New York, Evans was receptive to this cultural trend. Whether he was aware or not of the cultural negotiations happening in Havana in 1933, the fact that he chose to portray the man in *Citizen in Downtown Havana*, not only once but in a series of three portraits, corresponded in part, to his intuitions regarding his urban contemporaneity, and also as a sign of the 'American city'. The title *Citizen in Downtown Havana* gives further clues to Evans' intuitions. The citizen is the one who belongs to, is part of, is produced by, and, most importantly, owns the city, and as such he is entitled to the full rights guaranteed to each citizen by the city's different laws. By choosing this title, Evans was making a comment on the differences and similarities in the positioning of Afro-Americans within the mythologies of both nations.

When some of the photographs of the Havana series were again catalogued and exhibited in 1989, the Cuban writer Guillermo Cabrera Infante wrote a review, which later appeared in his collection of essays *Mea Cuba*:

> In all those books where Walker Evans returns and makes us return to Havana in the dream (and in the nightmares) of his portraits there is always a disturbing presence – a constant ghost. It is the image of a black dressed implacably from head to foot in white. He is standing on a downtown corner watching half the world go by. Evans calls him 'the citizen of Havana'. He is wearing a spotless linen suit and an immaculate collar shirt and a black tie with white polka-dots and a handkerchief in his pocket and a straw hat that was then very much in vogue. This man in a white suit may be a *sbirro* [sic]– whom Machado invented and Batista inherited (he looks so dangerous perhaps because he is so well dressed). However that may be, the man is there stopped in time and only his eyes appear to be moving. But of course his eyes cannot move either. Now he is frozen by the photograph and that moment has been made to last forever. The *dandy dangeroso*, as Walker Evans would say, will keep his eyes peeled while he watches the invisible witness who has made him immortal with a wink, black on white, like the photograph.[577]

His 'dandyism'[578] is in the dress and pose, but what makes him look dangerous to Cabrera Infante can only be his blackness. In the phrase: 'he looks so dangerous perhaps because he is so well dressed' Infante betrays the old unconscious fear of the black man, dominant among the European and American white populations. The assumption was that a successful and therefore, well-dressed black man, could only be a criminal. However, Cabrera Infante had already alluded to the presence of this image in Havana in different terms. In *Three Trapped Tigers* he describes an Afro-Cuban dressed exactly as the man in *Citizen*, a style that Cabrera Infante describes as 'my habanero' (very Havana style):

> I went to Las Vegas and arrived at the coffee stand and met up with Laserie and said to him, Hi, Rolando, how're things and he said, How're you, *mulato*
> and so we began chatting and then I told him I was going to take some pics of him here one of these nights when he was having a cup of coffee, because Rolando really looks good, a real singer, a real Cuban, a real regal *habanero* there with his white drill suit, very neat and dandy from the white tan shoes to the white straw hat, dressed as only Negroes know how to dress, ...[579]

It is possible that Cabrera Infante had in mind the photograph by Evans when he wrote this sentence at the beginning of the 1960s. However, I am more inclined to think that he was referring to the typicality of this image in Havana as one of the city's many visual signs.

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The white dandy, the North American tourist in Havana, would also often be represented using the same dress code [Illustration 96]. In one of the most popular Pan American Airways' posters promoting Havana as a holiday destination, the North American gentleman is dressed in the same manner, as a sign of his good taste and, therefore, status. The use of such dress code served to picture Havana as the 'Gay City' and 'the Paris of the Caribbean', as the promotional material often referred to [illustration 97]. In what sense are the two men different signs, the black man in Evans' image and the white man in the Pan American Airways promotional poster? The difference resides in the intrinsically urban nature of the former, as an image, a figure that stood for the city's modernity. This dress code is not only in this image by Evans or in Cabrera Infante's literature. It was often used by Havana's black performers - dancers, musicians and singers – from the 1920s to well into the 1950s until dress fashion changed dramatically during the 1960s.

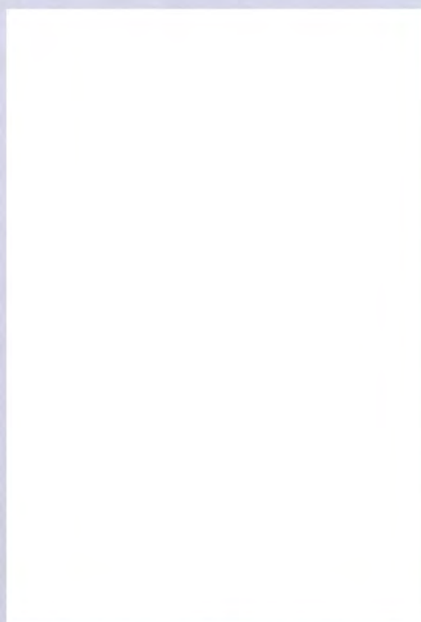Illustrations 96. Pan American Airways and promotional poster

Illustration 97. The P & O Steamship Company promotional poster

In Julio García Espinosa's filmic cabaret, *Son o no son*, the man in the couple dancing to a *son* recreated a similar dress code (See DVD: *Son o no son*: couple dancing a *son*). The performance is based on the centrality of the male performer, with the woman as literally the support, allowing for the man's acrobatic movements and postures. Many of these acrobatics came from the performative traditions of the Abakuás or *ñáñigos*, where the performer in the traditional *íreme* sac, dances balancing on only one leg [illustration 98].

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According to León Argeliers, the acrobatic displayed in this *son* derived from the *Rumba Columbia*, a dance tradition practised by Abakuá initiates[580]. This particular dance form, as performed in *Son o no son*, became popular in Havana's cabarets and clubs during the 1950s. Even though the film was shot in 1978, the man's dress code denotes the decades before 1959 and the particular cultural life the city had developed until then.

Illustration 98. Photograph of Abakuá performance.

However, in *Citizen Downtown Havana*, dress code, city life and race are intertwined to conform to an image of the new urbanity Evans saw as characteristic of the 'American City'. If he had not included this image among the others in *American Photographs,* its relevance would have rested only on the particularities of Havana's urbanity. These particularities resided first on the fact that, compared to the United States, a much higher proportion of Cuba's population was of African origin. However, as part of the hundred images exhibited, its new meaning rested at the point where both urban modernities coincided.

After Evans took this picture in Havana, he went back to it in order to reframe it [illustration 99], which transformed its discursive function. What he did was to accentuate the gaze-play between the citizen and the portrait of Kay Francis, a Hollywood actress, on the cover of *Cinelandia* magazine. The image of a well-known cinema actress represented as the 'looker' instead of the 'looked at' makes of the represented man just another image, so that the urban appears not only as the space of production and consumption of images, it is the cinematographic image itself. The pose, dress and apparent unawareness of the man standing in this image, framed (and trapped) in the crossing of two gazes - that of the women in the magazines and the photographer behind his camera – turned him into spectacle. This visual game seems to recreate the cinematographic. The relation of this image to Walker Evans' intuitions regarding urban change and the possibilities of its

representation during the Great Depression could also be found in the development of a collective image of modern city life encoded and made 'visible' by the cinematographic medium.
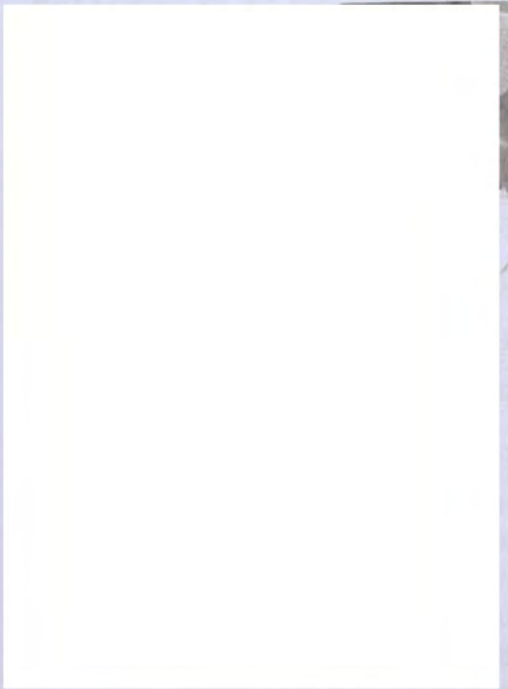

Illustration 99. W. Evans' crop of *Citizen Downtown Havana* (1933)

This is not such a speculative guess if we think that this concept of the urban had already been suggested to Evans by his friend, the poet Hart Crane in the poem <u>The Bridge</u> that Evans illustrated with three photographs in 1929:

I think of cinemas, panoramic sleights

With multitudes bent toward some flashing scene

Never disclosed, but hastened to again,

Foretold to other eyes on the same screen;[581]

It was not by chance that included among the many images Evans took of Havana, were several cinema entrances, with posters advertising the films on show [Illustrations 85 and 86]. Some of these films were made in Hollywood, for Evans probably another sign of the reproduction of what he called the 'American city' throughout the American continent. Cinematic projections of American cities were already having an impact in the ways cities

were perceived[582]. During the 1920s there had been many cinematographic productions representing modern European and North American cities as organic entities[583]. However, in *Citizen Downtown Havana*, the relations between the cinematographic, with the image of Kay Francis on the magazine cover, and the modernity represented by the presence of African-Americans and their urban cultures, have another dimension.

The subsequent cropping of this image in order to focus on the eyes and the direction of the gazes – that is, of the man and of the women on the magazine covers, – can also be interpreted as an attempt to capture photographically an otherwise nearly imperceptible moment of illicitness. Gilles Mora speculated on the sexually charged play of gazes after the crop was made in his introductory essay to the book *Havana, 1933*:

> Among the photographs taken in Havana, the portrait of Havana Citizen in the white suit and boater is exemplary: the whole negative becomes the point of departure for an astonishing cropping, which substitutes a close-up for a medium range shot in order to put the face of Havana Citizen in a critical relation to the faces of the women on the cover of the magazines on the newsstand. This enlargement fundamentally modifies the information presented, sexualizing it in the exchange of glances between the male and the females.[584]

However, there is no such 'exchange of glances'. The man is being looked at without returning the gaze either to the women or the photographer, a fact that Gilles Mora does not acknowledge. Walker Evans' biographer, James R. Mellow also attempted an interpretation of this image alluding to its possible transgressions:

> The eyes of Kay Francis, a reigning white queen of the silver screen in the thirties, peer out from the picture on a level with the black man's sullen stare. With the devious simplicity of photography, the picture says Man and Woman, black and white, and raises other unspoken visual issues. It says Hollywoodism and American enterprise.[585]

However, Kay Francis' eyes are not only peering out to the man. They are *looking at him*, as perceived by the viewer. This photograph can also be seen as Evans' recreation of an uncomfortable sight: that of a white woman's look of desire for a black man. Evans' cropping of *Citizen*, as if to insinuate that this is a black man being 'looked at' by a white woman, might have also been a comment on the types of urban modernity cities such as

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Havana or New York had to offer. These were years when sexual encounters between a white woman and a black man would still be severely condemned in both countries[586]. That is, it was widely thought that any white woman who had sexual encounters with black men was morally deplorable, and she was immediately 'blackened' (perceived as black women, who were then represented as sexually excessive and accessible)[587]. The relevance of such a taboo in the politics of racial difference in the American continent has been emphasized by Heloise Brown in her introduction to the collection of essays *White?Woman* from 1999:

> If social and legal sanctions against sex between people of European ancestry and people of African ancestry had never existed, the categories 'black' and 'white' as they are known and used today would not exist either.[588]

Such *social and legal sanctions* against sex between blacks and whites were harshly applied mostly when the equation was white woman/black man and generally not vice-versa[589]. This was the case particularly in Cuba. The relations between the city, cinema and taboo are visually played out in this image in a way probably unforeseen by Evans. *Citizen Downtown Havana* is an image of urban change or change brought about by urbanity: when desire (and it is Walker Evans' desire for this man, his presumed 'otherness', and not only that of the women on the magazine cover) ran wild in the anarchic aisles of the cities. The city appears as the space where sexual taboos are more easily broken, because it allows for more of them to pass unnoticed. Earlier, Charles Baudelaire had described this liberating experience in his poem 'Á Une Passante'[590], as an experience that was more often than not merely aesthetic. As David Clarke writes: 'For the *flâneur*, the (sexually charged) pleasures of the city stemmed from an *aesthetic* proximity to others that was wholly detached from any *social* proximity.'[591]

That both the white women and the black man inhabit different spaces in the image works as a kind of metaphor for Havana's gender and racial segregations at the time. It is also a visual metaphor of the indexical nature of the photographic medium, or better, of its loss, once an image is mechanically reproduced and widely distributed as in Kay Francis' portrait on the magazine cover. In the racial significations of this particular image, I concur with Ruth Frankenber's definition of 'whiteness' in her essay *White Women. Race Matters* (1993):

... whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint', a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, 'whiteness' refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed.[592]

If the figure of the urban black man was then becoming this desirable 'other', in this image the desire belongs to an also invisible 'other': the middle class white woman in the Cuban city. In his account of Havana during the 1930s, Alejo Carpentier spoke of the invisibility of women in Havana, locked behind windows and under the vigil of their male custodians, whether fathers, husbands or brothers[593]. However, who were these women really? All of Havana's women or just the white women from the middle and upper classes? He laments the lack of intellectual contact and friendship with those who were supposed to be his class (and cultural) companions, and confesses that such friendship and intellectual sharing would happen only with sexual workers, also made invisible inside brothels and private houses. Alejo Carpentier described this invisibility of the middle class white woman as one of the city's visual markers[594].

In Álvarez Tabío's analysis of Lezama Lima's literary recreations of Havana, she describes the importance given by Lezama to doors and windows as the spaces where the dialogue between the house and the city took place[595]. Because in Havana Vieja and Havana Centro, windows and doors are directly at street level, this figure is more literal than metaphorical. Lezama Lima speaks with inside knowledge of the female world characteristic of the white middle classes in the city. In his description, windows and doors were also visual devices: the middle class white female's space from which to see and to be seen within the city[596].

While in Havana, Walker Evans also took numerous portraits of women [Illustrations 100, 101, 102 and 103], among them, of sex workers. We know this because he inserted the negatives in small envelopes titling them in pencil. Some of these envelopes had written on the outside the word '*puta*' (Spanish for 'whore'). When these envelopes were archived they had already been emptied, making it impossible for the researcher to decipher which image belonged to which envelope[597]. There is the temptation for the researcher to guess from a gesture, a look, a skin color or a dress code who of the many women were the sex workers. One might reasonably wonder about Evans' need to note the fact that they were sex workers, using the disdainful Spanish term *puta,* but also whether he too was making

assumptions based on looks. There is very little in these images that would betray the women's position within Cuban society and its cultural differences that might hold the key to the city's dynamics. Apparently, it is a utopian space that has freed itself of the burden of racial inequalities and conflicts. However, these images would never tell us anything about any 'real' Havana. They are only there to hide it.

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Illustrations 100, 101, 102 and 103. W. Evans' portraits of Havana women (1933)

That *Citizen Downtown Havana* became the most recognizable image from the Havana series after its inclusion in *American Photographs* tells us more about the United States' national mythologies than those of Cuba. However, inserted within the context of other visual and literary documents that came to represent Havana, its significance now relies on this image's status as a sign of the city. As with the portraits of Havana's women, *Citizen* ended up 'hiding' the other possible Havanas. Its contemporary status as work of art rather than social document resides in its utopianism. A city that aspires to diversity and not mere difference would always represent itself using its exceptions in order to reproduce itself according to them.

Illustrations 104 and 105. Film stills from *Son o no son* (1978) showing couple dancing to a *son*.

Conclusions

To analyse different documents that have represented Havana from the 1930s until now in order to uncover a coherent narrative has seemed on occasion an impossible task. This has mainly been because the comparison of these documents with the general discourses on the western modern city has shown that often their utopianism derived from different, and sometimes contradictory, notions of what constituted a city. The emphasis on the national that characterises this investigation has been a response to the realisation that in the different documents, Havana has mainly been represented as the paradoxical producer and container of national narratives within and outside Cuba. Taking into account that national discourses have an eminently utopian character, the documents analysed appear to accomplish a specific utopian function within the discourse of the national by representing the city as collaborating with, and on occasion challenging, the formation of this discourse. Firstly, Havana has been imagined as a space whose form allows for the experience of aesthetic eclecticism, an experience related to the mystification of the old city as the 'non-capitalist' and therefore 'desired' and 'lost' city. Secondly, it has also allowed for the heterotopian formation of the nocturnal, functioning as relief from the contradictions in the ideological dichotomy between work and leisure. Thirdly, it has become the space that exemplifies our contemporary utopian notion of multiculturalism, where cultures that have developed independently, meet and inform each other in, at least apparent, equal cohabitation.

This investigation shows how the predominance of questions of cultural differences within the city and their possible reconciliation in the documents analysed has not only been a response to the need for coherent national narratives within Cuba. Such predominance has also been the result of projections onto the city of the narratives of others' identities outside Cuba, particularly from Europe and North America. Each document has been analysed without presuming that they were either the effects of a western colonial gaze onto the city and its inhabitants, or a challenge to this westernised representation by Cuban authors. Hence, I have avoided defining Havana as a third world city, so as not to draw simplifications that would obscure not only the differences within the Cuban made documents, but also the coincidences between some of these documents and those made by non-Cubans. This a priori division between a Cuban and a non-Cuban perspective has been

one of the main problems in the few bibliographies approaching the question of Havana's representations and their possible symbolisms[598]. Needless to say that differences between Cuban and non-Cuban productions indeed exist, the documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* being a case in point. However, these differences have not been decisive in relation to the type of utopian projections the city came to embody. As in the case of Walker Evans and his 1933 photographs of Havana, the utopianisms now associated with the Cuban city have been shaped in relation to its differences and similarities with the development experienced by other urban centres. If we understand the concept of utopia as an expression of desire that draws upon the perceived deficiencies of our contemporary reality, the utopianisms found in the different documents analysed refer as much to Havana's reality as it does to the reality of cities in Europe and North America, from where many of these documents' authors came.

Relating the concept of the utopian to the dominant representations of Havana during the 1990s has helped me to situate these representations within the more generic – and mainly western - discourses on the city from preceding decades. Firstly by identifying the common trend of representing the city as an anachronism. Secondly by relating the anachronic to the nostalgic, which at the same time seems to work as a discursive function in the formation of national narratives[599]. Thirdly, by concluding that, what has now become a paradigmatic representation of Havana, the documentary *Buena Vista Social Club*, came to fulfil this discursive function more completely. Havana then appears as the image of the 'lost city': the city left behind after the rapid urban developments in Europe and America during the 1950s. What *Buena Vista Social Club* added to this image was the ideal of the multicultural; the apparent equality in an ethnically diverse society, and particularly, the 'africanisation' of an otherwise western city.

Even though a higher proportion of Havana's population has been of white European ancestry during the entire twentieth century, its contemporary touristic appeal owes more now to what is perceived as its African components. This thesis has dealt with this apparent contradiction by reviewing the different literature concerning Cuban national narratives and their focus on the idea of *mestizaje*. The creation of the figure of the *mulato* to represent visually Cuba as a nation has come from the assumption that the body is bearer of culture and, therefore, that cultural development occurs through ethnic mixing or miscegenation.

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The presence of the Abakuás, as one of the many signs of the city that has persisted throughout its history, has helped to refute the notion that a mixed-race body would be the equivalent of a 'mixed culture', containing both the African and the European. By simultaneously resisting translation through hermeticism, and allowing Euro-Cuban men to join, the Abakuás embody a different concept of the national: a nation that keeps its men together and its women separated. From here the conclusion that can be drawn is that the representations of the positioning of women within the city has been one of the most important factors in understanding the relations between the different documents analysed. Understanding the Abakuás as a Havana-phenomena (and not only an African one), it can be said that social segregation – economic, cultural, sexual and gender based segregations – within Havana is what has allowed for the appearance of cultural mixing and ethnic harmony in its representations.

Havana's architectonical eclecticism, as represented in the documents analysed, have played a significant role in the creation of a visual paragon for the idea of the Cuban nation as formed through the process of transculturation described by Ortiz. The general literature dedicated to the formation of Cuban national identity has largely overlooked this fact[600]. In my revision of the concept of the baroque in Alejo Carpentier - paradigmatic in the mythologies of *mestizaje* -, Havana's architectural forms appear to exemplify the ideal of cultural harmonisation between different traditions. It was precisely in *City of Columns* where Carpentier came to define the old city, in contrast to the new North American city, as a form designed in a 'style without style'. Carpentier's equation between the baroque and the eclectic opened the possibility of describing Cuban cultural productions as synthetic instead of hybrid. In reality, the contrast between both cities, the old and the new, was the result of cultural competition between the European and the North American traditions in Cuba. The architectural landmarks that defined Havana in cinema and photography before 1959 – the Capitolio and the main hotels – have been identified as closely linked to the North American national project. By contrast, the recuperation of the concept of the baroque post-1959 and its relation to the old colonial city was of a marked European character. The 1959 Revolution revived the European traditions in the island by putting them together with the traditions of the Afro-Cubans. One of the most significant post-1959 architectural projects, the new buildings for the ISA, revealed a particularly eclectic aesthetic that embodied this attempt to break with aesthetics associated with pre-1959

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economic and cultural North American hegemony. This was done through the recuperation of aesthetics drawn from the traditions of the old medieval and baroque European city. The utopianism in this first attempt to break with the ideologies associated with Northern architectural models was linked to the nostalgic idea of the city as a work of art - the conception of the old city as mainly an aesthetic experience.

The analysis of post-1959 cinematographic recreations of the city has shown how representations and contrast between the different architectural traditions in the island have contributed to the discourses on the national. The symbolic character that architectural form acquired in this filmography depended on its ability to represent a city socially divided between two ideological projects: the capitalist and the socialist. These projects were formally represented through the aesthetic oppositions between the old European city and the new North American city. In these representations, the image of Havana's slums appears as another architectural sign of the city. Shown as comprising mainly poor Afro-Cubans, the slum population was equated with criminality and atavism and their disappearance presented as necessary. These cinematographic examples managed to represent those who inhabited Havana's different spaces and architectures as if produced by them. By so doing, citizens would easily fall within categories: bourgeoisie, proletarian and the most contended, the lumpenproletariats. The slums and the population they 'produced' were used by the post-1959 authorities as paradigmatic of the 'old regime'. Their removal and replacement for modern social housing went hand in hand with the ideological recreations of the 'new man' in the city: the need to turn the *lumpen* into the proletarian while transforming a decadent city into a revolutionary one.

Havana's perceived decadence during the 1950s had been in part the product of its promotion as a tourist resort in film, particularly in Hollywood-made productions. The centrality of those Hollywood representations from the end of the 1940s that gave Havana its status as a hedonistic enclave relied heavily on the city's cultural connections with the United States' urban developments at the time. It was a reflection of the heavy investments of businesses dedicated exclusively to leisure activities: casinos, hotels and nightclubs or cabarets. Recreations of Havana during the 1940s and 1950s, such as those in *Weekend in Havana* and *Guys and Dolls*, served to promote the city as this desirable holiday resort to North American prospective visitors. However, both films used very different strategies,

corresponding to the shift experienced by the type of utopianism projected onto the Cuban city during the decade that separated them. In *Weekend in Havana,* Havana's desirability is intimately linked to the lifestyle and cultural identity of the wealthy groups in North America. *Guys and Dolls* relied more heavily on Havana's perceived 'otherness', shifting its attention to those spaces in the city outside the elitist and North American dominated tourist centres. Through the character of Sky Masterson, the film draws equivalences between the criminal and Havana's nightlife, offering an image of the nocturnal during those years as a heterotopical space accomplishing a particular social function. This function ensured that the ideological divisions between work and leisure corresponded with those between the diurnal and the nocturnal, so as not to blur them. The figure of the criminal in Havana came to represent a glamorised and desired 'other', as long as it stayed within the constraints of the nocturnal.

The post-1959 recreations of the city's nightlife by the new cultural authorities continued with this equation between the criminal and the nocturnal in Havana, this time in order to ideologically equate the city's development during the 1950s with United States' organised crime. The city's 'americanisation' was seen as contradictory to Cuba's national independence. The paradox was that the attempt to move away from North American cultural dominance required the revival of cultural forms from the Afro-Cubans' traditions in the island. However, much of the new cultural forms developed in the preceding decades had been a product of the capital's development as a tertiary city thanks to investments coming from the United States. The Afro-Cuban cultural forms represented as 'authentically' Cuban were those coming from traditional religious rituals and practises, mainly *Santería* and Abakuá, and the traditional dances associated with Afro-Cuban rumba, such as the *Guaguancó.* However, the booming cultural scene produced by Havana's nightlife renaissance during the 1950s was obliterated and seen as contra-revolutionary. The censorship of the documentary *PM* was a direct result of this perspective. This film recorded Havana's nightlife before the city's transformation, a nightlife in which the presence of poor Afro-Cubans had been very influential. However, this time instead of Afro-Cuban cultural expressions, those who censored the film spoke of the *lumpen* and the need for its eradication. The Marxist term 'lumpenproletariat' was not only applied to the notion of the criminal in the city, but also successfully equated with its poor Afro-Cuban population. The relevance of the category of the lumpenproletariat and its relation to the

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criminal and the nocturnal is key to understanding the divisions among intellectuals after the 1950s and their different approaches to representing Havana.

Another shortcoming in the bibliography dedicated to Havana's representations has been to forget that Havana's nightlife also fulfilled the same heterotopical functions for its own citizens. Spaces such as the Rumba Palace and 'El Chori' in the area of Playa were frequented, apart from the occasional tourist, by Afro-Cubans from both genders and Euro-Cuban men, often in search of a sexual encounter with the racially different. This became explicit in the post-1959 allusions to the cabaret genre in the city by Cuban authors, such as Julio García Espinosa and Guillermo Cabrera Infante. Both had lived in the city during the 1950s and had participated in its nocturnal cultural life. Many of the cultural expressions represented in their work had developed parallel to the tourist and entertainment industries in Havana, whether practised by Afro-Cubans, Euro-Cubans or both. García Espinosa directly linked the concept of the 'popular' with the cabaret, as the genre that best expressed it. However, as the censorship of the documentary *PM* revealed, the new cultural authorities tried to put an end to this equation between the popular and the nocturnal. The cabaret genre could not continue to develop in the city as it had done during the 1950s[601]. Instead, the 'popular' became equated with the most traditional aspects of Afro-Cuban culture as explained above, a 'culture' very rarely performed by Euro-Cubans. At the same time, the notion of a *mestizo* culture, containing African and European elements to define Cuban national identity, was recovered and made official. In a classless society, Euro-Cubans and Afro-Cubans would share an identity drawn from what was conceived as 'popular', that is, the identity of the poor, as if 'the poor' in Cuba was a homogeneous cultural group. What came to represent Cuba culturally, particularly *rumba* dance expressions, were drawn from forms that had originally developed in Havana due to the city's racial and gender segregations: mainly those coming from the traditions of the Abakuás in the city. It could be said that the post-1959 cultural policies contributed greatly to the modern 'africanisation' of Havana as perceived by non-Cubans, a fact that has made the reality of social and cultural segregations and differences within the city invisible.

The particular case of Walker Evans' images of Havana from 1933 offers an alternative image to this recreation of the national in Cuba. These images represented Havana as a paradoxical[602] example of what Evans thought of the 'American city' - a category central to

the United States' national narratives. The image of the 'American City' in Evans relied heavily on a conception of the city as a space that allows for the cohabitation of differences. The inclusion of *Citizen Downtown Havana* in his *American Photographs* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art contributed to this conception, becoming not only one of the best-known images from the Havana series, but also one of the most representative of Evans' construction of the image of 'America' as a nation[603]. The man in *Citizen Downtown Havana* is portrayed as a 'desired other', as expressed by the gazes of the women on the magazine covers. Through Evans' intervention, he becomes a sign of the 'American City', of its possibilities. However, this investigation has identified this image as also a sign of Havana, of its particular cultural development and of its modernity. It is a figure that has been repeated throughout the twentieth century by performers, writers and other cultural producers.

By playing out the dynamics of spatial gendrification in the city, *Citizen Downtown Havana* also testifies to the crucial role that the positioning of women within the city has played in the construction of an imagined Havana. The analyses of the several documents in this investigation where this positioning has been represented, reveals the female body as the recipient and agent of the conflicts between different, and unequal, cultural traditions in the city. A follow up to this investigation would be a deeper analysis of the role of gender divisions when looking into the cultural history of Havana - including the production of the city's representations within and outside Cuba – and how it affects the dynamics between the different cultural groups sharing the space of the city.

The interdisciplinary nature of this research has brought together documents from different fields in order to elaborate an alternative interpretation of the cultural history of Havana. Seen here neither as an 'other', nor as a 'same', Havana has been shown as a peculiar case of different urban developments and their cultural outcomes experienced by cities in the twentieth century. What might follow on from this research would be a comparison between cities that have had a crucial role in the formation of national narratives while dealing with the de facto existence of cultural differences. What makes Havana a particularly exemplary case has in part been the importance of the post-1959 ideologies on social change and how they were applied to transform (successfully or not) the city's symbolic status within the nation. Therefore, in the American and European continent, the

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history of Havana appears unique, retaining its contemporary appeal as an urban 'other' to other cities in the western hemisphere. However, this research has shown that Havana's peculiarities, from early on, have presented similar paradoxes and challenges to those now found in many European and North American cities. The question of how to reconcile cultural differences in order to construct a cohesive national project is one of them. Following this, there is also the utopianism implicit in modern debates on the possibilities of multiculturalism, and how it is expressed in our cities. This is not to say that the Havana case should be extrapolated to the analysis of other cities. What this research adds to the study of the cultural history of the city is the presentation of a particular model where questions of cultural differences and their possible coexistence have developed differently. This could shed light on issues overlooked by other similar investigations, as for example, questions of cultural 'hermetism' within cities, or the role of the tourist industry in collaborating with and transforming national self-definitions. This study also contributes to the analyses of ways cinematographic, photographic and literary documents have colluded in the construction of an image of the city as bearer of utopian projections. As in the case of Evans' *Citizen Downtown Havana,* such projections serve to identify the city's own dynamics and the desires they unleash.

An interdisciplinary methodology is the most fruitful in order to understand how a particular urban space has produced a concrete image of itself through the diversity of the cultural productions that that very space has made possible. It is a methodology that testifies to the fact that cultural forms, including the individuals and groups that produce and perform them, are a product of the different contingencies coming together in the city. This is what makes each city different. At the same time, it is also what allows the understanding of those cultural productions as the city itself. In dialogue with each other, they represent and perform the city, making it possible to perceive it as a real entity, though 'constructed' or 'imagined'[604]. The analysis of cultural forms from just one discipline, for example in literature as in the case of Enma Álvarez Tabío in *La invención de La Habana,* would keep the image of the city as just the product of 'authors' or disciplines, and not as a separated entity that has acquired the status of 'lived reality' as in the case of Havana, New York and other world metropolises. With the concentration of the world population in urban centres now becoming an apparently unstoppable tendency, big metropolises are now challenging the authority of national discourses. A limited space made up of overlapping

differences cannot produce the same type of narrations Benedict Anderson identified as the basis of modern national identities in *Imagined Communities*. In their origins, these narrations had been reproduced through textual documents – and, on a lesser scale, museum-objects. Photography and, particularly, cinema contributed later to their reinforcement. However, photography and cinema have also been central in the construction of modern discourses on the city, now becoming independent from their earlier attachment to the national.

I would like to conclude with a final representation of Havana, this time by Cuban visual artist Carlos Garaicoa [Illustration 106]. This image was shown as part of an installation from 1996 entitled *When Desire Resembles Nothing*. It was later shown in Documenta XI, at Kassel 2002, in another installation entitled *Continuity of a Detached Architecture*[605]. The two blocks of flats in the background are social housing in the area of Havana Centro, normally characterised by a low-rise architecture dating from the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth. The man in the picture shows with pride a tattoo depicting the Twin Towers in New York, with the emblem *In my Soul* underneath. Nothing in this image indicates that it has actually been taken in Havana. As we are not able to see the surroundings of the building, it appears de-contextualized. However, the man's tattoo serves as an important clue. This man's expression of desire for another city most probably relied on his knowledge of that city through the cinematographic[606]. As with Fernando Pérez's *Madagascar*, Garaicoa took this image when the island was going through an acute economic crisis. The man's statement, drawn on his body, works as an act of protest. By using the housing block as background to the portrait, Garaicoa attempts a formal equation that also serves as a metaphorical commentary on both cities: that they belong to the same emancipatory project, one that imagined cities as the spaces for human self-fulfilment – albeit in very different ways. The block of social housing in the man's background identifies the post-1959 socialist plans for the city. The Twin Towers relied on the utopianism founded on the belief in endless economic growth. In both cases, the idea of social progress is embodied in the architectural form. However, both architectures appear now to us as the image of a utopian dream rapidly turning into a dystopia, as if the city itself might be condemned to share the same future as the Twin Towers.

Illustration 106. Carlos Garaicoa's *When Desire Resembles Nothing* (1996)

Endnotes:

Introduction

[1] The colonisation of Canary Islands started in 1407 and was concluded at the end of the fifteenth century, right before the colonisation of Cuba. See Mercer, John. *The Canary Islanders. Their Prehistory, Conquest and Survival* (London: Rex Collings, 1980) pp. 155-197

[2] Hal Foster distinguishes between vision and visuality, using the social and the historically contingent as the factors determining the latter: 'Although vision suggests sight as a physical operation, and visuality sight as a social fact, the two are not opposed as nature to culture: vision is social and historical too, and visuality involves the body and the psyche. Yet neither are they identical: here, the difference between the terms signals a difference within the visual – between the mechanism of sight and its historical techniques, between the datum of vision and its discursive determinations – a difference, many differences, among how we see, how we are able, allowed, or made to see, and how we see this seeing or the unseen therein. With its own rhetoric and representations, each scopic regime seeks to close out these differences: to make of its many social visualities one essential vision, or to order them in a natural hierarchy of sight.' Foster, Hal. 'Preface' to *Vision and Visuality*. Edited by Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988) pp. vii-xiv

On the other hand, W. J.T. Mitchell has identified 'visuality' as the object of Visual Culture, that is '... the social construction of the visual field and the visual construction of the social field'. Mitchell, W.J.T. 'Showing, Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture', *Journal of Visual Culture* 1, (3), August: 165-183

[3] Dean MacCannell's definition of 'symbolic markers' in his essay *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (The MacMillan Press Ltd., London and Basingstoke, 1976) p. 111: 'Sightseers do not, in any empirical sense, *see* San Francisco. They see Fisherman's Wharf, a cable car, the Golden Gate Bridge, [...]. As elements in a set called 'San Francisco', each of these items is a symbolic marker.'

[4] On the concept of *cubania* see Kapcia, Antoni. 'Introduction: The Concept of *Cubania* and the National Myth' in *Cuba: Island of Dreams* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2000) pp. 1-38

[5] See, for example, Kapcia, A.: 2000; De la Fuente, A. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Leclercq, Cécile. *El lagarto en busca de una identidad. Cuba: identidad nacional y mestizaje* (Madrid: Vervuert, Iberoamericana, 2004)

[6] Lefebvre, Henri. *Writings on Cities* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1995) p.103

[7] '... to make the urban a fundamental part of cinematic discourse and to raise film to its proper status as an analytical tool of urban discourse.' AlSayyad, Nezar. *Cinematic Urbanism. A History of the Modern from Reel to Real* (New York: Routledge, 2006) p. 4 from 'Introduction'

[8] '... the convergence of capitalism and print technology on the fatal diversity of human language created the possibility of a new form of imagined community.' Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006) p. 46

[9] On the cinematographic creations of cities see, for example, Donald, James. *Imagining the Modern City* (The Athlone Press, London, 1999)

[10] De la Fuente, A.: 2001, pp. 30-35; Leclercq, C.: 2004, pp. 145-147

[11] Mainly through Fernando Ortiz's theorisations on the phenomena of transculturation in Cuba. See Ortiz, Fernando. *Cuban Counterpoint. Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995) pp. 97 – 103. Also, Elías Entralgo. 'La mulatización cubana' published in *Estudios Afrocubanos. Selección de*

Lecturas de Lázara Menéndez. Tomo 1 (La Habana: Universidad de La Habana, 1998) pp. 174-183. I will discuss these two texts in Chapter II

[12] Clifford, James. 'Histories of the tribal and the Modern' in *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1988) pp. 189-214; Archer-Straw, Petrine. *Negrophilia: Black Culture and Avant-Garde Paris* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001) pp. 10-18

[13] Brace, C. Loring, 'Introduction' to *'Race' Is A Four-Letter Word. The Genesis of the Concept* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 1

[14] Ibid. p. 270

[15] Bronfman, Alejandra. 'Introduction', *Measures of Equality. Social Science, Citizenship, and Race in Cuba, 1902-1940* (London: The University of North Caroline Press, 2004) p. 5

[16] I am referring here exclusively to the Cuban case on which this research has been based.

[17] Gilroy, Paul. 'The Crisis of 'Race' and Raciology' in *Against Race. Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000) pp. 11-53

[18] 'The social reference of cultivation was allied to the earlier distinction between the civil and the savage: to be civilized meant to be a citizen of the city ..., as opposed to the savage (wild man)... It thus operated within the terms of the later ideological polarity of the country and the city, for the inhabitants of the city contrasted themselves to the savages outside by appropriating, metaphorically, an agricultural identity. ... This refined culture of the city was first named as 'civilization' in English by the Scot James Bowell ... [in 1772].' Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995) p. 31

[19] Brace, C. L.: 2005, pp. 269-274

[20] Kendall, Gavin and Wickham, Gary. 'Cultural studies as studies of meaning – Foucault's methods don't belong here.' in *Using Foucault's Methods* (London: Sage Publications, 1999) pp. 117-121

[21] Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972) p. 131

[22] On discourse formations see Foucault, M.: 1972, pp. 31-39

[23] On the relations between the architecture of the prison and statements on discipline, Foucault wrote: 'A whole problematic then develops: that of an architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control – to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals ...' Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punishment* (London: Penguin Books, 1975) pp. 170-177

[24] '... How, under what conditions, and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse? What place can it occupy in each type of discourse, what functions can it assume, and by obeying what rules? In short, it is a matter of depriving the subject (or its substitute) of its role as originator, and of analyzing the subject as a variable and complex function of discourse.' Foucault, M.
'What is an Author?' Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. Ed. Donald F. Bouchard. Ithaca (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977) pp. 124-127

[25] Foucault, M.: 1977, pp. 124-127 and 1975: pp. 170-177

[26] By 'visuality' I mean the social constitution of the visual aspects of the city, while 'visibility' refers to what is shown and what is hidden in its representations.

[27] The material chosen will belong to the period 1930-2000. However, references to documents from earlier periods will be necessary.

[28] Álvarez Tabío, Enma. *La invención de La Habana* (Barcelona: Editorial Casiopea, 2000)

[29] Izquierdo, Yolanda. *Acoso y ocaso de una ciudad. La Habana de Alejo Carpentier y Guillermo Cabrera Infante* (San Juan: Isla Negra Editores, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2002)

[30] Kapcia, Antoni. *Havana: The Making of Cuban Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg Books, 2005)

[31] Huyssen, Andreas. 'Mapping the Postmodern: the Search for Tradition' in *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture and Postmodernism* (London, Macmillan: Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1986) pp. 160-177

[32] Edwad Said took the concept of the 'Other' as theorised by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan in 'The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis' published in Jacques Lacan's *Ecrits* (1966): 'We know that he laid it down as a rule that the expression of a desire must always be sought in the dream. But let us be sure what he meant by this. If Freud admits, as the motive of a dream apparently contrary to his thesis, the very desire to contradict him on the part of the subject whom he had tried to convince of his theory, how could he fail to admit the same motive for himself from the moment that, from his having arrived at this point, it was from another that his own law came back to him?
To put it in a nutshell, nowhere does it appear more clearly that man's desire finds its meaning in the desire of the other, not so much because the other holds the key to the object desired, as because the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other.' Lacan, Jacques. 'The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis' in *The Language of the Self*. Translation and commentary by Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968) p. 31

See also, Said, Edward. 'Introduction' in *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1995) pp. 1-28

[33] Foucault, M. 'Different Spaces' in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*. Volume 2. Edited by James D. Faubion (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1998) pp. 175-185

[34] MacCannell, D.: 1999, pp. 110-111

[35] As it happens today, at the time there were very close ties between the different sectors of the entertainment industries (cinema, tourism, gambling and night entertainment). During 1950s, the standard of what was considered then an ideal holiday resort for the wealthy North American tourist consisted of luxury hotels by the coast with indoor casinos and, occasionally, cabarets or nightclubs. These were normally the main sets for the Hollywood musicals based in Havana.

[36] Cirules, Eduardo. *El Imperio de La Habana* (La Habana : Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1999) and *La Vida Secreta de Meyer Lansky en La Habana* (La Habana : Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2004)

[37] Culturally speaking, the city was during those years going through a period of cultural renovation very similar to that in New York during the 1920s, known as the 'Harlem Renaissance'. See Moore, Robin. *Nationalizing Blackness. Afrocubanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) pp. 114-165. Politically speaking this was also the year of the general strike and social revolts that finally ended the dictatorship of General Machado and installed a four-month revolutionary government until the United States' intervention ended it. See Aguilar, Luís E., *Cuba 1933: Prologue to Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972)

Chapter I: Utopian Anachronisms and the Contemporary Nostalgia for the Lost City. Havana in Cinema and Photography During the 'Special Period'

[38] Even after New York's stock market crash in the 1929.

[39] The decade of the 1990s was called by the Cuban authorities the 'Special Period in times of peace'. What this meant was that, after the Soviet Union stopped subsidising the Cuban economy at the beginning of the decade, the island went through a very critical economic crisis. Many Cubans lost their livelihood, and the differences already existent between Afro-Cubans and Euro-Cubans were accentuated. The new economic reforms applied by the government in order to mitigate the effects of the crisis on the population meant the opening up of some sectors of the Cuban economy, particularly the tourist industry, for foreign investment (though this process had already been initiated on the second half of the 1980s). See Gott, Richard. *Cuba. A New History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004) pp. 290-292

[40] The island seems to be the natural space for utopian construction, not only in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), but also in other texts such as William Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) or Aldous Huxley's *Island* (1962), the counterpart to his *Brave New World* (1932) dystopian nightmare.

[41] *Utopian Territories: New Art From Cuba* (Contemporary Art Gallery, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, 1997)

[42] See for example, Zaya, Octavio. 'The Cuban Quagmire. Carlos Garaicoa, Kcho and Osvaldo Yero' in *Flash Art International*, vol. XXVIII, N. 184, October 1995, pp. 195-198. Also, Molina, Juan Antonio. 'Cuban Art: The Desire to Go on Playing' in *Utopian Territories: New Art From Cuba* (Contemporary Art Gallery, Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, Vancouver, 1997) and Castro, Antón. 'La Isla estética como microutopía del presente' in *The Future Island: Recent Art from Cuba* (Ayuntamiento de Gijón, Gijón, 1998). Gerardo Mosquera in his essay 'New Cuban Art Y2K' critically mentions this tendency in Europe and North America to promote exclusively those works commenting on the political situation of the island. See Mosquera, Gerardo. 'New Cuban Art Y2K' in Block, Holly. *Art Cuba: The New Generation* (New York: Harry N. Abhrams, 2001)

[43] 'Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives.' In Lyotard, J.-F. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) p. xxiv

[44] Ibid. p. 13

[45] Ibid.

[46] Even though the attraction of the anachronic is also exploited in other well-known cities such as Venice and Rome, there is a major difference between them and Havana. The appeal of the anachronistic in Havana is not so much due to the profusion of very old buildings, but to the fact that they are still, at least in their majority, inhabited by poor sectors of the population. Also, the presence of the old and out-dated in Havana, such as 1950s American cars, 1950s and 1960s street signs and even people's clothing, adds to the city's odd anachronism. This was the case at least until the 1990s. Nowadays, Havana has renewed its image greatly.

[47] '... three institutions of power which, although invented before the mid nineteenth century, changed their form and function as the colonized zones entered the age of mechanical reproduction. These three institutions were the census, the map, and the museum: together, they profoundly shaped the way in which the colonial state imagined its dominion – the nature of the human beings it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.' Anderson, Benedict *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006) p. 163. Also see Bennett, Tony. *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1995): 'Much of the same is true of objects placed in history museums. Although, materially, these remain as they were, they become, on the plane of meaning, facsimiles of themselves. They announce a distance between what they are and what they were through their very function, once placed in museum, of representing their own pastness and, thereby, a set of past social relations?' p. 129

[48] Giovan, Tria. *Cuba. The Elusive Island*, (New York: Common Place Books, 1996)

[49] Matt, Gerard. 'Beyond Time' in *Cuba: Maps of Desire* (Vienna: Folio Verlag Wien-Bozen, 1998)

[50] Dopicos, Ana María. 'Picturing Havana. History, Vision, and the Scramble for Cuba'. *Neplanta*, Volume 3, Issue 3 (September 2002)

[51] Foucault, Michel. 'Different Spaces' in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984*. Volume 2. Edited by James D. Faubion (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1998) pp. 175-185

[52] Ibid.

[53] In Foucault, Michel. 'Of Other Spaces' published in *Documenta X-The Book* (Cantz Verlag, Documenta and Museum Fridericianum Veranstaltungs Gumstt, Kassel, 1997) pp. 262-272

[54] Jencks, Charles. *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977) pp. 15-16

[55] Le Corbusier. *The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning* (London: Architectural Press, 1947), *The Radiant City* (1935) and the *Athen's Charter* (1942), both published in *The Ideas of Le Corbusier in Architecture and Urban Planning*. Texts edited and presented by Jacques Guitton (New York: G. Braziller, 1981)

[56] Jencks, Charles. 'The Death of Modern Architecture' in *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977) pp. 26-27

[57] Ibid. p. 15

[58] Ibid. p. 7

[59] Ibid. pp. 87-101

[60] Ibid, p. 37

[61] Venturi, Robert, Scott Brown, Denise and Izenour, Steven. *Learning From Las Vegas* (Cambridge, London: M.I.T. Press, 1972)

[62] Huyssen, A., 'Mapping the Postmodern' in *After the Great Divide* (London, Macmillan: Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1986) pp. 178-221

[63] Ibid. p. 196

[64] Huyssen, Andrea, 'The Search for Tradition: Avant-garde and post-modernism in the 1970s' in *Postmodernism: a Reader*. Docherty, Thomas (ed.) (New York: Columbia UP, 1993) p. 229

[65] Latour, Bruno. *We Have Never Been Modern*. Translated by Catherine Porter (New York, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) p. 46

[66] Particularly at the beginning of the twentieth century in the architecture of the Russian avant-gardes and the one termed as 'futurist' architecture. See, for example, Becker, Lutz. 'Moscow 1916-1930' in *Century Cities*. Catalogue to the exhibition *Century Cities* held at Tate Modern, February to April, 2001 (London: Tate Publishing, 2001) pp. 96-121 and *Futurism 1909-1944: arte, archittetura, spettacolo, grafica, letteratura*. Catalogue to the exhibition held at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, July to October 2001 (Milan: Mazzotta, 2001)

[67] Latour, B.: 1993, p. 8

[68] Levitas, Ruth. 'Introduction' in *The Concept of Utopia* (New York, London, Toronto: Philip Allan, 1990) pp. 1-8

[69] Kumar, Krishan. *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987) p. 3

[70] Bloch, Ernst. 1986. *The Principle of Hope*. Volume 1 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) (Originally published in German as *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* in 1959) p. 11

[71] Sargent, Lyman. *British and American Utopian Literature 1516-1985* (New York & London: Garland Publishing, 1988) p. xiii

[72] Manuel, Frank E., and Manuel Fritzie P. 'Introduction' in *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979) pp. 1-29

[73] Levitas, R.: 1990, p. 2

[74] Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich. 'Manifesto of the Communist Party' and 'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific' in *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Selected Works.* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991) p. 58 and pp. 378-410.

[75] '... For if the proper articulation of any concrete mode of production structurally implies the projection of all other conceivable modes, it follows that it implies the future as well and that the hermeneutic contact between present and past outlined here cannot fully be described without the articulation within it of what Ernst Bloch has called the Utopian impulse'. Jameson, Fredric. 'Marxism and Historicism' in *The Ideologies of Theory. Essays 1971-1986. Volume 2: Syntax of History* (London: Routledge, 1988) pp. 148-177

[76] 'Meanwhile, even among those with a commitment to social revolution, the classical polemic of Marx and Engels against Utopian socialism, which had long since stigmatized both the word and the thing itself, seemed reconfirmed by books like Charles Reich's *Greening of America* (1960), whose "critique" of capitalism (Consciousness I) proved on closer inspection to harbour the much more comfortable and reassuring conviction that the essentials of a hallucinogenic future were already latent and stirring, implicit in consumer society itself, and available at the price of one last effort – which, however, turned out merely to be an effort of "consciousness!" Meanwhile, Reich's minor premise, shared with so many of the post-1848 Utopias, had a much more serious political function, asserting, as it did, that whatever Utopia was and however it might be conceived, it was not to be construed as having anything whatsoever to do with Marxian socialism – which is to say, with any of the existing political movements for social change in the world today.' In Jameson, Fredric. 'Of Islands and Trenches: Neutralization and the Production of Utopian Discourse' in *Diacritics* 7:2 (Summer 1977) pp. 6-21

Ruth Levitas, wanting to prove the existence of an eminent utopian character in Marx and Engels' writings, argues that what they described as utopian in the 'utopian socialists' (Owen, Fourier, Saint-Simon and others) was just their belief in a peaceful transition from a capitalist society to a socialist one through example, education and consent. For Marx and Engels this transition would only be possible through conflict and revolutionary processes. Hence both authors used the term utopian to mean 'unrealistic'. However, according to Levitas, while imagining the post-capitalist society, Marx and Engels shared with the 'utopian socialists' the same 'description of aspirations for a good society' that has characterised the tradition of western utopianism since its beginnings. See Levitas, Ruth. *The Concept of Utopia* (New York, London, Toronto: Philip Allan, 1990) pp. 55-58

[77] Shklar, Judith 'The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia' in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*. Edited by Frank E. Manuel (London: Souvenir Press, 1973) pp. 101-115.

[78] Levitas, R.: 1990, p. 180

[79] Ibid. p. 8

[80] Ibid. p. 8

[81] Clifford, James. 'Histories of the Tribal and the Modern' in *The Predicament of Culture. Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1988) pp. 189-214

[82] Ibid. p. 202

[83] On the history and concept of primitivism see Friedman, J. 'Civilisational cycles and the history of primitivism' in *Social Analysis*, 1983, Number 14: pp. 31-52

[84] During, Simon. 'Post-modernism or Post-colonialism Today' in *Postmodernism: a Reader*. Edited and compilated by Thomas Docherty (New York and London: Harvester WheatSheaf, 1993) pp. 448-462.

[85] Published in *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter, 1991) pp. 336-357

[86] Reprinted in *Art in Theory: 1900-1990*. Harrison & Wood eds. (Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992) pp. 1119-1123

[87] Ibid. p. 1122

[88] Kumar, Krishan 'The End of Socialism? The End of Utopia? The End of History?' in *Utopias and the Millennium*. Edited by Krishan Kumar and Stephen Bann (London,: Reaktion Books, 1993) pp. 58-77

[89] Ibid. P. 76

[90] On this subject see Lewis Mumford, *Story of Utopias: Ideal Commonwealths and Social Myths* (London: Harrap & Co., 1923) and Eaton, Ruth. *Ideal Cities: Utopies and the (Un)built Environment* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2002)

[91] Mumford, Lewis. 'Utopia, The City and The Machine' in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*. Edited by Frank E. Manuel (London: Souvenir Press, 1973) pp. 3-24

[92] Frye, Northrup 'Varieties of literary utopias', in Frank E. Manuel (ed.), *Utopias and Utopian Thought: A Timely Appraisal* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 25-50: p.27

[93] Pike, Burton. 'The City as Image' from *The Image of the City in Modern Literature* (1981): partly reproduced in *The City Reader*. Edited by Richard T. LeGates and Frederic Stout (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) pp. 242-251

[94] And nearly any other big city within the Western hemisphere, including the whole of Latin America.

[95] Freud, Sigmund in *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930) (London: Penguin Books, 2002) pp. 7-8

[96] ' ... what traces of these early stages can still be found by a modern visitor to Rome .... An extensive knowledge of the Roman republic might at most enable him to say where the temples and public buildings of that period once stood. Their sites are now occupied by ruins ... One need hardly add that all these remnants of ancient Rome appear as scattered fragments in the jumble of the great city that has grown up in recent centuries, since the Renaissance. True, much of the old is still there, but buried under modern buildings. This is how the past survives in historic places like Rome.' Ibid. pp. 7-8

[97] Docherty, Thomas. 'Postmodernism: An Introduction' in *Postmodernism: a Reader*. Docherty, Thomas (ed.) (New York: Columbia UP, 1993) pp. 1-31:

[98] Jameson, Fredric. 'Of Islands and Trenches: Neutralization and the Production of Utopian Discourse,' *Diacritics* 7:2 (Summer 1977) pp. 6-21

[99] Ibid.

[100] Jameson, Fredric. *The Seed of Time* (Columbia University Press, 1994) pp. 28-32

[101] Ibid.

[102] For the traditional distinction between the country and the city see Raymond Williams' book *The Country and the City* (Herts: Paladin, 1973) pp. 9-17

[103] Wilson, Elizabeth. *The Sphinx in the City* (London: Virago Press Limited, 1991) p. 122

[104] Minh-ha, Trinh T. 'Difference' In *Discourse 8*, quoted in Clifford, J.: 1988, p. 215

[105] As discussed by Judith Shklar in her essay "The Political Theory of Utopia: From Melancholy to Nostalgia' in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*. Edited by Frank E. Manuel (London: Souvenir Press, 1973) pp. 101-115

[106] Wenders, Wim. Introduction to *Buena Vista Social Club. The Book of the Film* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000) p. 13

[107] Ibid. p. 14

[108] Famously, the architect Charles Jencks identified the exact date when modern architecture ended, and with it, the utopian project which had initially inspired it. Modern architecture, he says, died on the 15th of July of 1972 when various social housing blocks at the city of St. Louis, Missouri, were demolished by the city's authorities. Jencks explains how before the demolishing, these blocks had previously: '... been vandalised, mutilated and defaced by its black inhabitants, ...' Jencks, C.: 1977, p. 9

[109] '... when the term 'middle-class' is used here it will have a precise and unique meaning – namely not an economic class but a cultural community, referring to that section of the (mostly Havana-based) bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie that self-consciously or unconsciously adopted a set of cultural aspirations and preferences following 'middle-class' models from Western Europe and, increasingly, the United States.' Kapcia, Antoni. *Havana. The Making of Cuban Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg. 2005) p. 15

[110] 'Ironically, Afro-Cuban culture, embodying elements of music, dance, and religion, became essential to both nationalistic and touristic image builders.' Schwarz, Rosalie. *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) p. 87

[111] It is again, as in most of the Cuban filmography from before and after 1959, a film based on the lives of Euro-Cubans in the capital. However, that crisis affected mostly poor Afro-Cubans, particularly the ones living in the eastern parts of the island. During the 1990s, many of them emigrated to the capital, often living in self-built slums. Apart from a handful of other tourist resorts, Havana was the only place during the crisis where it was possible to make a decent living, however minimal. The wealth gap between Euro-Cubans and Afro-Cubans widened dramatically due not only to the increased number of tourists in the city, but more importantly, because many white families in Havana were able to receive economic support from their families living in Miami and other places outside Cuba. As the emigrant Cuban population is mainly middle-class and white, this fact left Afro-Cubans even further down in the distribution of wealth within the island. The Cuban authorities dealt with the emigration crisis by clamping down on mostly black eastern emigrants, who are required to obtain a special permission from the authorities in order to settle down in Havana - being treated as de facto illegal immigrants in their own country. Many Havana's citizens refer to eastern Afro-Cuban migrants as 'the Palestinians', highlighting the apartheid system now prevalent in the city. In another sequence, Laurita, the daughter, brings to the house a group of Afro-Cuban children who had been living rough in the streets. The mother reacts angrily and orders them out of the house, arguing she has enough problems of her own to be worrying about others. This sequence is the only one in the film, and probably in the whole of the Cuban filmography during the 1990s (fiction films), where the poverty suffered by mainly Afro-Cubans due to the crisis was depicted, though in a very limited manner.

On the impact of the 'Special Period' on Afro-Cubans see Sawyer, Mark Q. 'Race and Daily Life in Cuba During the Special Period' in *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba* (Los Angeles: University of California, 2005) pp. 134-153 and De la Fuente, A. 'The Special Period' in *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) pp. 317-334

Chapter II: Cuban National Identity, *Mestizaje* and Abakuá Utopia

[112] Millington, Mark. 'Transculturation: Contrapuntal Notes to Critical Orthodoxy' *Bulletin of Latin American Research. Journal of the Society of Latin American Studies*. Volume 26, number 2, April 2007. pp. 256-268

[113] Paz, Octavio. *Sor Juana or the Traps of Faith* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988) Chapter 3: 'Syncretism and Empire' pp. 34 – 43, and Shaw, Rosalind and Stewart, Charles. 'Introduction: problematizing syncretism' in *Syncretism/anti-syncretism: The Politics of Religious Synthesis*. Stewart, C. and Rosalind Shaw (eds.) (London: Routledge, 1994)

[114] On the concept of 'creolisation' in the Caribbean Islands see Hannerz, Ulf. *Cultural Complexity. Studies in the Social Organisation of Meaning* (New York, Oxford: Columbia University Press, 1992) pp. 264-266: 'The root metaphor I favor, ..., is that of creole cultures.
... I would suggest first of all that creole cultures – like creole languages – are intrinsically of mixed origin, the confluence of two or more widely separate historical currents which interact in what is basically a center/periphery relationship.'

Also Hall, Stuart. 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990) pp. 222-237

[115] In Carpentier, Alejo. *Tientos y diferencias* (Montevideo: Arca, 1967) and *La novela latinoamericana y en vísperas de un nuevo siglo y otros ensayos* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1981). Also, Lezama Lima, José. *La expresión Americana* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, S.A., 1969)

[116] Castellanos, Jorge and Castellanos, Isabel. *El negro en Cuba, 1845-1959* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1990) p. 404

[117] Ayorinde, Christine. *Afro-Cuban Religiosity, Revolution, and National Identity* (Miami, Tampa, Orlando: University Press of Florida, 2004) p. 141 and Gott, Richard. *Cuba. A New History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004) p. 214

[118] Ibid.

[119] Kutzinski, Vera. *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993) pp 4-6; Leclercq, Cécile. *El lagarto en busca de una identidad. Cuba: identidad nacional y mestizaje* (Madrid: Vervuert, Iberoamericana, 2004) pp. 11-24; De la Fuente, A. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) pp. 7-16

[120] Leclercq, C.: 2004, p. 15. Also, Stubbs, Jean 'Reflexiones acerca del Gran Caribe: identidades múltiples en el mundo del Atlántico' in *Utopía para los excluidos: el multiculturalismo en África y América Latina* (Bogotá, D.C.: Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, 2004) pp. 111-130

[121] Gott, R.: 2004, pp.14-15

[122] Thomas, Hugh. *Cuba. The Pursuit of Freedom* (London: PanBooks, 2002) p. 14; Gott: 2004, pp. 21-23

[123] Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 7-27; Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 23-26

[124] Carbonell, Walterio. *Como surgió la cultura nacional* (La Habana: Crítica. 1961) pp. 10-12

[125] Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 101-112

[126] Walker, Daniel E., *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) pp. 1- 18

[127] Ibid. p. 7

[128] Moreno Fraginals, 'Cultural Contributions and Deculturation' in *Africa in Latin America*, 8 [cited in Kutzinski, Vera. *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993) p. 216]

[129] Chang, F. 'La inmigración china en Cuba. Asociaciones y tradiciones' in *De dónde son los cubanos* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2005) pp. 117-164

[130] These 'whitening' policies actively encouraged immigration from Spain. See Gott, R: 2004, pp. 52-57 and p. 107

[131] Gómez Navia, R. 'Lo haitiano en lo cubano' and Chailloux, G. and Whitney R. 'British subjects y pichones en Cuba' in *De dónde son los cubanos* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2005) pp. 5-116

[132] Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 118-125; Gómez Navia, R.: 2005, Chailloux, G. and Whitney R.: 2005, p. 62

[133] See Rojas, Rafael. *José Martí: La invención de Cuba* (Madrid: Editorial Colibrí, 2000); Ibarra, Jorge. *José Martí: dirigente político e ideólogo revolucionario* (Mexico D.C.: Nuestro Tiempo, 1981) and Pérez Galdós, Victor. *José Martí. Visión de un hombre universal* (La Habana: Pablo de la Torriente Editorial, 1999)

[134] For example, in the case of José Saco, an essayist of Spanish origins who wrote during the first half of the nineteenth century against the inclusion of Afro-Cubans within the idea of a Cuban nation. See Leclercq, Cécile. *El lagarto en busca de una identidad. Cuba: identidad nacional y mestizaje* (Madrid: Vervuert, Iberoamericana, 2004) pp. 344-348

[135] Martí, José 'Our America' (published as 'Nuestra América' in *El Partido Liberal* (Mexico City), March 5, 1892). See *José Martí reader: writings on the Americas*. Edited by Deborah Shnookal and Mirta Munãiz (Melbourne, New York, Chicago: Ocean Press, 2001) pp. 111-120

[136] 'Nothing inherent in Negroes prevents them from developing their souls as men, and nothing that happens to them can limit their innate ability. ...
    In Cuba, there is no fear of a racial war. Men are more than whites, mulattos or Negroes. Cubans are more than whites, mulattos or Negroes. On the field of battle, dying for Cuba, the souls of whites and Negroes have risen together into the air ..
[...]
... White and black racists would be equally guilty of racism. Many whites have already forgotten their color, as have many Negroes.' Martí, José. 'My Race', published on April 16, 1893, in *Patria*, New York in *José Martí Reader: Writings on the Americas*. Edited by Deborah Shnookal and Mirta Munãiz (Melbourne, New York, Chicago: Ocean Press, 2001) pp. 160-162

[137] Rojas, R.: 2000; kapcia, A.: 2000

[138] Moore, Robin D. *Nationalizing Blackness. Afrocubanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) p. 28

[139] See, for example, Helg, Aline. *Our Rightful Share. The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995) pp. 55-90

[140] The Afro-Cuban movement from the 1920s and 1930s was mainly a Havana phenomena also due to the large presence of freed slaves in the city during the nineteenth century and even before. Many of them made a living as musicians and performers which explains the central role Afro-Cuban music and dance had in the redefinitions of a Cuban national identity during those years. See Carpentier, Alejo. *Music in Cuba.* Translated by Alan West-Durán (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) pp. 153-165

[141] Moore, R.: 1997, p. 146

[142] Ibid. Chapter 1: 'Afrocubans and National Culture' pp. 13-40

[143] Miscegenation: term from the Latin *miscere* (meaning to mingle) and *genus* (meaning race) coined in 1864 by D. G. Croyl and G. Wakeman. See Young, Robert J.C. *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995) pp. 144-149

[144] De la Fuente, A. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) pp. 15-16

[145] See Ortiz, Fernando. *Los negros brujos* (1906) (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1973) pp. 23-25

[146] Ayorinde, C.: 2004, p. 90

[147] Leclercq, C.: 2004, p. 385

[148] Ortiz, Fernando. 'On the Social Phenomenon of 'Transculturation' and Its Importance in Cuba' *Cuban Counterpoint. Tobacco and Sugar* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995) pp. 97-103

[149] Beverley, J. *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999) p. 45

[150] Kutzinski, V.: 1993, pp. 142-143

[151] This poem appeared in Guillén's book of poems *De West Indies Ltd* (1934)

[152] Helg, A.: 1995, p. 106

[153] See Tomás Fernández Robaina, 'Marcus Garvey in Cuba. Urrutia, Cubans, and Black Nationalism' from *Between Race and Empire. African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution.* Edited by Lisa Brock and Digna Castañeda Fuertes (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1998) pp. 120-128

[154] Urrutia, Gustavo. 'Racial Prejudice in Cuba' (1933) published in *Negro Anthology 1931-1933.* Edited by Nancy Cunard (London: Wishart & Co., 1934) pp. 473-477

[155] See Schwartz, Rosalie, 'Cuba's Roaring Twenties. Race Consciousness and the Column 'Ideales de una Raza'' from *Between Race and Empire. African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution.* Edited by Lisa Brock and Digna Castañeda Fuertes (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1998) pp. 104-119

[156] Césaire, Aimé. *Discourse on colonialism.* Translated by Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000)

[157] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006) pp. 48-49 and p. 191

[158] Gómez Navia, R.: 2005, p. 17 and Chailloux, G. and Whitney R.: 2005, p. 62

[159] A much earlier similar event: 'the conspiracy of *La Escalera'*. See Helg, A.: 1995, p. 4 and p. 15

[160] For a history of the *Partido Independiente de Color* and an explanation of their political stand see: Portuondo Linares, Serafín. *Los Independientes de Color* (La Habana: Editorial Caminos, 2002) and Helg, A.: 1995, pp. 2-3 and pp. 151-191

[161] Circular from the Coloured Party's national committee sent on February 1910 to all its leaders and members, as quoted by Portuondo Linares, S.: 2002, p. 74

[162] Gott, R.: 2004, p. 47

[163] Leclercq, C.: 2004, pp. 11-24 and p. 463

[164] Ibid. p. 15

[165] Ibid. pp. 461-463

[166] Ibid. p. 12

[167] 'Latin American countries are currently the result of the sedimentation, juxtaposition, and interweaving of indigenous traditions ..., of Catholic colonial hispanism, and of modern political, educational, and communicational actions. Despite attempts to give elite culture a modern profile, isolating the indigenous and the colonial in the popular sectors, an interclass mixing has generated hybrid formations in all social strata. The secularizing and renovating impulses of modernity were more effective in the 'cultured' groups, but certain elites preserve their roots in Hispanic-Catholic traditions, and also in indigenous traditions in agrarian zones, as resources for justifying privileges of the old older challenged by the expansion of mass culture.'García Canclini, Ernesto. *Hybrid Cultures. Strategies For Entering and Leaving Modernity.* Translated by Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. Lopez (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) p. 46

[168] Rosaldo, Renato. 'Foreword' to García Canclini, Ernesto. *Hybrid Cultures. Strategies For Entering and Leaving Modernity.* Translated by Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. Lopez (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1995) pp. xi-xvii

[169] Hall, Stuart. 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference.* Jonathan Rutherford (ed.) (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990) pp. 222-237

[170] Ibid. p. 236

[171] For example , AlSayyad, Nezar. 'Hybrid Culture/Hybrid Urbanism: Pandora's Box of the 'Third Place''. Prologue to *Hybrid Urbanism. On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment.* Edited by Nezar AlSayyad (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2001) pp. 1-18

[172] That is still the case, though things improved notably after the 1959 Revolution. See, for example, Sawyer, Mark Q. *The Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005) pp. 102-133

[173] The concept of the 'baroque' as the aesthetic category that describes the cultural identities of Latin America can be found in several of Carpentier's texts. The most important are: *La música en Cuba* (1946), *Tientos y diferencias* (1964), *La novela latinoamericana en vísperas de un nuevo siglo* (1981) and *La Ciudad de las columnas* (1970)

[174] Leclercq, C. p. 476

[175] Wölfflin, Heinrich. *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888) (London: Collins: 1984)

[176] 'It is a characteristically Renaissance conception, and is often combined with a central arch, the motif in the interplay of large and small pilaster bays; the small ones are always small enough not to disturb the predominance of the large one, yet not so small that they lose their meaning as individual forms.
    The baroque firmly repudiated this principle of articulation. Absolute unity became the rule, and subordinate parts were sacrificed.' Ibid. pp. 41-42

[177] This is for example, the approachs of Maravall, José Antonio in *La cultura del barroco: análisis de una estructura histórica* (Esplugues de Llobregat: Editorial Ariel, 1975) and Hauser, Arnold. *The Social History of Art. Vol. 2: Renaissance, Mannerism, Baroque* (London: Routledge, 1999). Also from Saisselin, Rémy G. 'Introduction' in *The Enlightenment against the Baroque. Economics and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth Century* (University of California Press, Berkeley. Los Angeles, 1992)
'Thus, in using the term Baroque, we mean to designate not only the architecture of Bernini and Borromini, or an open pictorial space and the contrast of light and dark, but a civilization that can be associated with the period of absolute monarchy, with an alliance of church and state to maintain the hierarchical structure of society, and even with economic mercantilism.' p. 2

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[178] Mumford, Lewis. 'The Baroque City' in *The City in History* (1961) (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973) pp. 140-145

[179] 'At the beginning of the seventeenth century, during the period that has been termed, rightly or wrongly, the Baroque, thought ceases to move in the element of resemblance. Similitude is no longer the form of knowledge but rather the occasion of error, the danger to which one exposes oneself when one does not examine the obscure region of confusions.'
[...]
Baroque]... ; it is the age of the deceiving senses; it is the age in which the poetic dimension of language is defined by metaphor, simile, and allegory.' In Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Things* (1966) (Routledge Classics, London & New York, 2002) pp. 56-57

[...] What is Baroque is this distinction and division into two levels or floors. The distinction of two worlds is common to Platonic tradition. [...] The universe as a stairwell marks the Neoplatonic tradition. But the Baroque contribution par excellence is a world with only two floors, separated by a fold that echoes itself, arching from the two sides according to a different order. It expresses, as we shall see, the transformation of the cosmos into a 'mundus.'' In Deleuze, Gilles. 'What Is Baroque?' in *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque* (Athlone P., 1993) p. 29

[180] 'At the same time that it was tending to obliterate the strangeness of the external other, Western civilization found an interior other. From the classical age to the end of romanticism (i.e. down to our own day), writers and moralists have continued to discover that the person is not *one* – or is even nothing –that *je est un autre*, or a simple echo chamber, a hall of mirrors..' in Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Discovery of America: The Question of the Other* (Oklahoma: the University of Oklahoma Press, 1999) p. 248

[181] Ibid. p. 5

[182] 'The word 'Baroque', as I shall use it in this book, denotes, first of all, the predominant artistic trends of the period that is roughly comprehended by the seventeenth century. ... Though the earliest manifestations of Baroque art appeared well before the year 1600, Mannerism was still a living force in many European centres during the first decades of the seventeenth century. The end of the Baroque is even less clear-cut than its beginning. ... Yet there is no doubt that in general the impetus of the Baroque had begun to slacken by the last quarter of the seventeenth century.
... If unity is to be discovered within this diversity, it is evident that what we must look for is not any well-defined uniformity of style, but the embodiment of certain widely held ideas, attitudes and assumptions. ... The Copernican revolution brought in its train a sense of the infinite, which was to permeate seventeenth-century art and thought. Nothing reveals more clearly the consciousness of infinity in this period than the interest in space, time and light.' Martin, John Rupert. *Baroque* (London: Penguin Books, 1977) pp. 11-14

[183] 'América, continente de simbiosis, the mutaciones, de vibraciones, de mestizajes, fue barroca desde siempre' [*America, continent of symbiosis, of mutations, vibrations, of mixings, has always been baroque*] Carpentier, Alejo. *La novela latinoamericana en vísperas de un nuevo siglo* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 1981) p. 123

[184] Leclercq, C.: 2004, p. 476

[185] Shaw, R. and Stewart, C. : 1994, p.1

[186] Paz, O.: 1988, pp. 34-43

[187] Ibid. p. 35

[188] Shaw, R. and Stewart, C.: 1994, pp. 1-26

[189] Benjamin, Walter. 'The Task of the Translator' pp. 253-266 in *Selected Writings. Volume 1: 1913-1926.* Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996) pp. 257-258

[190] '...caught in between a 'nativist', even nationalist atavism and a postcolonial metropolitan assimilation, the subject of cultural difference becomes a problem that W. Benjamin has described as the irresolution, or liminality, of 'translation', the element of resistance in the process of transformation.' In Bhabha, Homi K. 'How Newness enters the World: Postmodern space, postcolonial times and the trials of cultural translation' in *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 212-235

[191] See Barnet, Miguel. *Afro-Cuban Religions* (Princenton, NJ.: Markus Weimer Publishers, 2001) and Castellanos, Jorge and Castellanos, Isabel. *Cultura AfroCubana. Volume 3: Las Religiones y las lenguas* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1992)

[192] In his ethnographic works: *El huracán, su mitología y sus símbolos* (1947), *La africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* (1950), *Los bailes y el teatro de los negros en el folklore cubano* (1951), *Los instrumentos de la música afrocubana* (1952, 5 vols.).

[193] 'Pues si Ortiz matiza su propio enfoque racista e intenta superar sus propios límites ideológicos, desea y cuenta plenamente con la asimilación de los negros, con su blanqueamiento racial y cultural... Para el, la parte afrocubana de la población cubana seguía constituyendo el residuo 'primitivo' de una sociedad no-europea dentro de una nación que era la prolongación de una nación europea, situada atrás en la vía del progreso y de la civilización, de la cual Europa y los EEUU encarnaban el modelo más acabado.' Leclercq, C.: 2004, pp. 396-397

[*Even though Ortiz tones down his own racist approach and attempts to overcome his own ideological limits, he totally wishes and promotes blacks' assimilation, with their racial and cultural whitening ... In his opinion, the Afro-Cuban part of the Cuban population still constituted the 'primitive' residue of a non-European society within a nation that was the prolongation of an European nation, located behind in the way to progress and civilisation, of which Europe and the United Status embodied its most perfected model.*]

[194] Bibliography on the Abakuás or *ñáñigos*: Cabrera, Lydia. *La Sociedad Secreta Abakuá narrada por viejos adeptos* (La Habana: Ediciones C.R., 1958) and *Anaforuana: ritual y símbolos de la iniciación en la sociedad secreta Abakuá* (Madrid: Ediciones R, 1975); Castellanos, Jorge and Castellanos, Isabel. Chapter III: 'La Sociedad Secreta Abakuá: los ñáñigos' in *Cultura AfroCubana Volume 3: Las Religiones y las lenguas* (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1992) pp. 203-280 and Brown, David H. *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003)

[195] Brown, D.: 2003, p.14

[196] Ibid. p. 24

[197] Helg, A.: 1995, pp. 107-108, 173-176; Walker, D.: 2004, pp. 65-68

[198] Many among the Afro-Cuban middle classes also shared this view.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ortiz, Fernando. *La Antigua Fiesta Afrocubana del 'Día de Reyes'* (La Habana: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Departamento de Asuntos Culturales, 1960)

[201] This perception continued well after 1959. For example, in Sara Gómez's film *De cierta manera* (1973), Abakuás are represented as atavists or primitive and, therefore, in contradiction with the Cuban Revolution's ideologies of social progress.

[202] Abakuá Initiation speech, reproduced by Lydia Cabrera in *Anaforuana: ritual y símbolos de la iniciación en la sociedad secreta Abakuá* (Madrid: Ediciones R, 1975) pp. 33 and 34: 'Aquí hay que respetar a los Cuatro Jefes principales que son las Grandes Plazas: Mokongo, Iyamba, Isué, Isuneke. Y las secundarias: Mpegó, Ekueñon, Nkríkamo, Mosongo, Abasongo, Nkóboro, Eribangandó, Mbákara. Y hay que respetar hasta el último hijo de Ekue, pues todos los abanekues somos hermanos y usted tiene que ser fiel hasta que *ñankue* (hasta que muera). En la Potencia será un hijo más y la Sociedad no puede consentir que dentro de ella

tenga agravios con otro hermano. Si deja usted de contribuir con lo fijado ... nos veremos en la obligación de despedirlo por medio de un oficio que le niega el derecho a ser Abakua y no podrá poner los pies en este ni en ningún otro Partido. Si no es usted buen hijo, si no atiende a su madre, que es lo mas grande que tiene un hombre, y si abandona a sus hijos y a su mujer, no merecerá tampoco el aprecio de sus hermanos. Sepa que no queremos guapos ni cobardes, porque el ñáñigo no puede dejarse maltratar. Si usted se entera que un hermano está enfermo, no podrá dejar de socorrerlo. Tendrá que respetar a la pieza de orden, al tambor Mpego. Respeto, unión, formalidad, palabra y valor es lo que aquí se le exige. Y piénselo bien, le repito.'

[Here you need to respect the four main chiefs who are the Great 'Plazas': Mokongo, Iyamba, Isué, Isuneke. You need to respect to the last son of Ekue, as we, all the abanekues, are brothers and you must be loyal until you 'ñankue' (until you die). In the 'Potencia' you are just one son among the many and the Society cannot tolerate grievances between brothers. If you stop contributing to the agreed ... we will have to take your right to be an Abakua and you wont ever be able to enter this or any other Party. If you are not a good son, if you don't attend your mother, who is the most important person in the life of a man, and if you abandon your children and your wife, you wont deserve the affection of your brothers. You need to know we don't want 'guapos' neither cowards, because the ñáñigo cannot allow to be mistreated. If you find out a brother is ill, you cannot neglect to attend him. You will have to respect the piece of order, the drum Mpego. We demand from you respect, unity, formality, word and courage. And think well about it, I remind you.]

[203] In Walker, D.:2004, Chapter 3: 'Regulating Domesticity: The fight for the family' pp. 59 – 104

[204] Cabrera, L.: 1975, p. 23 and Brown, D.: 2003, p. 22

[205] Brown, D.: 2003, pp. 237-242

[206] '... the narratives of Cuban nationalism itself. This narrative turns on the struggle out of old-world controls, and the invention of tropes of national identity, including the land, the peasant, the Afro-Cuban, the *mulata,* and so on. These are the tropes of *mestizaje.* ... Abakuá Society represented a thorn in the side of the emerging body politic, the story of the Abakuá Society begins as an 'African' form; its 'whitening' causes conflict; this conflict is resolved as the Abakuá Society becomes 'mixed' or 'integrated''. Brown, D.: 2003, pp. 237-242

[207] 'What led Cuban whites to seek Abakuá initiation in the first place, and what now motivates white Abakuá to venerate their 'black roots'?' Brown, D.: 2003, p. 239

[208] Anderson, B.: 2006, pp. 5-12; Mosse, George L., *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985)

[209] Mosse, G.: 1985, p. 67

[210] I discussed this issue in the 'Introduction' to this thesis. See Brace, C. Loring. *'Race' is a Four-Letter Word. The Genesis of the Concept* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

[211] Ortiz, Fernando. *El engaño de las razas* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975)

[212] Leclercq, C.: 2004: pp. 468-69

[213] It is worth reproducing the crudeness of the ideologies of miscegenation impregnating this text's intentions:

'Característica peculiar de la conquista española en América fue la de haberse realizado con la única presencia del hombre, y por ello, con exclusión de la mujer. De ahí que desde los más remotos tiempos se iniciara en estas sociedades una amalgama de razas, primero de hombres españoles con mujeres indígenas, y cuando estas se fueron extinguiendo, y no eran sustituidas por blancas, con negras.

... proceso de mulatización muy significativo ...:

Regocijémonos de ser así como al óleo, porque el mulato ha venido a constituir la tercera forma de liberación étnica, la más étnica de todas, por racial y por nacional, restableciendo el equilibrio, un equilibrio dinámico – ... – entre el blanco y el negro, y liberando al uno y al otro. El cubano blanco ante el mulato debe sentirse menos absoluto; el negro cubano ante el mulato, menos inferior al blanco.

El mulato ha venido como a liberar al blanco de su codicia, de su antigua iracundia y de su nueva soberbia, y al negro de su miseria, de su antiguo rencor y de su nuevo resentimiento. El papel más justo del mulato consiste, a mi juicio, en mirar con un ojo de comprensión hacia arriba y con otro de hermandad hacia abajo. A él le corresponde, ..., el verdadero poder moderador y de solidaridad nacional.

El mulato ha representado la equilibrada historicidad en el sentimiento de Patria y la conciencia de Nación.'

[*A peculiar aspect of the Spanish conquest in America was its realisation with just the male presence, and exclusion of women. This is why since the first moments there was in these societies a blend of races, first of Spanish men with indigenous women, and when they started to disappear, they were not replaced by white women, but with black women.*
... a process of 'mulatisation' very significative....:
Lets congratulate ourselves to be like this oil painting, because the mulatto has come to reconstitute the third form of ethnic liberation, the most ethnic of all of them, because of racial and national, re-establishing the equilibrium, a dynamic equilibrium – ... – between the white and the black, and liberating the one and the other. The white Cuban before the mulatto must feel less absolute; the black Cuban before the mulatto, less inferior to the white. The mulatto has come to liberate the white from his greed, his old irascibility and his new arrogance, and the black from his misery, his old hatred and his new resentment. The fairer role for the mulatto consists, to my judgement, to look with an understanding eye upwards and with a fraternal one downwards. To him corresponds, ... the truth power of moderation and national solidarity.

The mulatto has represented the harmonious historicity in the feelings of motherland and the national consciousness.]

Entralgo, Elías. 'La mulatización cubana' *Estudios Afrocubanos. Selección de Lecturas de Lázara Menéndez.* Tomos 1, 2, 3 and 4 (La Habana: Universidad de La Habana, 1998) pp. 174-183. This is a fragment of a speech given by Entralgo in 1942 and later turned into a book: *La liberación étnica cubana*, published in 1953.

[214] Kutzinski, V.:1993, p. 7

[215] Ibid. p.165

[216] Federico Miahle was a French lithographer working in Cuba during the nineteenth century. He was the author of the *Picturesque Album of the Island of Cuba*, from where this image comes. See Menocal, Narciso G. 'An Overriding Passion: The Quest for a National Identity in Painting' in *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts*, Vol. 22, Cuba Theme Issue (1996) pp. 186-219

[217] *Íreme* is the Abakuá described as spirit messenger. It appears performing dressed in the traditional sac, also called *íreme* sac. For Euro-Cubans would be the 'diablito' or 'little devil'. Brown, David H. *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003) p. 115

[218] In the play, the black 'catedrático' (black professor) uses a language that, although it sounds pompous, is incorrect. 'These vaudeville plays did not usually feature *bozales* ('unseasoned' Africans) or *negros de nación* (blacks who belonged to specific African cultural communities), but focused instead on ridiculing the social pretensions of the ultrarefined, citified *catedráticos* and the *curros*, who were much closer to certain North-American minstrel types such as the 'black dandy' ...' Kutzinski, V.: 1993, p. 43

[219] 'The right of *coartación* - of accepting, that is, the virtual freedom of the slave after receiving a fraction of his value – was a Hispano-American institution, and not a Spanish or Mediterranean one. It had no equivalent in North America where indeed planters often did not recognize their own illegitimate children, much less emancipate them. *Coartación* seems to have originated in Cuba in the 1520s and to have spread from there

with some variations to other Spanish colonies. Other rights possessed by slaves in Cuba as in other Spanish colonies included that of changing their master for a new one if such could be found, while the children of slaves by free women (and men) became automatically free.

The consequence was a substantial number of free Negroes and mulattoes in Cuba: possibly 20,000 in comparison with a slave population of 32,000. This again was a complete contrast with the British and French West Indian islands, where the free black population was insignificant.' Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 24 and 25

[220] See Stubbs, Jean. 'Race, Gender and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: Mariana Grajales Cuello and the Revolutionary Free Browns of Cuba' in Nancy Naro (ed.). *Blacks and Coloured in the Formation of Nacional Identity in Nineteenth-Century Latinoamérica* (London: ILAS/Palgrave, 2003) pp. 95-122

[221] Extract from an article by Ontiano Lorcas. 'Los diablitos o el día infernal en la Habana'. Prensa de la Habana 6, Enero, 1859 and reproduced by Ortiz in Ortiz, Fernando. *La Antigua Fiesta Afrocubana del 'Día de Reyes'* (La Habana: Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, Departamento de Asuntos Culturales, 1960) pp. 12-13

[222] Levine, Robert M. *Images of History. Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Latin American Photographs as Documents* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1989) p. 140

[223] See Goldberg, David Theo. 'Introduction: Multicultural Conditions'. In *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Theo Goldberg, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) pp. 1-41; Todorov, Tzvetan. *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993) pp. 390-191 and ''Race', Writing and Culture' in *'Race', Writing and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986) pp. 370-380. Also, Ford, Richard T. *Racial Culture. A Critique* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005) pp. 18-19

[224] While also guaranteeing respect for the rights and freedoms of individuals.

[225] Helg, Aline. 'Constituciones y prácticas sociopolíticas de las minorías de origen africano: una comparación entre Colombia y Cuba' in *Utopía para los excluidos: el multiculturalismo en África y América Latina*. Jaime Arocha (ed.) (Bogotá, D.C.: Facultad de Ciencias Humanas, 2004): 'En cuanto a Cuba, aunque se califica a su población afrodescendiente como minoría, en realidad son hoy la mayoría de la población cubana'.
[...]
La Constitución socialista de Cuba que afirma la unidad nacional y niega la diferencia, y la Constitución Colombiana de 1991 que proclama la existencia de una Nación multiétnica y multicultural.' pp. 23-24

[226] This title alludes to a popular Cuban song 'De donde son los cantantes'

[227] Gómez Navia, Raimundo. 'Lo haitiano en lo cubano' in *De dónde son los cubanos* (La Habana, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 2005) pp. 5-52

[228] Chailloux, Graciela and Whitney, Robert. 'British subjects y pichones en cuba' in *De donde son los cubanos.* pp. 53-116

[229] Chang, Federico. 'La inmigración china en cuba. Asociaciones y tradiciones' in *De donde son los cubanos.* pp. 117-164

[230] Corrales Capestany, Maritza. 'Cuba: paraíso recobrado para los judíos' in *De donde son los cubanos.* pp. 165-231

Chapter III: Out With The New, In With The Old: Architecture and Nation

[231] Schwarz, Rosalie. *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997) pp. 154-159

[232] Josep Lluis Sert was at the time a follower of Le Corbusier based in the United States, though of Catalan origins. He later designed very relevant examples of late modernist architecture in the North America, such as the Peabody Terrace Married Students' Housing (1963-1965), Harvard University, and Eastwood (1971-1975) on Roosevelt Island, New York City. Most of the Spanish and English-translated Spanish texts where he has been named use the Spanish version of his name, José Luis Sert, as for example in Scarpaci, J.L., Segre R., Coyula M., *Havana. Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis* (New York, Toronto, Singapore: John Wiley & Sons, 1997) p. 80

[233] See Segre, Roberto. 'Descolonización de la ciudad' in *Transformación urbana en Cuba: La Habana.* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1974) (Reproduction of numbers 340, 341 and 342 of the journal *Arquitectura/Cuba*, La Habana, 1972-1973) pp. 1-4

[234] See Khan, Hasan- Udin. *The International Style. Modernist Architecture from 1925 to 1965* (London: Taschen, 1998)

[235] Scarpaci, J.L., Segre R., Coyula M.: 1997, p. 79

[236] As described by Jane Jacobs, Charles Jencks and Robert Venturi.

[237] See Segre, Roberto. *La arquitectura de la Revolución Cubana* (Montevideo: Universidad de La Republica, Facultad de Arquitectura, 1968), *Transformación urbana en Cuba: La Habana* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1974) and Segre, R., Coyula, M. and Scarpaci, J. L. *Havana: Two Faces of the Antillean Metropolis* (Wiley, Chichester, 1997)

[238] On Forestier's plans in Havana see Lejeune, Jean-François, Beusterien, John and Menocal, Narciso G. 'The City as Landscape: Jean Claude Nicolas Forestier and the Great Urban Works of Havana, 1925-1930 in *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts,* Cuban Issue, No 22 (1996), pp. 150-185 and Segre, Roberto.'La Habana siglo XX, de la ciudad burguesa a la ciudad proletaria'. *La Ciudad. Concepto y obra.* VI Coloquio de Historia del Arte (Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas, UNAM, 1987) pp. 187-210

[239] Lejeune, J.F., Beusterien, J. and Menocal, N.G: 1996, p. 155

[240] On Neo-classic architecture and urbanism see Summerson, John. *The Classical Language of Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980); Wilson, W.H. 'The Ideologies and Aesthetics of the City Beautiful Movement' in *The City Beautiful Movement* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989) pp. 75-95 and Ive, Graham. 'Urban classicism and modern ideology' in *Architecture and the Sites of History. Interpretations of Buildings and Cities.* Edited by Iain Borden & David Bunster (Oxford and London: Butterworth-Heinemann Ltd., 1995) pp. 38-52

[241] Gerardo Machado, a military commander officer turned politician who became the president of the Cuban Republic as the liberal candidate in 1922, after having served as deputy chief of the armed forces and later, Minister of Interior. In 1928 he secured his re-election, turning his mandate into a straightforward military dictatorship. In 1933 he was forced to stand down after the country went through a general strike and general social unrest. Gott, R: 2004, pp. 129-135

[242] '... neoclassic architecture evoked American history and spoke to the late-nineteenth-century urban elite. Classic construction evoked the American past because it was firmly in the architectural tradition from colonial times. It flowered through the late 1840s before giving way to eclecticism. Although the Greek orders were popular, Roman modes also found favor. The differences between the classicism of the early nineteenth century and the neoclassic buildings of the American Renaissance are differences of degree, not of kind. Classic architecture symbolized the historical heritage of the United States in a way that the Gothic, Romanesque, or commercial styles never could. ... it expressed a romantic attachment to Greece and Rome and, by extension, to the Renaissance city-state. The attachment has less to do with governmental forms and more with assumed similarities of political thought and social achievement.' Wilson, W.H.: 1989, p. 89

[243] Summerson, John. *The Classical Language of Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980) p. 93

[244] See Manieri-Elia, Mario. 'Towards and 'Imperial City': Daniel H. Burnham and the City Beautiful Movement' in Ciucci, Giorgio, Dal Co, Francesco, Manieri-Elia, Mario and Tafuri, Manfredo et al. *The American City from the Civil War to the New Deal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979) pp. 46-63

[245] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006) p. 191

[246] Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 128-129 and Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 328-335

[247] Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 71-112 and Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 147-197

[248] Miguel de Céspedes, Gerardo Machado's private secretary, quoted in *Un Proyecto Singular. El Capitolio de La Habana* (Edyfoat S.L., Electra Vitoria, 1996)

[249] 'From the time of Thomas Jefferson's first administration in 1801, influential elements in the United States regarded the 'Pearl of the Antilles' with an interest that went beyond mere trade relations. [...] A strong power in possession of Cuba, they argued, would control the trade routes, cut off American trade with the West Indies, block the Mississippi and threaten the eastern coast of the United States. To stave off a future menace, the United States should take steps *now* to acquire Cuba.' Foner, Philip S. *A History of Cuba and Its Relations with the United States*. Volume I (International Publishers, New York, 1962) pp. 124-125

[250] That was how Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels represented 'History' in Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852), Engels' in the *The Peasant Question in France and Germany* (1894). Also in the book co-written by both *The Communist Manifesto* (1848). In: http://marx.eserver.org/

[251] Tafuri, Manfredo *Architecture and Utopia. Design and Capitalist Development* (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1976) pp 30-35

[252] See Hannah Arendt's discussions on these principles in Arendt, Hannah 'Foundation I: ConstitutioLibertatis' in *On Revolution* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982) pp. 139-178

[253] He gives the example of Thomas Jefferson's aspirations for the newly formed nation, more connected to the utopianism of the first religious communities who settled in North America than to the new type of society now developing. Tafuri, M.: 1976, pp.25-30

[254] 'In Washington, the nostalgic evocation of European values was concentrated in the capital of a society whose drive to economic and industrial development was leading to the concrete and intentional destruction of those values. ...
... New York, Chicago, and Detroit are left to be the protagonists of development.' Tafuri, M.: 1976, pp. 34-35

[255] See Vale, Lawrence J. *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992): 'The perceived need to make architecture and urban design serve politics is most salient in those countries where the form of politics is new and the forms of architecture are old, ...' p. 9

Also Edelman, Murray. 'Space and the Social Order' in *Journal of Architectural Education 32*, n.2 (Novemeber 1978) pp. 2-7: '[public buildings] catalyze the common search for clarity, order and predictability in a threatening world' p. 3

[256] Benedict, A.: 2006, pp. 192-193

[257] For example, travel writer Claudia Lightfoot finds strange the fact that this building is not accompanied by other features normally characterising monumental cities in the West:
'The Capitolio is somehow an odd building to find in Havana. There is something about it that doesn't fit the city. For one thing, it looks out of proportion. It is so enormous and monumental compared with other public buildings that it looks as though it has ended up in the wrong place. The other strange thing about the Capitolio is its rather humble setting. It is a building crying out for spacious, landscaped grounds and a wide,

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dignified approaching avenue, perhaps leading down to the seafront, [...]' Lightfoot, Laura. *Havana* (Signal Books, London, 2002) p. 159

[258] The '26th of July' leaders could see through this symbolically charged building and decided, after taking over in January 1959, to alter its use and therefore its political relevance. As in the case of the Capitol in Washington, the Capitolio in Havana housed first the Cuba's Senate and later the House of Representatives. After 1959, it became the headquarters of the Academy of Medical, Physical, and Natural Sciences as well as the Cuban National Natural History Museum. It was not by chance that the new government decided to strip the building of any political function, as this would have clashed with the image of a newly regained national independence. See Llanes, LLilian. *Havana: Then & Now* (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2004) pp. 92-93

[259] 'Not all designed capitals have been constructed in the aftermath of an independence movement, though the symbolics of city building and nation building often do seem to be synchronized. In some cases, especially in Latin America, the decision to design a new capital city has been taken well after the cessation of colonial rule, motivated more by dreams of economic development of the country's hinterland than by regional and ethnic rivalries.' Vale, Lawrence J. *Architecture, Power and National Identity* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1992) p. 44

[260] Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 125-129 and Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 323-339

[261] Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 129-134; Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 336-370

[262] This development had already started in the first decade of the century, and it sped up with the beginning of the prohibition years in the United States in 1919. See Schwarz, Rosalie. *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba.* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997): 'In the four years between July 1928 and July 1932, Cuba's nearly six hundred thousand tourists included Boy Scouts, doctors, teachers and students on summer holiday, sports figures, .. and families enticed by bigger and more sophisticated advertising campaigns,...' p. 68

[263] Jencks, C. *The Language of Post-modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977) p. 13

[264] 'In Chicago an attempt had been made to achieve visual and dimensional control of the skyscraper, an organism that, by its very nature, defies all rules of proportion; in New York, the ascending lines of force of this organism of potentially infinite development, were given free reign; the isolation of the Woolworth Building is in perfect accord with this concept. ...
[...]
... architects resorted to a formal language that could adequately publicize and exalt the concentration of capital the skyscraper expressed, ...' Tafuri, Manfredo. 'The Disenchanted Mountain: The Skyscraper and the City' in Ciucci, Giorgio, Dal Co, Francesco, Manieri-Elia, Mario and Tafuri, Manfredo et al. *The American City from the Civil War to the New Deal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979) pp. 389 - 391

[265] They had also designed the Breakers Hotel in Palm Beach. See Lacey, Robert. *Little Man. Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life* (London: Century, 1991) p. 231

[266] See Segre, Roberto, Coyula, Mario and Scarpaci, Joseph L.: 1997, pp. 49-86

[267] See Norbert Messler's essay *The Art Deco Skyscraper in New York* (Peter Lang, European University Studies, Frankfurt/M. Bern, Vol. 25, 1983)

[268] According to promotional material they included: Ava Gardner, Frank Sinatra, Johnny Weissmuller, Buster Keaton, José Mujica, Jorge Negrete, Agustín Lara, Tyrone Power, Rómulo Gallegos, Errol Flynn, Marlon Brando, Ernest Hemingway, Santos Traficante, Meyer Lansky, Lucky Luciano, Frank Costello, the Windsor Duchesse, Alexander Fleming and Winston Churchill.
See http://www.hotelnacionaldecuba.com/en/history.asp

[269] Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Three Trapped Tigers* (London: Pan Books, 1980) p. 192

[270] Álvarez Tabío, Enma. *La invención de La Habana*. (Barcelona: Editorial Casiopea, 2000) pp. 135 and 193

[271] In Roberto Segre and Enma Álvarez Tabío *floridización* means adoption of architectural features characteristic of the Florida area in the United States, mainly within the private housing sector. This process was enhanced towards the end of the 1950s with the construction of the Capri, Riviera and Hilton hotels. Regarding these hotels, Álvarez-Tabío writes: '...introducirían en el paisaje arquitectónico de La Habana el kitsch monumental de las construcciones de Morris Lapidus en Miami Beach.' Ibid. pp. 329-330

[272] This fact has been pointed out by, for example, Eliana Cárdenas in *En la Búsqueda de Una Arquitectura Nacional*. (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1991). See also, Segre, Roberto 'La Habana siglo XX, de la ciudad burguesa a la ciudad proletaria'. *La Ciudad. Concepto y obra*. VI Coloquio de Historia del Arte (Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas, UNAM, 1987) pp. 188-210. p. 192

[273] On the dominant cinematography watched in Cuba before 1959 see Chanan, Michael. 'Melodrama and White Horses' in *Cuban Cinema*. (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) pp. 68-89

[274] See Palmer, Barton. 'The Concept of Noir' in *Hollywood's Dark Cinema: The American Film Noir* (New York, Oxford: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994) pp. 1-31

[275] However, *Siete muertes a plazo fijo* is not a *noir* film, in the same way that Havana was not a North American city. It is more a caricature of the genre as seen through the cultural filters of the region. Murders do not really happen, dangers are only imagined. Once we realise it is all just a comic parody the city stops being another cinematic version of Chicago or Boston and returns to its most defining genre: cabaret.

[276] Through nationalisations and political infighting. See Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 833-883

[277] Such glamorisation was not exactly new, as it has been noticed by Eliana Cárdenas in her short essay *la búsqueda de una arquitectura nacional*. (Editorial Letras Cubanas, La Habana, 1991) p.12: 'No obstante, hacia los anos treinta comienza a mostrarse interés por la arquitectura de la etapa colonial, y aunque con un sentido eminentemente historicista, constituye un modo de acercamiento a las raíces de la arquitectura producida en el país, como una alternativa a los códigos europeos que habían provocado una ruptura con valores asentados por una tradición de tres siglos. Ese interés se refleja en tres aspectos: la aparición de estudios sobre la arquitectura de esa etapa; las primeras labores de conservación de edificaciones de la colonia; y la incorporación de algunos elementos formales de ese periodo, sobre todo del siglo XVIII, y que se insertan en la estructura compositiva del eclecticismo, como una variable mas de los códigos formales decorativos.'
[*However, by the 1930s an interest for the architecture from the colonial era begins to show and, though with an eminent historicist character, it constitutes a search for the roots of the architecture produced in the country, as the alternative to the European codes that had produced a rupture with values established by a tradition of three centuries. There are three aspects that manifest this interest: the creation of studies on the architecture from that era; the first works of conservation of colonial buildings; and the incorporation of some formal elements from that period, particularly from the eighteenth century, which are inserted in the compositional structure of eclecticism, as another variable in the decorative formal codes.*]

[278] Carpentier, Alejo. *La Ciudad de las Columnas* (Editorial Letras Cubanas, Havana, 1982) pp. 13-14.

[279] See Kelemen, Pal. *Baroque and Rococo in Latin America* (New York: McMillan, 1951) and Sebastián, Santiago. *El Barroco Iberoamericano* (Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, 1990)

[280] 'The baroque has no sense of the significance of individual forms, only for the more muted effect of the whole. The individual, defined and plastic form has ceased to matter; compositions are in the mass effects of light and shade and the most indefinite of all elements have become the real means of expression. Baroque, that is, lacks the wonderful intimacy of empathic response to every single form which was characteristic of the Renaissance. It does not feel the architectural body in the sense of following sympathetically the function of each member; rather it keeps only to the painterly image of the whole. The effect of light assumes a greater significance than the form.' Wölfflin, Heinrich. *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888) (Collins, London, 1984) p. 85

[281] 'Increasing size is a common symptom of art in decline; or, more accurately, art is in a state of decline from the moment that it aspires to massiveness through colossal proportions.' Ibid. p. 39

[282] Deleuze, Gilles, 'What Is Baroque?' in *The Fold. Leibniz and the Baroque* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, Athlone P., 1993) p. 32

[283] D'Ors, Eugenio. *Lo Barroco* (Madrid: M. Aguilar Editor, 1944) p. 36

[284] The Lacanian 'other', as discovered difference internalised through identification. See footnote 32 from 'Introduction'.

[285] Of Russian mother and French father, he was brought up between Cuba and Europe.

[286] On Carpentier and surrealism see Birkenmaier, Anke. *Alejo Carpentier y la cultura del surrealismo en América Latina* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2006) and Müller-Bergh, Klaus 'Corrientes vanguardistas y surrealismo en la obra de Alejo Carpentier' in *Alejo Carpentier: estudio biográfico-crítico* (New York: Las Américas, 1972) pp. 13-38

[287] See Archer-Straw, Petrine. *Negrophilia: Black Culture and Avant-Garde Paris* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001) pp. 134-157

[288] Ibid. pp. 135-136

[289] Lezama Lima, José. 'La curiosidad barroca' in *La expresión Americana* (Santiago de Chile: Editorial Universitaria, S.A., 1969) pp. 33-57

[290] Duno – Gottberg, Luis '(Neo)barroco cubano e identidad. El periplo de Alejo Carpentier a Severo Sarduy' in *Barrocos y Modernos: nuevos caminos en la investigación del Barroco iberoamericano.* Petra Schumm (ed.) (Madrid: Vervuert Iberoamericana, 1998) pp. 307-320

[291] Ibid. p. 311

[292] In the book *La música en Cuba* (1946) and his poetic fiction *Concierto barroco* (1974)

[293] Corey Shouse also uses this argument in her essay 'Barroco, no barroco y transculturación': '... es fácil entender que muchos de los componentes estilísticos del arte barroco: ... el uso de la metáfora que sincretiza ... la mezcla de diversos estilos, géneros y momentos históricos ... la deformación y representación transgresora de modelos clásicos ... la importancia del artificio carnavalesco ... podrían servir al escritor como un conjunto de recursos técnicos y estilísticos aptos para desarrollar un proyecto literario vinculado a un continente marcado por el mestizaje cultural.' Shouse, Corey. 'Barroco, no barroco y transculturación' in *Barrocos y modernos: nuevos caminos en la investigación del Barroco iberoamericano.* Petra Schumm (ed.) (Frankfurt am Main, Vervuert, Madrid: Iberoamericana, 1998) pp. 321-336: p. 328

[*... it is easy to understand that many of the stylistic aspects of baroque art: ... the use of the metaphor that syncretises... the blend of diverse styles, genres and historical moments ... the deformation and representation of the classical models ... the importance of the carnival artifice ... could serve to the writer as a group of technical and stylistic strategies able to develop a literary project linked to a continent already marked by cultural mixing.]*

[294] Álvarez Tabío, Enma. *Invención de La Habana.* (Barcelona: Editorial Casiopea, 2000) pp. 326-338

[295] Sarduy, Severo. *Barroco* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1974) p. 59

[296] Álvarez Tabío, E.: 2000, p. 336

[297] However, it is important for the purposes of this analysis to emphasise that Mumford understood the concept of the baroque in its contradictions: 'The concept of the baroque, as it shaped itself in the seventeenth

century, is particularly useful because it holds in itself the two contradictory elements of the age. First, the abstract mathematical and methodical side, expressed to perfection in its rigorous street plans, its formal city layouts, and in its geometrically ordered gardens and landscape designs. And at the same time, in the painting and sculpture of the period, it embraces the sensuous, rebellious, extravagant anti-classical, anti-mechanical side, expressed in its clothes and its sexual life and its religious fanaticism and its crazy statecraft. Between the sixteenth century and nineteenth century, these two elements existed together: sometimes held in tension within a larger whole.' Mumford, Lewis. 'The Baroque City' (excerpts from *The City in History*, 1961) in *The Lewis Mumford Reader*. Edited by Donald L. Millar (University of Georgia Press, Anthen and London, 1995) p. 132

[298] Mumford, L. 'The Lessons of Washington D.C.' in *The City in History* (1961): 1995, p.153

[299] Ibid.

[300] Mumford, L. *The City in History* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973) p. 118. My Italics.

[301] Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jonathan Cape, London, 1962) pp. 187-188

[302] In architecture: The term eclecticism is generally used to describe the combination in a single work of elements from different historical styles. However, authors, such as for example Walter Kidney, describe it also as the existence in the same urban space of buildings, public and private, designed following different regional and historical styles:
'In Florida and California, where the Spanish past was romanticized, the full range of Spanish, or at least of Mediterranean, styles was equally common. In the Southwest, a Pueblo style flourished for a while, and in the New Orleans area a Creole. Parts of the country where the earliest buildings were mid-Victorian – and thus in deep disgrace – tended to choose architectural styles under the other, more universal and even more important, aspect of cultural context: the historic background of the building type. When style was thus determined, a house was usually Georgian, Tudor, or Cotswold (Anglo-Saxon home atmosphere), unless it was a mansion and intended to look like one, in which case it might have been Jacobean or one of the Louis (aristocracy of wealth). A church – if not Colonial – would, for an old and ritualistic sect, be Gothic (Christian heritage); if it was for some new sect, lie the Christian Scientists, it might be decently but noncommittally wrapped in something classical. A synagogue, in the absence of a true Hebraic architecture, was usually Byzantine or Moorish. A school was Tudor or Jacobean (Oxford, Eton). A theatre was either Louis XV (courtly diversions) or – especially if a movie house – something utterly fantastic, with some sort of high-pressure Mediterranean Baroque providing the norm (palace of illusions). For the center city, classicism was long the near-universal solution; a cluster of styles, rather than a single style, it clothed the museum, the library, the memorial structure in cool eternal beauty, but broke into rustications, ressauts, and swags, giant orders and Renaissance cornices for the more worldly office buildings, the bank, the apartment house, the theatre, the clubhouse, and the town mansion. It had manners for both the places of contemplation and secular solemnity and the places of sociability and business.' Kidney, Walter C. *The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America 1880-1930* (New York: George Braziller, 1974) pp. 2-3

[303] Segre, Roberto, Coyula, Mario and Scarpaci, Joseph L.: 1997, pp. 65-72

[304] '... the word syncretism is largely used now as a technical term in the history of religion, and, above all, ancient religions, when it is still used in the history of philosophy it seems on the whole not to differ from eclecticism.' Pierluigi Donini 'The History of the Concept of Eclecticism' in J.M. Dillon, A.A. Long (eds.) *The Question of 'Eclecticism': Studies in Later Greek Philosophy* (Hellenistic Culture and Society , No 3) (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1988) pp. 15-33. p. 28

[305] Charles Jencks, in his description and defence of a post-modern architecture, also uses the term eclecticism as meaning synthesis. He distinguishes between simple eclecticism, without a clear purpose, and *adhocism*: 'Certain buildings of Le Corbusier definitely articulate this kind of experience, but they do so with a Purist language purged of symbolic signs, writing and vulgarity. By contrast, the buildings of Venturi and his team use an inclusive language without attempting much of a reconciliation between opposed meanings. Only one architect manages to be convincingly profound with a hybrid language, Gaudí; but before discussing him, I'd

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like to instance several examples of this language itself since it is the precondition for an inclusive architecture.

In general terms it can be described as a radical eclecticism, or adhocism. Various parts, styles or sub-systems (existing in a previous context) are used in a new, creative synthesis. Radical eclecticism stresses the aspect that these parts must find a semantic justification; eclecticism in itself is a senseless shuffling of styles, as incoherent as Purism, its opposite. Adhocism stresses the aspect that these parts must be unified creatively for a specific purpose (the definition of *ad hoc*).' Jencks, Charles. *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London: Academy Editions, 1977) pp. 91-92

[306] 'Purist architecture was partly a reaction against nineteenth-century eclecticism. Gothic churches, Renaissance banks, and Jacobean manors were frankly picturesque. The mixing of styles meant the mixing of media. Dressed in historical styles, buildings evoked explicit associations and Romantic allusions to the past to convey literary, ecclesiastical, national, or programmatic symbolism.' Venturi, Robert, Scott Brown, Denise and Izenour, Steven. *Learning From Las Vegas* (Cambridge, London: M.I.T. Press, 1972) pp. 1-2

[307] As in the distinction I made in Chapter II between *mestizaje*, creolization and multiculturalism.

[308] Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City* (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1998) p. 110: 'A Technological Baroque': 'The sense of the baroque running through their aesthetic preferences, from the Palais Ideal to Jorn's garden, was recognized by the situationists themselves, who empathized with the 'exemplary' work of 'Mad' King Ludwig II of Bavaria, whose most famous work, the fantasy castle of Neuschwanstein in the German Alps, inspired the centrepiece of Disneyland. Ludwig's architecture, Debord felt, had 'a baroque character, that one always finds so marked in essays upon an integral art.' 'In this respect,' Debord went on, 'it is significant to note the relations between Ludwig of Bavaria and Wagner, who would himself research an aesthetic synthesis' – in other words, the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the total work of art.' Quotation from Guy-Ernest Debord,'L'architecture et le Jeu', *Ptlatch* No 20 (Paris, May 1955). Reprinted in *Potlatch* 1954-1957, pp. 137-140.
'Chtcheglov considered that the new city of situations 'would be the baroque stage of urbanism considered as a means of *knowledge* and a means of *action*.' p. 112

[309] Sarduy, S.: 1974, p. 103

[310] Severo Sarduy went to Europe in 1960 with a scholarship from the Cuban government. However, he remained in France, after the active persecution of homosexuals by the new regime of Cuba became clear. He lived in France as a political exiled, where he died in 1993. See Machover, Jacobo. 'El periplo cosmopolita de Severo Sarduy' in *La memoria frente al poder: escritores cubanos del exilio. Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Severo Sarduy, Reinaldo Arenas* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2001) pp. 63-102

[311] Segre, Roberto. *Diez años de arquitectura en Cuba Revolucionaria* (La Habana: Ediciones Unió n, 1969) p. 53 .

[312] Antoni Kapcia describes the uses of walls in Havana, and the whole of Cuba, depicting pro-Revolution political statements as 'mundanization' of revolutionary ideology, making that ideology part of the citizens' every-day experiences. As I understand it, they are also an attempt to visually equate Havana with the tradition of mainly left-wing inspired political resistance and uprising in cities (for example, May 1968 Paris). See Kapcia, Antoni. *Cuba: Island of Dreams* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2000) pp. 266-268

[313] See 'La Habana metropolitana, un instrumento para el desarrollo de Cuba socialista' in *Transformación urbana en Cuba: La Habana* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1974) pp. 76-135

[314] Segre, R.: 1968, pp. 8-9

[315] Ibid, p. 6.

[316] '... imagen de cubanía derivada de una compleja elaboración intelectual, como es el caso de las escuelas nacionales de arte, donde se maneja el concepto de sensualidad tropical, expresado simbólicamente o mediante metáforas directas, además de la recuperación del patio central y las galerías, soluciones que se

destacan en la Escuela de Artes Plásticas.' Cárdenas, Eliana. *En la Búsqueda de Una Arquitectura Nacional.* (Editorial Letras Cubanas, La Habana, 1991) pp. 22-23

[... *image of cubanía derived from a complex intellectual elaboration, as in the case of the national schools of arts, where the concept of tropical sensuality is used, symbolically expressed, or through direct metaphors, apart from the recuperation of the central patio and the galleries, solutions that stand out at the School of Visual Arts.*]

[317] Roberto Segre explains the purposes and principles guiding the design of the National Schools of Art as follows:
'Las Escuelas Nacionales de Arte forman el conjunto mas polémico y espectacular realizado por la revolución: difundidas ampliamente a nivel internacional, consideradas por algunos como la genuina expresión de la arquitectura revolucionaria, son al mismo tiempo repudiadas y negadas, encasilladas dentro de la serie de errores cometidos en este primer periodo, denominado 'romántico'. Se originan en la idea de formar un centro de enseñanza artística a escala tricontinental – ballet, música, arte plástica, arte dramático, danza moderna – para los becados y artistas del Tercer Mundo. Reaparece aquí el factor simbólico: primero, ocupando uno de los paisajes naturales mas bellos de La Habana exclusivo de la burguesía – el tradicional Country Club -, Segundo, magnificando la actividad artística – derecho inalienable de toda sociedad -, surgida del pueblo y liberada de los moldes impuestos por la penetración cultural norteamericana...
La respuesta arquitectónica asume tres premisas básicas: la individualización de cada tema en un edificio, el empleo del ladrillo y las bóvedas catalanas, la integración de la obra en el ambiente natural.' Segre, R.: 1968, pp. 10-11.

[*The National Art Schools are part of the most polemic and spectacular project made by the revolution: widely promoted at an international level and considered by some as the genuine expression of a revolutionary architecture, they are at the same time rejected and negated, considered within the series of mistakes from this first period, known as 'romantic'. The Schools came from the idea of creating a centre of artistic education to a tri-continental scale – classic and modern dance, music, visual arts and theatre – for 1,500 bursary students, Third World artists. A symbolic factor reappears: first, occupying one of the most beautiful natural landscapes in Havana, exclusive to the bourgeoisie – the traditional Country Club -; Secondly, magnifying the artistic practice – inalienable right in every society -, a practice born from the people and free from the imposed models of North American cultural penetration.*
The architectonic answer assumes three basic premises: the individualisation of each theme in one building, the use of bricks and the Catalan vaults, the integration of the work in the natural context.]

[318] See Loomis, John. *Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools. Revolution of Forms* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999) pp. 24-25

[319] The utopianism of this project was recreated much later by the group of Cuban artists Los Carpinteros with a now very emblematic work from the beginnings of the 'special period', the painting *Havana Country Club* (1994), where the three artists represented themselves parodying a golf game with tree branches at the ISA's fields. This allusion to this space's past and the mythologies surrounding it overlaps with their own images as art students parodying an elitist game, perhaps as a direct challenge to those utopian aspirations embodied in the ISA's architecture.

[320] It is anachronistic because it contradicted the premises of functionality and simplicity, possibly thanks to the use of glass and steel, in modern buildings.

[321] Very few urban and architectural projects were carried out in Havana after 1959, and they were mainly related to the construction of social housing and creation of neighbourhoods for the relocation of those living in slums. In most of these occasions the international style was predominant, following also the Soviet-dominated Eastern European trend during those same years. See Segre, Roberto *La vivienda en Cuba en el Siglo XX. República y Revolución* (Editorial Concepto, Mexico D.F., 1980) and *La arquitectura de la Revolución cubana* (Montevideo: Universidad de la República, número monográfico dedicado a la arquitectura de la Revolución cubana, 1968)

[322] 'The dome and the spire, the open avenue and the closed court, tell the story, not merely of different physical accommodations, but of essentially different conceptions of man's destiny. The city is both a physical utility for collective living and a symbol of those collective purposes and unanimities that arise under such favoring circumstance. With language itself, it remains man's greatest work of art.' Mumford, L.: 1995, p. 106

[323] Among the most important: the ISA (Superior Art Institute), the ICAIC (the Cuban Institute of the Cinematographic Arts and Industry) and the UNEAC (the National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists).

[324] See Kapcia, Antoni. *Havana: the Making of Cuban Culture* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005) pp. 125-148 and p. 168

[325] Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) pp. 35-54

Chapter IV: Film and Urban Space

[326] See Chanan, Michael. *Cuban Cinema.* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) pp. 73-89

[327] 'Some of these films are more personal than others, but for the most part the subjects and themes of the films in all three groups were chosen according to the needs of ideological struggle in the revolutionary situation. Historians of the Revolution would do well to watch these films carefully: they serve as an excellent guide to what many, if not all, of these issues were, and at the same time indicate the lines that were being drawn at each moment for the next phase; for since films take time to make, they are also evidence of how closely the leadership at ICAIC was integrated from the outset with thinking at the center of gravity within the revolutionary leadership.' Chanan, M.: 2004, p. 130

[328] Chanan, M.: 2004, pp. 103-109. Also, on this issue, Alea comments: "The Party is all very well for unifying forces in order to direct them towards a common objective, and in that I support them". See Chanan, Michael. 'Interior Diaolgue in the Work of T. G. Alea' in *Framework*; Spring 2003; 44, 1, pp. 11-21, p. 17

[329] "It was the custom to talk about the motherland; there were some who had a wrong idea of the motherland. There was the motherland of the privileged ones, of a man who has a large house, while the others live in hovels. What motherland did you have in mind, sir? A motherland where a small group lives from the work of others? A motherland of the barefoot child who is asking for alms on the street? What kind of motherland is this? A motherland which belonged to a small minority? Or the motherland of today? The motherland of today where we have won the right to direct our destiny, where we have learned to decide our destiny, a motherland which will be, now and forever--as Martí wanted it--for the well-being of everyone and not a motherland for few!
The motherland will be a place where such injustices will be eliminated, now we can have the real concept of motherland. We are willing to die for a motherland which belongs to all Cubans." Extract from a speech given by Fidel Castro on the 1st of May 1961. Published in:
http://www.marxists.org/history/cuba/archive/castro/1961/05/01.htm
Also, see Kapcia, Antoni. *Cuba: Island of Dreams* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2000) pp. 99-148

[330] Chanan, M.: 2004, p. 163. Also, Piñera, Walfredo & Cumaná María Caridad. *Mirada al cine cubano* (Brussels: Colección CINEMEDIA, Organización Católica Internacional, 1999) p. 57

[331] According to Chanan, the neorealist influence in Gutiérrez Alea and García Espinosa did not persist beyond the films *Historias de la Revolución* (1960) and *Aventuras de Juan Quinquín* (1967). Chanan, M.: 2004, p. 150

[332] For example, the three act plot structure, the use of artificial settings and lighting and recorded sound that gave the appearance of a perfected 'naturalism'.

[333] See Monaco, James. *The New Wave. Truffaut, Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Neupert, Richard. *A History of the French New Wave Cinema* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2002)

[334] The cinema from the first decade after the 1959 Revolution, though *De Cierta Manera* was finished in 1973.

[335] During an interview, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea explained how while shooting his film *Las doce sillas* the many changes brought about by the Revolution directly affected the aesthetics and rhythm of the film: "The Revolution implies a fundamental change in the structure of society," he said, "but the appearance of things also changes from day to day. A billboard announcing a luxury hotel in Miami and inviting Cubans to spend their vacation there is substituted by another which declares Cuba a territory free of illiteracy. Suddenly, where a large mansion previously housed counts or marqueses, there is now an art school; where Cadillacs used to be sold, now they sell furniture for workers who have been given houses by the Urban Reform. When we arrived to film a lonely vantage point over a valley we found a large hotel built by the Tourist Institute full of tourists. Inside the building where we had gone to shoot a number of scenes we found walls erected and walls demolished, a new arrangement of furniture and bricklayers at work everywhere, which obliged us to change our plans and to hurry the filming through because of the danger that even during shooting they would transform the scene around us. I think that the general rhythm of the film to some extent reflects the vertigo of the Revolution." Quoted by Michael Chanan in *Cuban Cinema* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) p. 161

[336] In an article published in the magazine *Adelante* (Camagüey, 11 Agosto, 1964), Mikhail Kalatozov described Havana in the following ideological terms: 'En la primera novela mostramos La Habana de antes de la revolución, con sus elegantes hoteles para los americanos, la habana de los turistas ricos, donde todo se compra y todo se vende, ciudad donde es difícil vivir a la gente sencilla y honesta, donde lleva una vida desafortunada la joven María'

[... *In the first story we show the Havana from before the Revolution, with its elegant hotels for the North Americans, the Havana for the wealthy tourists, where everything can be bought and sold, a city where life is difficult for simple and honest people*...]

[337] Thomas, H.: 2002, pp. 864-883; Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 183-186

[338] I do not try to imply that such re-writings were just fabrications. There was, and there still is, differences in wealth between Havana and the rest of the island. However, there have been serious rhetorical simplifications. The more important one is the assumption that anything outside Havana was a life in abject poverty.

[339] Urusevsky's long-take shots in both the new and the old cities have been the most commented upon when this film was again released - this time for the audiences in the United States - by directors Martin Scorsese and Francis Ford Coppola in the 1990s.

[340] The upper-income groups had moved to the residential areas of Vedado and Miramar. See 'La Habana siglo XX, de la ciudad burguesa a la ciudad proletaria' in *La Ciudad. Concepto y obra*. VI Coloquio de Historia del Arte (México: Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, UNAM, 1987)

[341] The action of passing the flag by the tobacco workers recreates in front of the camera the action of passing the camera needed to shoot this sequence without any cuts.

[342] It is now a sign of the city itself, ironically, standing for the island's poverty and anachronistic isolation from the economic processes dominant in the rest of the American continent.

[343] Pineda Barnet, Enrique. 'Soy Cuba' in *Cine Cubano*, No 8 (1962).

[344] See for example, *City of God* (2002) by Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund.

[345] When this sequence was shot, Las Yaguas had already been pulled down. Kalatozov decided to recreate the slum in the same site, building a set and using extras, many of whom had probably been former inhabitants of Las Yaguas themselves.

[346] Pineda Barnet later defined the film as 'exotic' and even 'kitsch': 'En general, yo interpretaba lo que estaba resultando como algo 'turistico', 'exotico' en el peor sentido, grandilocuente, y a veces cursi.'

[*In general, I interpretated the final product as 'touristc', 'exotic' in its worst sense, pretentious, and sometimes, kitsch*]

From an interview via e-mail with Enrique Pineda Barnett by Betti Sue Hertz, a Phd student from the Graduate Centrer in New York City (8th of January 1998)

[347] Urusevsky explained this intention in an interview with Eduardo Manet published in *Cine Cubano* No 20, (1964):
"La primera vez que visitamos Cuba, nuestro grupo se componía de tres personas: el director Kalatozov, el poeta Eutuchenko y yo. No teníamos ninguna idea concreta cual iba a ser el guión, como iba a presentarse, etc. Estaba claro que no íbamos a escribir una novela sobre Cuba, ya que para eso, hubiese sido necesario quedarse en Cuba varios años para conocer plenamente el tema. Realizar una película sobre tipos sicológicos cubanos, nos parecía también aventurado y atrevido ya que, siendo extranjeros no podíamos dar un reflejo cabal de la realidad. Pensemos sin embargo, que se podían escribir versos sobre Cuba. Por eso decidimos que la solución artística de la película estribaba en realizar un guión que fuese como un poema dedicado a este país. En los poemas no se requieren esos pequeños detalles sicológicos y de hábitos que se necesitan en una novela. El poema requiere unas imágenes muy claras, muy definidas que penetren rápidamente en la imaginación. Por eso quisimos que la película fuera como un poema romántico. Partiendo de esa opinión, surgió mi idea de filmar con material infra-rojo...El infra-rojo es un material que comunica luminosidad y penetración a la forma."

[*The first time we visited Cuba, our group was formed of three people: the director Kalatazov, the poet Eutuchenko and myself. We didn't have a concrete idea regarding the script, how it would be presented, etc. It was clear that we didn't want to write a novel about Cuba, because in order to do so it would have been necessary to stay in Cuba for a few years, to understand the issues treated more deeply. To make a film about Cuban psychological types seemed to us also too risky and daring, due to the fact that as foreigners we could not reflect the reality accurately. We thought, however, that it would be possible to write verses about Cuba. That is why the artistic solution for the film was to create a script that would work as a poem dedicated to the country. In poetry you don't require all those small details on characters and habits needed in a novel. The poem requires very clear and well-defined images that penetrate the imagination faster. That's why we wanted the film to work as a romantic poem... The infra-red is a material that communicates formal luminosity and penetration.*]

[348] Guevara, Che. 'Socialism and Man in Cuba' (1965) from *The Che Reader* (London: Ocean Press, 2005) pp. 197-214. Also, Lumsden, C. Ian. 'The Ideology of the Revolution' in *Cuba in Revolution*. Edited by Bonachea, Rolando and Valdés, Nelson P. (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1972) pp. 529-44

[349] Moore, Carlos. *Castro, The Blacks, And Africa* (Los Angeles: Center for Afro-American studies, University of California, 1988) pp. 307-316

[350] Nicolás Guillén Sr., the poet, not Nicolás Guillén Landrián, a filmmaker and painter who also belonged to the group of Afro-Cubans barred from the Congress. Moore, C.: 1988, pp. 309-310

[351] De La Fuente: 2001, p. 266

[352] For example, intellectual Afro-Cubans associations such as the Club Atenas, denoted the existence of a relatively affluent and illustrated important group of Afro-Cubans in Havana, particularly since the 1920s, who would be concerned with the advancement of Afro-Cubans within Cuban society. See Davis, Darien J. 'Nationalism and Civil Rights in Cuba: A Comparative Perspective, 1930-1960' *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 83, No. 1 (Winter, 1998), pp. 35-51. Also see Schwartz, Rosalie, 'Cuba's Roaring Twenties.

Race Consciousness and the Column 'Ideales de una Raza'' from *Between Race and Empire. African-Americans and Cubans before the Cuban Revolution.* Edited by Lisa Brock and Digna Castañeda Fuertes (Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1998) pp. 104-119

[353] Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 52-57

[354] See Robin D. Moore, *Nationalizing Blackness. Afrocubanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 1997) p. 37: 'The Cuban Communist Party through the mid-1930s expressed a desire to end the exploitation of Afrocubans in the workplace but did not apparently envision them as part of the nation. Leaders advocated instead the relocation of all blacks and mulattos to the province of Oriente and the creation of two separate countries in the island, with black and white citizens, respectively.'

[355] Chanan, M.: 2004, pp. 346-350

[356] On this issue see Ayorinde, Christine. *Afro-Cuban Religiosity, Revolution, and National Identity.* Chapter 4: 'The Revolution, 1959-1990' (Miami, Tampa, Orlando: University Press of Florida, 2004) pp. 83-136

[357] Quoted on review of the film in *Cine Cubano*, No 93 (1979) by Gerardo Chijona.

[358] 'The 'dangerous class', the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue.' In Engels, F. and Marx, K. *The Communist Manifesto* published in: http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm.
The term lumpenproletariat was coined by Karl Marx in *The German Ideology* (1845) during his critique to Max Stirner: 'But since with these imaginations about liberalism, good burghers and vagabonds he, of course, gets nowhere, he finds himself compelled in order to make the transition to communism to bring in the actual, ordinary bourgeois and proletarians insofar as he knows about them from hearsay. This occurs on pages 151 and 152, where the lumpen-proletariat becomes transformed into 'workers', into ordinary proletarians' In Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. *A Critique of the German Ideology* (Progress Publishers, 1968. Online Version: Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 2000) Also from MIA: Encyclopedia of Marxism (http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/l/u.htm): 'Roughly translated as *slum workers* or *the mob*, this term identifies the class of outcast, degenerated and submerged elements that make up a section of the population of industrial centers. It includes beggars, prostitutes, gangsters, racketeers, swindlers, petty criminals, tramps, chronic unemployed or unemployables, persons who have been cast out by industry, and all sorts of declassed, degraded or degenerated elements.'

[359] See Brown, David H. *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003) pp. 26-30 and Walker, Daniel E. *No More, No More: Slavery and Cultural Resistance in Havana and New Orleans* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) p. 66

[360] She belonged to the group of Afro-Cuban intellectuals who wanted to insert Afro-Cuban studies as part of the University Curriculum. Moore, C.: 1988, pp. 309-10

[361] It was Tomás Gutiérrez Alea who finished the film later in collaboration with Julio García Espinosa.

[362] 'She talked about her happiness and difficulties with a lover from *el ambiente*, who was *Abakuá.* She talked about the taboos in the relationship, the *machismo*. I put myself on the line too. I was familiar with the *machista* woman, who takes on the macho cult, the exclusively male sect and its violence, and manipulates its secrets (like breaking taboos) to keep a lover in tow.' González, Tomás in 'Sara, One Way or Another' published in *Cine Cubano,* Special Commemorative Issue to Sara Gómez (1990) pp. 12-18

[363] Pedro Pérez Sarduy, Afro-Cuban writer who belonged to Sara Gómez's circle of friends relates how he was present at one of the meetings among Afro-Cuban intellectuals where they discussed with Sara Gómez the need for a black actor instead of a mixed race one for the character of Mario. According to Pérez Sarduy,

Sara Gómez decided for the latter, alluding to the Cuban audiences not being prepared for blackness on the screen. This is also the version of dramaturge Tomás González who wrote *De Cierta Manera*'s storyline. González, T.: 1990 *(Cine Cubano)*

[364] *Unos y Otros*. Photographs by Ernesto Fernández (La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literature, 1978)

[365] The best known and one of the oldest uses of this cinematographic visual trope was in *Citizen Kane* (1941)

[366] See Lacey, Robert. *Little Man. Meyer Lansky and the Gangster Life* (London: Century, 1991) p. 231-232

[367] Segre, Roberto *La vivienda en Cuba en el Siglo XX. República y Revolución* (Editorial Concepto, Mexico D.F., 1980) pp. 22-23

[368] The script was a collaboration between director, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and writer, Edmundo Desnoes.

[369] The October 1960 Urban Reform Law: '... provided that no one should own more than one residence, Lessees of rented property became tenants of the state and, after a certain number of years, would become outright owners, while landlords would be compensated, though never at more than $350 a month.' Thomas, H.: 2002, p. 882

[370] For a brief explanation of the Cuban missile crisis see Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 195-209

[371] *The Maine* was a United States' battleship which sank in the Havana harbour in 1898, ending the life of 258 American sailors aboard. This event was used as *casus belli* by the United States and led to the 'Spanish-American War' of 1898. This war put an end to 400 years of Spanish rule over the island and initiated four very influential years of American occupation, until Cuba regained officially its independence in 1902. The eagle at the top of the monument was dismantled after January 1959, a symbolical act standing for the final end to the United States' domination on the island. The image of the Monument to the Maine without its eagle was used on the promotional poster to this film in Cuba. See Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 98-100

[372] *El Encanto* was Havana's main department store before 1959. It was destroyed by bombs set off by counter-revolutionaries in 1960.

[373] In his film *Los Sobrevivientes* (1979), Alea again treats the figure of the house, this time a mansion typical from new Vedado, as a fortress from which its inhabitants manage to stay safe and isolated from the political and social transformations happening outside.

[374] Together with the contemporary tones of the specific soundtrack composed by avant-garde Cuban musician and composer Leo Brouwer, who was of African and Chinese descendency. He composed the soundtrack of several post-1959 Cuban films.

[375] This debate arose at the Bandung Conference in 1955 from newly independent countries worried about their status between the two blocks, the 'capitalist' and the 'socialist'.

[376] The ignorance of western high-culture.

[377] Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-garde* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) pp. 26-29

[378] Even though North American abstract expressionism was at its peak, it was still seen as also critical and foreign to the United States' hegemonic culture. What later was denominated pop art was still being negotiated as part of the avant-garde tradition.

[379] This essay was first published on the film magazine *Cine Cubano*, numbers 66/67 (La Habana, December 17, 1969). Reprinted as García Espinosa, Julio. *Por un cine imperfecto* (Madrid: Castellote Editor, 1976)

[380] Authors of the documentary, *La Hora de Los Hornos* (Hour of the Furnaces, 1968)

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[381] A cinema produced on the Hollywood studio model. See Chanan, Michael. 'The Changing Geography of Third Cinema', *Screen. Special Latin American Issue*. Volume 38, number 4 (Winter 1997) p. 375

[382] See Chanan, M.: 1997, pp. 376

[383] '... Ideas such as 'Beauty in itself is revolutionary' and 'All new cinema is revolutionary' are idealistic aspirations that do not touch the neocolonial condition, since they continue to conceive of cinema, art, and beauty as universal abstractions and not as an integral part of the national processes of decolonisation. ...
[...]
... Insert the work as an original fact in the process of liberation, place it first at the service of life itself, ahead of art; dissolve aesthetics in the life of society: only in this way, as Fanon said, can decolonisation become possible and culture, cinema, and beauty - at least, what is of greatest importance to us - become our culture, our films, and our sense of beauty. ...
[...]
The first alternative to this type of cinema [Hollywood cinema], which we could call the first cinema, arose with the so-called 'author's cinema,' 'expression cinema,' 'nouvelle vague,' 'cinema novo,' or, conventionally, the second cinema. This alternative signified a step forward inasmuch as it demanded that the film-maker be free to express himself in non-standard language and inasmuch as it was an attempt at cultural decolonisation. But such attempts have already reached, or are about to reach, the outer limits of what the system permits. The second cinema film-maker has remained 'trapped inside the fortress' as Godard put it, or is on his way to becoming trapped.' In Solanas, Fernando and Getino, Octavio in 'Towards a Third Cinema: Notes and Experiences for the Development of a Cinema of Liberation in the Third World' in http://info.interactivist.net/article.pl?sid=05/09/15/205253. 4 September 2007

[384] 'But the questions that were recently raised appeared promising; they arose from a new historical situation to which the film-maker, as is often the case with the educated strata of our countries, was rather a latecomer: ten years of the Cuban Revolution, the Vietnamese struggle, and the development of a worldwide liberation movement whose moving force is to be found in the Third World countries.' Ibid.

[385] 'In our times it is hard to find a film within the field of commercial cinema, including what is known as 'author's cinema,' in both the capitalist and socialist countries, that manages to avoid the models of Hollywood pictures. The latter have such a fast hold that monumental works such as Bondarchuk's War and Peace from the USSR are also monumental examples of the submission to all propositions imposed by the US movie industry (structure, language, etc.) and, consequently, to its concepts. ...' Ibid.

[386] Desnoes, Edmundo. *Memories of Underdevelopment* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971) p. 26

[387] José Martí. 'Our America' (1892)

[388] In one of his interviews with Michael Chanan, Alea parly identifies with Sergio's need of 'intellectual indepence' from the Party, though he also clarifies that, unlike Sergio, he is not a spectator in the revolutionary processes but a participant in it, a cultural producer within the Revolution. See Chanan, Michael. 'Interior Diaolgue in the Work of T. G. Alea' in *Framework* Spring 2003; 44, 1, pp. 11-21

[389] Edmundo Desnoes was the son of a white Cuban and a white Jamaican, and was, therefore, bilingual. He also lived for a long time in the United States, from 1956 to 1960.

Chapter V: Nightlife As Heterotopia: The 'Roaring Fifties'

[390] For a historical recount of the entertainment industry in Cuba before 1959 see: Schwarz, Rosalie. *Pleasure Island: Tourism and Temptation in Cuba*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997)

[391] Ibid. pp. 55-73. Also, Kapcia, Antoni. *Havana: The Making of Cuban Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2005) pp. 67-69

[392] See Christopher, Nicholas. *Somewhere in the Night. Film Noir and the American City* (The Free Press, New York, London, 1997) and Straw, Will. 'Urban Confidential: The Lurid City of the 1950s' *The Cinematic City* Edited by David B. Clarke (Routledge, London & New York, 1997) pp. 110-128

[393] Straw, W.: 1997, pp. 115-119

[394] Ibid. p. 111

[395] Benjamin, Walter. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1973)

[396] Cirules, Enrique. *El Imperio de La Habana* (Casa de Las Americas, La Habana, 1993) pp. 40-41

[397] A more recent account of the presence of the members of North American *mafia* in Havana is T. J. English's *The Havana Mob: Gangster, Gamblers, Showgirls and Revolutionaries in 1950s Cuba* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishers, 2007)

[398] Cirules, Enrique *La Vida Secreta de Meyer Lansky en La Habana. La Mafia en Cuba* (Editorial Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, 2004)

[399] Due to the political tensions between the United States and Cuba, Francis Ford Coppola was not allowed to shoot in Havana.

[400] In the year 1952, Fulgencio Batista - a high command in the Cuban Army who had effectively run the country from 1933 to 1940 – successfully launched a coup de'etat, that suspended the Cuban Constitution, removing all democratic rights (more importantly the right to strike) and constitutional guarantees. He supported and increased the United States' investments in the island, particularly with the North American entertainment industry in the city of Havana, including the infamous gambling businesses associated with North American organised crime. The movement called 26th of July in Cuba, led by Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, Huber Matos, Che Guevara and Camilo Cienfuegos, which took over after January 1959, had initiated as an armed attack against Batista's dictatorship at the Moncada Barracks on the 26th of July of 1953. Gott, Richard. *Cuba. A New History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004) pp. 147-189

[401] Bell, Daniel. *The End of Ideology. On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York: Free Press, 1962) p. 128

[402] Ibid. pp.140-141

[403] Ibid.

[404] Benjamin, Walter. 'On Gambling'. *Selected Writings. Volumen 2 1927-1934* (London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999) pp. 120-125

[405] Benjamin, Walter. *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1973) p. 134

[406] Ibid. p. 137

[407] Ibid. p. 174

[408] See Dunar, Andrew J. 'People of Plenty. The Transformation of American Society' in *America in the Fifties* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006) pp. 167-203; Halberstam, David *The Fifties* (Ballantine Books, New York and Toronto, 1994) and Donaldson, Gary A. 'The Use of Abundance: Culture and Society 1945-1960' in *Abundance and Anxiety: America 1945-1960* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997) pp. 123-148

[409] See Kaledin, Eugenia. *Daily Life in the United States, 1940-1959: Shifting Worlds* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2000) pp. 125-126

[410] On the history of gambling see: Schwartz, David G. *Roll the Bones: The History of Gambling* (New York: Gotham Books, 2006) and Reith, Gerda. *The Age of Chance: Gambling in Western Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999)

[411] On this issue see: *Chicanos and Film: Essays on Chicano Representation and Resistance*. Edited by Chon A. Noriega (New York, London: Garland, 1992); Berg, Charles. *Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, and Resistance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Hooks, Bell. *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (London: Turnaround, 1992) and Friedman, Lester D. (ed.) *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and the American Cinema* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1991)

[412] She would interpret Cubans, Mexicans or any other Latin character, never mind her distinctive Portuguese accent.

[413] The term *guajiro* in Cuba refers to those who live and work in the countryside, mainly looking after cattle. It is in many ways associated with the image of the cowboy in North America, more than the, for example, Spanish *campesino* or *ganadero*.

[414] This is not to say that all sexual workers in Havana were Afro-Cubans. Among them, there were also numerous white Cubans. Also, not every tourist in Havana searching for sex would look for Afro-Cubans. However, the sex trade in Cuba has always been associated with the Afro-Cuban woman, due to the historical, social and cultural consequences of the slave trade in the island. The overrepresentation of Afro-Cubans in the sex trade in Havana has also been due to the expectations set by many travelling to the island: nowadays mainly white Europeans and North American tourists whose desire for an 'other' has resulted in sexual lust for the racially different. See De la Fuente, A. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) pp. 322-330. Also, O'Connell Davidson, Julia. 'Sex Tourism in Cuba' in *Race & Class* 38, no. 1 (1996) pp. 39-48

[415] The character of Superman, who during the 1950s performed at the Shanghai Theatre in Chinatown, is often cited by Cubans intellectuals and artists, as a signifier of the particular times the city was going through during the 1950s.

[416] It also corresponded with a long tradition within North American popular culture that had constructed the figure of the latin woman as characterised by sexual excess. There is no such thing as a racially differentiated latin people. The incredibly ethnic and cultural diversity of those who have been classified under this term is proof of its irrelevance (those who descend from mixes between South Europeans, North Africans, West Africans, others Subsaharian Africans, and from the many different indigenous groups, in the whole of the American continent). Despite this, the figure of the *Latin* is still very prevalent in western and other cultures. On the representations of 'latin' women see, for example, Fregoso, Rosa Linda. *MeXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 2003)

[417] See Young, Ian. *The Stonewall Experiment. A Gay Psychohistory* (London and New York: Cassell, 1995) pp. 54-56. Also, Carter, David. *Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked The Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004)

[418] See the documentary *Conducta Impropia* (1983) by Orlando Jiménez Leal and Néstor Almendros.

[419] See Benjamin, Walter. 'The *Flâneur*' in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (London: NLB, 1973) pp. 35-66

[420] MacCannell, Dean *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Foreword by Lucy R. Lippard (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1999) p. 35

[421] Cirules, Eduardo. *La Vida Secreta de Meyer Lansky en La Habana* (La Habana: Editorial de Letras Cubanas, 2004)

[422] For Bell, it was senseless hedonism that characterised culturally the society of the 1950s and 1960s:

'The greates single engine in the destruction of the Protestant ethic was the invention of the instalment plan, or instant credit. Previously one had to save in order to buy. But with credit cards one could indulge in instant gratification. The system was transformed by mass production and mass consumption, by the creation of new wants and new means of gratifying those wants.

The Protestant ethic had served to limit sumptuary (though not capital) accumulation. When the Protestant ethic was sundered from bourgeois society, only the hedonism remained, and the capitalist system lost its transcendental ethic.' Bell, Daniel. *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (London: Heinemann, 1979) p. 21

[423] This was one of the short stories from his collection Runyon, Alfred Damon. *Guys and Dolls and Other Stories* (London: Jarrolds, 1932)

[424] Ortega, Josefina. 'Las 72 horas de Marlon Brando en La Habana' in *La Jiribilla* (November 2007): http://www.lajiribilla.co.cu/2002/n79_noviembre/memoria.html

[425] 'In Libertyville my idols in the jazz world had been Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich, but one night I went to the Palladium, a ballroom on Broadway, to dance and almost lost my mind with excitement when I discovered Afro-Cuban music. ... Tito Puente and Tito Rodríguez, the very best of the Afro-Cuban bands, played there, ...' Brando, Marlon. *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (London: Century, 1994) p. 66

[426] See most recent Marlon Brando's biography: Bosworth, Patricia. *Marlon Brando* (London: Phoenix, 2002)

[427] Summers, A. and Swan R. *Sinatra: the Life* (London: Doubleday, 2005) pp. 162-174

[428] Christopher, Nicholas 'Office Buildings and Casinos' in *Somewhere in the Night. Film Noir and the American City* (New York: The Free Press, 1997) pp. 85 – 149

[429] See Le Riverand, Julio. *Breve Historia de Cuba* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1978) and *La República, dependencia y Revolución* (La Habana: Editorial Universitaria,1976). Also Padrón, Pedro Luis. *Qué República era aquella* (La Habana: Editorial Ciencias Sociales, 1986)

[430] Benjamin, Walter *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* (NLB, London, 1973) p. 43

[431] Ibid. p. 54

[432] Burrows, Abe. *Honest Abe: Is There Really no Business Like Show Business?* (Toronto, Boston: Atlantic Press, Little, Brown and Company, 1980) p. 152

[433] 'It is the middle class that systematically scavenges the earth for new experiences to be woven into a collective, touristic version of other peoples and other places. [...] The middle class is the most favoured now because it has a transcendent consciousness. Tourism, I suggest, is an essential component of that consciousness.' MacCannell, Dean *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1999) p. 13

[434] See particularly Archer-Straw, Petrine. *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000)

[435] There has always been a much higher proportion of Afro-Cubans than Euro-Cubans living in urban centres. See, for example, De la Fuente, A. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) p. 113

[436] Kapcia, A.: 2005, pp. 89-90

[437] See Inglis, Fred. 'The Meaning of Luxury' in *The Delicious History of the Holiday* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000) pp. 55-73

[438] From *Bohemia*, Año 51, N. 2, Enero 11, 1959

[439] Álvarez Tabío, Enma. *Invención de La Habana*. (Barcelona: Editorial Casiopea, 2000) p. 376

[440] '*Guajiro* nationalism' was a related if slightly less widespread alternative to the *afrocubanismo* movement that also affected the arts in the early 1900s. Promoting the culture of the *guajiro*, or rural Hispanic peasant, as that of the nation appealed to conservative elements of Cuban society just as indigenous imagery had. It provided an alternative to the increasing prominence of Afrocuban influences in the media, by which many felt threatened.' In Moore, Robin D. *Nationalizing Blackness. Afrocubanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) p. 131. Also see Leclercq, Cécile. *El lagarto en busca de una identidad. Cuba: identidad nacional y mestizaje* (Madrid: Vervuert, Iberoamericana, 2004) pp. 188-191

[441] See Brown, David H. 'We Were Teaching How to Ask the Black Man about Very Private, Personal Things: *Afrocubana*, the Triumph of the Revolution, and Socialist Folklore' in *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003) pp. 199-210

[442] See the manifesto published by several architects and urban planners working for the new Cuban government, where this intention is spelled out: *Transformación urbana en Cuba: La Habana* (Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili, 1974) Chapter 6 'La Habana metropolitana, un instrumento para el desarrollo de Cuba socialista' pp. 76-79

[443] In 1965 the new government created the UMAP camps (Military Unions to Aid Production), which became de facto concentration camps for homosexuals and members of religious groups considered hostile to the Revolution (protestants and evangelists). They were closed in 1967 after protests from intellectuals within and outside the country. However, active state repression of homosexuals continued until the 1980s. The case of Cuban writer Reinaldo Arenas, who was incarcerated due to his sexuality, became the most famous after Julian Schnabel's film, *Before Night Falls* (2000). For a historical account of these events see Lumsden, Ian. Chapter 3: 'Institutionalised Homophobia' *Machos, Maricones and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality* (Philadelphia P.A.: Temple University Press, 1996) pp. 55-80

Chapter VI: Son, Boleros and Rumba. On the Definitions of the 'Popular' (Guillermo Cabrera Infante and Julio García Espinosa)

[444] The Miami-base Cubans are mainly the group of Cubans, and their descendents, who left the island after 1959 and settled down in Miami.

[445] He had been one of the founders of the Cinemateca of Cuba in 1951, and became its director from 1951 to 1959. During Batista's dictatorship Cabrera Infante wrote a column on cinema in the magazine *Carteles* under the pseudonym G. Caín.

[446] Chanan, Michael's conversations with Alfredo Guevara, in *The Cuban Image* (London: British Film Institute Books, 1985) p. 101.

[447] Ibid. p. 101

[448] *PM* also recorded the presence of many Euro-Cuban men and a few Euro-Cuban women enjoying Havana's nightlife.

[449] And this was mainly the problem: following centralistic policies copied from the Soviet Union, the cultural industry was centralised in several all-powerful organisms such as the ICAIC and the UNEAC (Union de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba, 'Cuban Writers and Artists Union'), with a few people at its top, members or close to the Communist Party of Cuba.

[450] Ian Lumsden, commenting on the repression of homosexuals during Batista's time says: '*Redadas o recogidas* (police raids or mass arrests) were part and parcel of the experience of homosexuals, prostitutes,

and other street people who lived such notorious barrios as that of Colón in Centro Habana. Newspapers like *El Mundo* and *Prensa Libre* periodically demanded that the *barrios* be cleaned up. Still, most *entendidos* could enjoy their personal life as the saw fit. And although *maricones* and *locas* were often harassed by the police, they were not systematically persecuted.' In Lumsden, Ian. *Machos, Maricones and Gays: Cuba and Homosexuality* (Philadelphia P.A.: Temple University Press, 1996) p. 57

[451] Guevara, Ernesto 'Che', 'Socialism and Man in Cuba' in *The Che Reader* (Melbourne: Ocean Press, 2003) pp. 198-201

[452] Reference: interview script in appendix

[453] Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Mea Cuba* (London: Faber and faber, 1995)

[454] Cabrera Infante, Guillermo, 'Orígenes. Una cronología llamada: un autor se presenta' in *Tres Tristes Tigres* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1967) pp. 495-521

[455] Moore, Robert D. *Music & Revolution. Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006) pp. 61-63

[456] In one of his interviews he said: 'I believe that writers, unless they consider themselves terribly exquisite, are at heart people who live by night, a little bit outside society, moving between delinquency and conformity. It is from this atmosphere that the language for *Three Trapped Tigers* is derived.' Interview with Marie-Lise Gazarian Gautier From *Interviews with Latin American Writers* (Elmwood Park: Dalkey Archive Press, 1989) pp. 31-32

[457] A proletarian created by industralisation and not by tertiarisation, as it had happened with the growth of the tourist sector in the city.

[458] In this speech Fidel Castro said the now infamous 'Within the revolution everything; outside the revolution nothing', which meant the factual insertion of censorship in the cultural productions of the island.

[459] The best-known case of state repression of intellectuals during those years was that of the Cuban poet Heberto Padilla who, after the publication of the book of poems *Fuera de Juego* ('Outside the Game'), was imprisoned and forced to publicly retract before the UNEAC. This case initiated in 1971 what Cuban intellectuals generally denominate as the 'Quinquenio Gris' ('Grey Five Years') referring to the increasing 'sovietization' of Cuba during the decade of the 1970s, and the subsequent censorship of intellectuals who did not follow the 'party line'. See, Howe, Linda. 'Art in Revolutionary Cuba. What Price Solidarity?' in *Transgression and Conformity: Cuban Writers and Artists After the Revolution* (Madison, Wisconsin, London: University of Wisconsin Press, c2004) pp. 14-65, and Kapcia, Antoni. 'The Grey Years – Conformity and Stagnation' in *Havana. The Making of Cuban Culture* (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2005) pp. 149-168. For an account of the 'Caso Padilla' and the relationship between intellectuals and the Cuban Revolution see: *El Caso Padilla: literatura y revolución en Cuba.* Edited by Lourdes Casal (Miami: Ediciones Universal, 1972).

[460] Martín-Santos, Luís. *Tiempo de silencio* (Barcelona: Biblioteca Formentor, 1962)

[461] Cabrera Infante, G.: 1967: p. 509

[462] Ibid.

[463] Izquierdo, Yolanda. *Acoso y ocaso de una ciudad* (San Juan: Isla Negra, 2002)| p. 177

[464] It has now recovered this dynamism due to the economic reforms implemented during the 'special period', which brought again masses of tourists to the city, this time from mainly Europe and Canada.

[465] Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Three Trapped Tigers* (London: Pan Books, 1980) p. 310

[466] Ibid. p. 5

[467] See Appignanesi, Lisa. *The Cabaret* (1975) (Yale: Yale University Press, 2004) pp. 13-30 and Jelavich, Peter. *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1993)

[468] *Bolero* is a musical form following the traditions of nineteenth century Spanish-Andalusian 'seguidilla' but rhythmically of also Afro-Cuban origin. It is more commonly a slow-paced 'love song'. Contemporary Cuban Trova is a continuation of this tradition. See Roy, Maya. *Cuban Music* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2002) pp. 109-110

[469] In his interview with Marie-Lise Gazarian Gautier, he refers to the literary uses of the *bolero* genre in his novel: "In *Three Trapped Tigers,* however, what I intended to do was to work with music by other means, such as literature. I use musical patterns there in one of the sections of the book dealing with the life of a *bolero* singer in Havana." in Gazarian Gautrier, M.L.: 1989, p. 35

[470] The year when the UMAPs were finally closed down.

[471] Guillermo Cabrera Infante in an interview with Orlando Jiménez and Néstor Almendros for the documentary *Conducta Impropia* (1983).

[472] Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Ella Cantaba Boleros* (Alfaguara, Madrid, 1996) pp. 152-154

[473] This is a reference to the poem by the classic Roman poet Virgil 'God Made the Country but Man Made the Town' Vergil (70 B.C.–19 B.C.):

hanc Remus et frater, sic fortis Etruria creuit
scilicet et rerum facta est pulcherrima Roma,

It translates as: *Rome, the finest thing on earth, was created*

[474] At the end of the 1950s Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa attended in Rome to seminars on neo-realism imparted at the *Centro Sperimentale*. Ideologically closed to the Cuban Communist Party, both directors saw in the Italian movement the appropriate formula to represent the Cuban social reality at the time. They later became the post-1959 Revolution main filmmakers, internationally acclaimed as the fathers of the new Cuban cinema.

[475] Though *La muerte de un burócrata* was in style a homage to classic Hollywood comedy.

[476] For example, the distribution company Marakka 2000, based in Miami, sells the dvd with the slogan: 'Esta es una de las películas que han sido censuradas en Cuba.' [*This is one of the films that have been censored in Cuba.*]

[477] Interviews with Julio García Espinosa extracted from the book Fowler-Calzada, Víctor. *Conversaciones con un cineasta incómodo: Julio Garcia Espinosa* (La Habana: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Cultura Cubana Juan Marinello, Ediciones ICAIC, 2004)

[478] 'In our work of revolutionary education we frequently return to this instructive theme. In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man of the future. ...
This was the first heroic period, and in which combatants competed for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty. In our work of revolutionary education we frequently return to this instructive theme. In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man and woman of the future.
[...]
To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man and woman. ...
[...]

I think the place to start is to recognizes the individual's quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The vestiges of the past are brought into the present in one's consciousness, and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them. The process is two-sided. On the one side, society acts through direct and indirect education; on the other, the individual submits to a conscious process of self-education. ...
[...]
When the revolution took power there was an exodus of those who had been completely housebroken. The rest — whether they were revolutionaries or not — saw a new road. Artistic inquiry experienced a new impulse. The paths, however, had already been more or less laid out, and the escapist concept hid itself behind the word 'freedom.' This attitude was often found even among the revolutionaries themselves, a reflection in their consciousness of bourgeois idealism.
[...]
Our aspiration is for the party to become a mass party, but only when the masses have reached the level of the vanguard, that is, when they are educated for communism. Our work constantly strives toward this education. The party is the living example; its cadres must teach hard work and sacrifice.' Guevara, Che. 'Socialism and Man in Cuba' (1965) from *The Che Reader* (London: Ocean Press, 2005) pp. 197-214

[479] Apart from some of the musicians at the background of orchestras, who in many occasions were Afro-Cubans.

[480] First class cabarets were for example, the Monmartre, Sans-Souci, the Casino Nacional and the Parisienne at the National Hotel. Moore, Robert. *Nationalizing Blackness. Afrocubanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), pp. 31-40.

[481] Ibid.

[482] See Leal, Rine. *Breve historia del teatro cubano* (La Habana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1980) pp. 30-35

[483] For example in the film *A la Habana me voy* (1951), when the lead female character, acted by Euro-Cuban Blanquita Amaro, dances in a sensual manner, men comment on her ancestors being from 'the jungle'.

[484] Gott, R.: 2004, pp. 125-129

[485] I found this review in this film's file at the ICAIC Cinemateca. However, it was impossible for me to establish in which particular newspaper or journal it was published. I use it as to exemplify the level of cultural misunderstandings and divisions between Euro-Cubans and Afro-Cubans during those years.

[486] As I explained in Chapter I, this film visually recreates the physical separation between Afro-Cubans and Euro-Cubans by using visual tropes such as doors and windows.

[487] Moore, R.: 1997, pp. 53-60

[488] The homophobic undertones in this sequence, with the inclusion of a man who acts in an 'effeminate' manner during Campillo's performance, with the intention of producing laughter, has at the same time racist connotations. As Kutzinski explains when describing one of V. Patricio Landaluze's depictions of Afro-Cuban men, the representation of Afro-Cuban men and their performances as 'effeminate' constituted a 'form of representational emasculation that renders this character's actions safely comical'. See Kutzinski, V.: 1993, p. 69

[489] See Schwarz, R.: 1997, p. 87 and Moore, R. D.: 2006, Chapter 1: 'The Paradox of the 1950s' pp. 26-55

[490] Archer-Straw, P.: 2001, p. 94

[491] Ibid.

[492] Particularly what R. Moore calls the 'commercialised' rumba, a musical genre that drew from the traditional form of rumba but that, after being adapted to the North American market, bore very little semblance to it. Moore, R.: 2006, pp. 26-55

[493] In fact, the only two fields where Afro-Cubans would more easily acquire any visibility and 'authority' were boxing and music, similarly to what was happening in the United States at the time.

[494] Moore, C.: 1988, pp. 15-28, Moore, R.: 2006, pp. 170-196, Ayorinde, Christine. *Afro-Cuban Religiosity, Revolution, and National Identity* (Miami, Tampa, Orlando: University Press of Florida, 2004) pp. 83-136

[495] From *Son o no son* file at the ICAIC Cinemateca (La Habana)

[496] '... most of the figures planning cultural policy in revolutionary Cuba during its first decades came from the ranks of Cuban Communist Party organizations such as the PSP, founded in the 1920s. International works on socialist aesthetics have influenced platform documents of the new Cuban Communist Party (established in 1965) strongly and continue to be a basis for arts policy.' Moore, Robin D. *Music & Revolution. Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006) p. 1

'The Cuban Revolution since 1959 has gone further. In place of a minority cultural avant-garde, the government itself has elevated things Afro-Cuban to the status of national folklore on the model of Third World socialist ideas of popular culture's seminal role in national formation.' Brown, David H. *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003) p.7

[497] Ibid. pp. 24-29

[498] 'Al cine imperfecto no le interesa más la calidad ni la técnica. El cine imperfecto lo mismo se puede hacer con una Mitchell que con una cámara de 8 mm. Lo mismo se puede hacer en estudio que con una guerrilla en medio de la selva. Al cine imperfecto no le interesa más un gusto determinado y mucho menos el «buen gusto». De la obra de un artista no le interesa encontrar más la calidad.' Ibid. p. 33

[*An imperfect cinema is not interested in quality or technique. An imperfect cinema can be made with a Mitchell or a 8mm camera. It can be made in a studio or with the guerrillas in the jungle. An imperfect cinema is not interested in one particular taste, less of all in 'good taste'. It does not look for 'quality' any more when judging the work of an artist.*]

[499] '... the Afro-Cuban performance repertoire developed and performed by the Conjunto Folklórico: Rumba, Guajiro, Lucumí, Congo, Abakuá, and so on.' Brown, David H. *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003) p. 201

[500] For example, the Tropicana cabaret troupe routine and the *son* danced by the Afro-Cuban couple, incorporating forms from the Abakuá tradition of rumba Columbia

[501] Extract from Victor Fowler's interviews with Julio García Espinosa published in Fowler-Calzada, V.: 2004

[502] See Kapcia, A.: 2005, pp. 145-146

[503] García Espinosa, Julio. *La Doble Moral del Cine* (Santafé de Bogotá: Editorial Voluntad S.A., 1995)

[504] This was a film still very much influenced by Italian neorealist cinema, unlike *Son o no son*, which was more of an example of what García Espinosa defined as an 'imperfect cinema'.

[505] See, for example, De la Fuente, A. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-century Cuba* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001) pp. 317-334

[506] Chanan, Michael. *The Cuban Image* (London: Bfi Books, 1985)

[507] Guillermo Cabrera Infante was born in Gibara, a small fishing town on the North-East of Cuba. See Cabrera Infante, G.: 1967, p. 497

[508] In 1998, Pedro Juan Gutiérrez wrote *Dirty Havana Trilogy*. In this book, he graphically described the violence and hate the crisis had brought to the city. This is the reason why this book is so difficult to read and, at the moment, impossible to 'watch' in cinema.

[509] There is another well known part of his work, highly promoted by the Cuban authorities of students' protests in Havana, as he was supposedly a sympathiser of the 26th of July movement and of its student wing in the city.

[510] As an anecdote illustrating this point, during my interview with Fina Arias, Constantino Arias' wife, I asked her whether Constantino was a frequent visitor to the Rumba Palace. She replied: 'Él iba solo a tomar fotos. Dios no! Ese era un sitio de negras', [*He would go there just to take photos. Gosh no! That was the place of black women.*]

[511] See Appendix: Interview with Julio García Espinosa, May 2006 (*Escuela Internacional de Cine de San Antonio de los Baños*)

[512] Ibid.

[513] 'El Chori', Silvano Shueg, was a well-known Afro-Cuban percussionist.

[514] Cabrera Infante also mentions 'El Chori' in *Three Trapped Tigers:*
'I mean, what happened was that after closing up the shop in your place Bustro and I picked up Ingrid and Edith as we planned to go to the Chori and on our way to La Playa Brustrófedon was in true form, you should have heard him, but we were already on the heavy side of the river when he began to feel ill and we had to go back and Edith finally told the driver to stop on the corner and she went to bed all by herself, Silvestre said.' Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Three Trapped Tigers* (London: Pan Books, 1980) p. 167

[515] See Appendix: Interview with Julio García Espinosa.

[516] Archer-Straw, P.: 2001, p. 15

[517] For example in the film *Gallego* (1988) by Manuel Octavio Gómez. This is also a mythology associated with the origins of Brazil's national identity and practically any other Spanish and Portuguese ex-colony where the practice of slavery was extended. Carlos Moore describes this mythology as an essential part of the typical racist manifestations in 'latin societies': See Carlos Moore, *Castro, The Blacks and Africa*, 'Appendix I: The Latin Model of Race Relations' (Center for Afro-American studies, University of California, Los Angeles, 1988) pp. 355-56

[518] This subject is partially treated in *El otro Francisco* (1975) by Afro-Cuban director Sergio Giral.

[519] Moore, C.: 1988, pp. 48-50 and Moore, Robin D. *Music & Revolution. Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006) pp. 61-63

[520] On the issue of socialism and culture in Cuba see Moore, Robin D. *Music & Revolution. Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2006) pp. 1-25

[521] '… 'the dancers and musicians were not *aficionados,* that is, they had not taken dance classes and such. Rather, they were simply townspeople of these same religious groups' (Hagerdon 2001:140). 'Townspeople' operates as a revolutionary legible euphemism for a distinctive class or subcultural formation that both legitimated the state as a popularly supported institution and that was (to be) uplifted within the new socialist society. The Conjunto, at least on its official face, would teach not religion to these townspeople, Cuban society and the world, but music and art, 'cultural values,' which were 'isolatable from the hold that ritual has on them' [Argeliers de León in the text accompanying the *Concierto de música Abakuá*] …
[…]
The 'intellectuals' - the 'Director', 'Choreographer', and 'Designer' - were academically trained white professionals. The performers were virtually all dark-skinned from the poorer *barrios* (see Consejo Nacional

de Cultura 1963; Hagedorn 2001:166).' Quotations and comments from Brown, David H. *The Light Inside: Abakuá Society Arts and Cuban Cultural History* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Books, 2003) p. 202

[522] 'Rumba first developed in the black urban slums of Havana and Matanzas in the mid-nineteenth century (Urfe 1982, 153). Performed solely by percussion instruments and voice, it is distinctly more 'African-sounding' than most stage or ballroom compositions of the same name.' Moore, Robin D. *Nationalizing Blackness. Afrocubanism and Artistic Revolution in Havana, 1920-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997) p. 168

[523] Daniel, Yvonne. *Rumba. Dance and Social Change in Contemporary Cuba.* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995) pp. 140-141

[524] 'Apparently casino lacks something seminal to national objectives, as conga does also.
... Rather than a focus on the individualistic passing, turning, and designing of patterns in casino or a focus on the improvisational and unstructured activity of conga, rumba has emerged as a dance structure that coincides with socialist perspectives, a cultural symbol of social relations.' Ibid. p. 141

Chapter VII: The American City: Havana 1933

[525] Even though he always maintained he was in Havana during the year 1932, there is now a consensus among specialists arguing that he really stayed in Havana during July 1933. This detail is quite crucial for most authors, as it was in August 1933 when a general strike and social unrest in the city and the rest of the island brought down the dictatorship of Manuel Machado and initiated a period of just four months of 'revolutionary' government. These events are marked in the Cuban historiography as crucial, representing a turning point in the island's history. In every historical text now published within the island both revolutions, the one in 1933 and the later one in 1959, are equated. After returning to New York, Evans wrote in his diary entries on this trip to Cuba that he had arrived in the island 'at the midst of a revolution'. That the period when Evans travelled to Havana was of extreme social tensions is unquestionable. After all those were the years of the Great Depression. See Aguilar, Luís E., *Cuba 1933: Prologue to Revolution.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972) and Gott. Richard. 'A Republic for revolutionaries: Antonio Guiteras and the Revolution of 1933' in *Cuba. A New History.* pp. 135-141

[526] The concept of 'index' was introduced by semiotician Charles Sanders Pierce, who also defined photography as an indexical sign: ' There are three kinds of interest we may take in a thing. First, we may have a primary interest in it for itself. Second, we may have a secondary interest in it, on account of its reactions with other things. Third, we may have a mediatory interest in it, in so far as it conveys to a mind an idea about a thing. In so far as it does this, it is a *sign,* or representation.
There are three kinds of signs. Firstly, there are *likenesses,* or icons; which serve to convey ideas of the things they represent simply by imitating them. Secondly, there are *indications,* or indices; which show something about things, on account of their being physically connected with them. Such is a guidepost, which points down the road to be taken, or a relative pronoun, which is placed just after the name of the thing intended to be denoted, or a vocative exclamation, as "Hi! there," which acts upon the nerves of the person addressed and forces his attention. Thirdly, there are *symbols,* or general signs, which have become associated with their meanings by usage. Such are most words, and phrases, and speeches, and books, and libraries.
[...]
... Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature. In that aspect, then, they belong to the second class of signs, those by physical connection.' Pierce, Charles S. 'What is a Sign?' (1894).
http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/us/peirce1.htm (23 September 2007)

[527] See for example: Hurley, F. Jack. *Portrait of a Decade. Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties* (New York: A Da Capo Press, 1972) and Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation* (London: Macmillan, 1988) and Stagen, Maren. *Symbols of Ideal Life. Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890-1950* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

[528] Beals, Carleston. *Brimstone and Chilli. A Book of Personal Experiences in the Southwest and in Mexico* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1927)

[529] Beals, Carleston *The Crime of Cuba* (Philadelphia & London: J.P. Lippincott, 1933)

[530] See Tafuri, Manfredo *Architecture and Utopia. Design and Capitalist Development* (The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1976) and 'The Disenchanted Mountain: The Skyscraper and the City' in *The American City from the Civil War to the New Deal* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1979) pp. 389-528. Also, Rowland, Kurt. *A History of the Modern Movement: Art, Architecture and Design* (New York, London: Van Nostrand Reinhold, Looking and Seeing, 1977)

[531] 'It is not exactly clear how or when he first met the photographer Berenice Abbott, who in late 1929 had returned from Paris and was for a time living in a studio at the Hotel de Astistes. Abbott had brought with her the collection of Atget glass plates and prints that she would tend and preserve for years to come. (In 1930, the New York art dealer Julien Levy acquired an interest in the collection). In February 1930. Evans was writing about her to Skolle.. [...] Presumably, it was around the same time that he became acquainted with the work of Atget. [...] It is significant, however, that both Abbott and Evans, as much as any contemporary photographers, would make careers of documenting New York's architecture, street scenes, and shop fronts, introducing Atget's vital urban documentary style into American photography.' Mellow, James R. *Walker Evans* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) p. 111

[532] See Walker, Ian. *City Gorged with Dreams. Surrealism and Documentary Photography in interwar Paris* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002) Chapter 5: ''A Surrealist Atget' pp. 88-113

[533] As collected by his friend, the photographer Berenice Abbott, – who, at the same time, had worked as an assistant to surrealist photographer Man Ray.

[534] Benjamin, Walter. 'Little History of Photography' in *Selected Writings. Volume 2, part 2, 1931-1934.* Edited by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999) pp. 507-530

[535] Aragon. *Le Paysan de Paris* (1924-25). English translation: *Paris Peasant* (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1980)

[536] Trachtenberg, Alan. *Reading American Photographs. Images as History. Matthew Brady to Walker Evans* (Toronto: Hill and Wang, 1989) pp. 236-237

[537] In 1929, Evans took an image from the top of a skyscraper while still in construction. This image, titled *New York in the Making*, was published that same year in *Alhambra*, a cultural journal published in New York and dedicated to Spanish and Latin American culture.

[538] 'PAUL CUMMINGS: What about Ben Shahn? You got involved with him, too, at some time? WALKER EVANS: Yes. I did. This is all interesting. This is what I say: People do get drawn together when they're sort of meant to. Shahn and I met at somebody's house on Columbia Heights in Brooklyn. I know that. There was a doctor there who picked me up on the street because he was a photographer. You see, if you're in that neighborhood – it's a little neighborhood – you can talk to anybody. And two photographers would talk to each other on photographing in the New York style – it's the most obvious photograph in the world.' Interview with Walker Evans Conducted by Paul Cummings in Connecticut October 13, 1971 In New York City. Published at http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/001443.php (22 September 2007)

[539] Trachtenberg, A.: 1989, p. 244

[540] Mellow, James R. *Walker Evans* (New York: Basic Books, 1999) p. 154

[541] *Walker Evans at Work* with an essay by Jerry L. Thompson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982) p. 82

[542] Ibid.

[543] Beals, C.: 1933, p. 36

[544] Trachtenberg, Alan. 'Camera Work/Social Work' in *Reading American Photographs. Images as History. Mathew Brady to Walker Evans* (Toronto: Hill and Wang, 1989) pp. 168-190. Ware, Mike. 'Artistic Aspirations: The Lure of Fine Art' in Michel Frizot (ed), *A New History of Photography* (London: Konemann, 1998) and Wells, Liz. 'Photography as Art' in *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, Liz Wells (ed), (London: Routledge, 1997) pp.201-212.

[545] From Cummings, Paul. 'Walker Evans' in his *Artists in Their Own Words* (St. Martin's Press, New York) pp. 88-91

[546] '('How long had you been shooting seriously when this job came – were you quite sure of your direction or did that come later?')
        I was pretty sure then, yes, I was sure that I was working in the documentary style. Yes, and I was doing social history, broadly speaking.'
Extract from tape in an interview for Boston, 8/4/71. Quoted in *Walker Evans at Work* with an essay by Jerry L. Thompson (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982) p. 82

[547] Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation* (London: Macmillan, 1988) pp. 120-152

[548] Hurley, F. Jack. *Portrait of a Decade. Roy Stryker and the Development of Documentary Photography in the Thirties* (New York: A Da Capo Press, 1972)

[549] In the 1989 book reproducing the Havana series, the photographs of the slums were reproduced at a very small scale with the other images that had illustrated Beals' essay. *Walker Evans: Havana 1933*. With an essay by Gilles Mora (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1989)

[550] For example José Manuel Noceda, subdirector of the Centre of Modern Art Wilfredo Lam in Havana, mentions Evans images in his essay 'Notas sobre ciudad, nomadismo e interculturalidad' as an early record of the over-representation of images such as posters, advertisements campaigns, and other ephemera multiplying in the American city's landscape during those years. Noceda, J. M. Essay for the Novena Habana Bienal general programme, April 2006.

[551] From Evans' personal diary on his trip to Cuba, kept at the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum of New York.

[552] 'As early as the mid-nineteenth century, Havana supported a famed opera house, introducing the works of Verdi to the Western Hemisphere. The city, at the time, was the first stop of the stars of the French and Italian opera house, who extended their tours to include Boston, New York, and New Orleans. In the thirties it could boast a lively cultural life and numerous publications, including weekly reviews and vanguard literary magazines.[...] With its brothels and rampant gambling houses, Havana also had a reputation for bohemianism and dissipation.' Mellow, J.R.: 1999, pp. 173-192

[553] Cultural hybridity, as I defined it in Chapter II, refers to cultural identities which are unsettled and in constant negotiation, so that an essentialist and 'excluding' definition of them becomes impossible. It corresponds with how Stuart Hall defined hybridity in his text Hall, Stuart. 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990) pp. 222-237. The artists' collective La Pocha Nostra, which includes the Mexican artist Guillermo Gómez Peña, uses the cultural specificities of Mexican frontier towns such as Tijuana or Juárez to develop this concept of the cultural hybrid as opposed to the traditional idea of the Nation/State: 'La Pocha Nostra is a virtual 'maquiladora' (assembly plant) that produces brand-new metaphors, symbols, images and words to explain the new complexities of our times. The Spanglish neologism 'Pocha Nostra' translates as either 'our impurities' or 'the cartel of cultural bastards'. We love this poetic ambiguity. It reveals an attitude towards art and society: 'Cross-racial, poly-gendered, experi-mental, y que? ...
        ... La Pocha Nostra is a unique aesthetic. Our 'robo-baroque' and 'ethno-techno-cannibal aesthetic' samples and devours everything we encounter: Border and Chicano pop culture; TV; film; rock and roll; hip-hop;

comics; journalism; anthropology; pornography; religious imagery and of course, the history of the visual and performing arts. ...

In our world, hybridity is the only Nation/State.' La Pocha Manifesto. http://www.pochanostra.com/

Also see Vila, Pablo. *Crossing Borders, Reinforcing Borders: Social Categories, Metaphors, and Narrative Indentities on the U.S.-Mexico Frontier* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000)

[554] Mora, Gilles. 'Havana, 1933. A Seminal Work'. Introductory essay to *Walker Evans. Havana 1933* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1989)

[555] Unfinished letter to Ernestine Evans, February 1934 from *Walker Evans at Work* with an essay by Jerry L. Thompson (Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1982)

[556] Not the first, but the most important solo exhibition at the time given to a documentary photographer, which gives us a clue on how quickly documentary photography reached high art status, losing in the process its ability to work as a historically bounded document, as it has been argued by John Tagg in *The Burden of Representation* (1988)

[557] Trachtenberg, A.: 1989, pp. 233-290

[558] Kirstein, Lincoln. Introductory essay to Evans' exhibition catalogue *American Photographs* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1938)

[559] 'To define the issues which lie between the two practices requires that we recognize 'art' and 'document' as arbitrary terms that describe a way of looking at photographs, rather than qualities intrinsic to them. Put one of Hine's 'human documents' (his term) of children working in mills on a museum wall, and it becomes 'art'. The definition is extrinsic and institutional. Cannot Stieglitz's picture of a street sweeper be considered a 'document'? It all depends on where and how we view the image.' Trachtenberg, A.: 1989, p. 176.

[560] For example, Sontag, Susan. *On Photography* (London: Penguin books, 1979), Tagg, John. *The Burden of Representation* (London: Macmillan, 1988) and Stagen, Maren. *Symbols of Ideal Life. Social Documentary Photography in America, 1890-1950* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

[561] ' Photographies ... are discursive practices ...

[...]

For this reason, one cannot 'use' photography as an unproblematic 'source'. Photography does not transmit a pre-existent reality that is already meaningful in itself. As with any other discursive system, the question we must ask is not, 'What does this discourse reveal of something else?, but, 'what does it do; what are its conditions of existence; ...

Why were photographs of working-class subjects, working-class trades, working-class housing, and working-class recreations made in the nineteenth century? By whom? Under what conditions? For what purposes? Who pictures? Who is pictured? And how were the pictures used? What did they do? To whom were they meaningful? And what were the consequences of accepting them as meaningful, truthful or real? ...' Tagg, J.: 1988, p. 119

[562] Tagg, J.: 1988, Chapter 6: 'The Currency of the Photograph: New Deal Reformism and Documentary Rhetoric' pp. pp. 153-183

[563] I say American in this case to refer to just the type of national myths from the United States, and not the rest of the continent, though there is a great amount of common ground between the United States and some of the countries in the Latin American sphere.

[564] It is not by chance that the National Archives in Washington D.C. has a collection of photographs classified under the rubric 'The American City'.

However, Liam Kennedy has written more recently on the contemporary loss of such identification: 'What Wideman's writing ambivalently attests to is the loss of the spatial promise of the city as a site of American identity formation, a promise shared by many cultural producers throughout the twentieth century who articulated their understanding of the city as a totality. For much of the century, stories of and about the

American city have been stories about the making of Americans.' Liam Kennedy, from 'Conclusions: Citizens and Strangers', *Race and Urban Space in Contemporary American Culture* (Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2000) pp. 169-74

[565] See endnote 37 from 'Introduction'

[566] Mellow, J.: 1999, pp. 73-76

[567] Archer-Straw, Petrine. 'Fetishism and Fashion' in *Negrophilia: Black Culture and Avant-Garde Paris* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000) pp. 51-78

[568] On the Harlem Renaissance see Baker, Houston A. *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1987) and Lewis, David L. *When Harlem Was in Vogue* (New York: Knopf, 1981)

[569] Afro-American photographer James Van Der Zee documented profusely the existence of this group of wealthier Afro-Americans living in New York at the time. See Van Der Zee, James. *The Legacy of James Van Der Zee: A Portrait of Black Americans* (New York: Alternative Centre for International Arts, 1977) and *James Van Der Zee*. With an essay by Kobena Mercer (London: Phaidon, 2003)

[570] See Moore, R. D.: 1997, pp. 13-40

[571] 'The period from 1925 to 1928 constitutes a turning point in the history of *son*, one in which it was transformed from a marginal genre of dubious origins into the epitome of national expression. [...]
[...]
[...] In the context of the barrage of North American merchandise, films, literature, sports events, and music that entered Cuba during these years, *son* represented an important symbol of national identity and a 'weapon against [American] jazz'. Moore, R. D.: 1997, p. 105

[572] Moore, R. D.: 1997, Chapter 5: 'Nationalizing Blackness. The Vogue of Afrocubanism' pp. 114-146

[573] Ibid.

[574] There is here again the problematic of cultural purity and syncretism. How much of Afro-Cuban there was in these expressions is a matter of interpretation. However, it is important to explain that because of the long-term apartheid nature of the Cuban society, not only in Havana, Afro-Cubans had culturally developed independently from Euro-Cubans.

[575] Moore, R. D.: 1997, p. 2

[576] Ibid. p. 3

[577] Guillermo Cabrera Infante, 'Walker Evans: Eye Witness' in *Mea Cuba*. Translated by Kenneth Hall with the author (Faber and Faber, London, 1994) pp. 97-99 (text written on November 1989)

[578] Here we see the relationship between the figure of the 'black dandy' in North American minstrel theatre and that of the 'el catedrático' in Cuba. Kutzinski, Vera. *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993) p. 43

[579] Cabrera Infante, Guillermo. *Three Trapped Tigers* (London: Pan Books, 1980) p. 73

[580] Argeliers, León. *Música folklórica cubana* (La Habana: Ediciones del Departamento de Música de la Biblioteca Nacional 'José Martí', 1964) pp. 143-145

[581] From Hart Crane's poem The Bridge published in 1929.

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[582] On the imaginary constructions of the city through cinema see, apart from Donald, James *Imagining the Modern City* (The Athlone Press, London, 1999), also Clarke, David B. 'Introduction. Previewing the Cinematic City' in *The Cinematic City*. Edited by David B. Clarke (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) pp, 1-18

[583] Apart from *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (1928) we can include in this group of city-films from the 1920s: Dziga Vertov, *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929), *Manhattan* (1924) by Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, *Rien que les heures* (1926) by Alberto Cavalcanti, and *Moscow* (1927) by Ilya Kopalin and Mikhail Kaufman. Also, the recreation of the future city by Fritz Lang in *Metropolis* (1927)

[584] Gilles Mora, 'Havana, 1933. A Seminal Work' in *Walker Evans: Havana 1933* (Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1989) p. 14

[585] Mellow, J. R.: 1999, pp. 173-175

[586] Petrine Archer-Straw explains how the hostility to such type of relations was still very acute in both the United States and Cuba. On the relationship between Nancy Cunard and Henry Crowder, an Afro-American musician, she writes: 'During their research for *Negro*, he refused to accompany her on her trip through America because of the race riots that a black man travelling with a white woman might trigger. Crowder's instincts were correct: when Cunard went ahead with another escort, A. A. Colebrooke, the fact of their travelling together was met with hostility in both the United States and Cuba. Cunard was forced to leave Havana because of public harassment.' Archer-Straw, P.: 2001, p. 165

[587] 'In my amassing of incidents of inter-racialism in early modern English drama, I have posited three rules. Rule number one: inter-racial sex is a prospect to be avoided by all means, ... Rule number two: inter-racial sex is rarely raised as a possibility ... Rule number three: inter-racial sex never involves a consenting and a sympathetic white woman.'
'And if it isn't rape, if she 'wanted it', it is not miscegenation, but rather proof that a woman is not truly white, but whitewashed.' Daileader, Celia R. *Racism, Misogyny, and the Othello Myth. Inter-racial Couples From Shakespeare to Spike Lee* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) pp. 16 and 22

[588] 'Introduction' to *White? Women. Critical Perspectives on Race and Gender*. Edited by Heloise Brown, Madi Gilkes, Ann Kaloski-Naylor (Raw Nerves Books Limited, York, 1999) p. 8

[589] Vron Ware has written on the subject of the illicit character of the sexual encounters between white women and black men within the context of the southern states after the abolition of slavery and the subsequent wave of lynchings of black men. Particularly interesting is her account of Ida B. Wells' position on this subject. Ida B. Wells was an Afro-American anti-lynching campaigner at the end of the twenty century. According to Vron Ware, her position on this subject was at odds with that held by most of the women in the suffragist movement, who would share the same racial prejudices with the majority of white men: 'In other words, Ida B. Wells was not interested in criticizing the behaviour of the white women who were implicated in lynchings; her argument was based on a perception of white womanhood as an ideological component of American racism. The 'sacred convention that white women can never feel passion of any sort, high or low, for a black man' was, in her eyes, incompatible with the evidence she had collected during her research.' Vron Ware, *Beyond the Pale. White Women, Racism and History* (Verso, London, New York, 1992) p. 196

[590] 'Amid the deafening traffic of the town,
Tall, slender, in deep mourning, with majesty,
A woman passed, raising, with dignity
In her poised hand, the flounces of her gown;
Graceful, noble, with a statue's form.
And I drank, trembling as a madman thrills,

From her eyes, ashen sky where brooded storm,
The softness that fascinates, the pleasure that kills.

A flash . . . then night!--O lovely fugitive,
I am suddenly reborn from your swift glance;
Shall I never see you till eternity?'

[591] Clarke, David B. 'Introduction. Previewing the Cinematic City' in *The Cinematic City*. Edited by David B. Clarke (London and New York: Routledge, 1997) p. 5

[592] Frankenber, Ruth. 'Introduction: Points of Origin and Points of Departure' from *White Women, Race Matters. The Social Construction of Whiteness* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993) p. 1

[593] *Carpentier habla sobre La Habana* ('Carpentier Talks about Havana'). Video-recording of interviews with Carpentier in 1973 (Archivos de la Cinemateca Española, Madrid)

[594] Ibid.

[595] Álvarez-Tabío, Enma. *La invención de La Habana* (Ed. Casipoea, Barcelona, 2000) p. 247

[596] Lezama Lima, José. *Paradiso* (Madrid: Cátedra, Letras Hispánicas, 2001)

[597] This fact was told to me by the staff at the Walker Evans Archive at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

Conclusions

[598] As some authors have argued. For example, Ana Maria Dopicos in 'Picturing Havana. History, Vision, and the Scramble for Cuba' in *Neplanta*, Volume 3, Issue 3 (September 2002)

[599] '... we become aware of a systematic historiographical campaign, deployed by the state mainly through the state's school system, to 'remind' every young Frenchwoman and Frenchman of a series of antique slaughters which are now inscribed as 'family history'. Having to 'have already forgotten' tragedies of which one needs unceasingly to be 'reminded' turns out to be a characteristic device in the later construction of national genealogies.' Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006) p. 201

[600] As in the case of Vera Kutzinski, De la Fuente and Cécile Leclercq

[601] In his criticism of the type of cabaret now showing in Havana's main venues, García Espinosa evidences this fact. He complaints that these venues just show straightforward revivals from mainstream cabaret forms from the 1950s, without any attempt at innovation [See Appendix: Interview with Julio García Espinosa].

[602] Paradoxical because Evans recorded the city's differences as much as its similarities with the type of urban growth then characteristic in the United States.

[603] The term 'America', used to refer simply to the United States' national project, is still very common, particularly to native English-speakers. However, this is not the case for Spanish and Portuguese-speaking worlds where 'America' refers to the whole continent.

[604] Benedict Anderson argues that the fact that nations are understood as 'imagined communities' does not necessarily make them inexistent: 'The drawback to this formulation, however, is that Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation'. ... In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. ...'. Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006) pp. 6-7. This same argument could be used to discuss the existence of cities as imagined cultural entities.

[605] *Documenta 11 Catalogue: Platform 5* (Kassel: Documenta, 2002)

[606] In *Buena Vista Social Club*, Wim Wenders contrasts both cities, successfully representing them as antagonistic worlds.

Appendix:

Interview with Julio García Espinosa, 6th of May 2006, at the Escuela Internacional de Cine San Antonio de los Baños

OR: Me gustaría hablar sobre dos de sus películas, *Cuba baila* y *Son o no son*, donde usted trata el tema de la vida nocturna en La Habana. Fue usted participante de esa vida antes y después del 59?

JGE: Bueno mas o menos. Despues de que Alea y yo terminamos de estudiar cine en Italia. Estudiamos en el Centro de Experimentación de Roma, Centro experimental del cine de Roma. Regresamos a la habana y nos incorporamos a los grupos intelectuales de La Habana de esos años. Nosotros organizamos la sociedad de cine. A partir de esos contactos propagamos las teorías del neo-realismo italiano y finalmente motivados por esa corriente cinematográfica de entonces, hicimos un documental, *El Mégano*, en el sur de la Habana, Ssurgidero de Batamanó. Ese documental fue incautado por la policía después de su primera muestra. Yo fui preso y fue todo un pequeño proceso, porque ellos no lograron incautar el material. Nosotros contactamos algunas altas figures para que el documental se guardara en la Sociedad de Críticos de cine de nuestro país. Pero no fui posible, lo tuvimos que dejar en una de las instituciones mas siniestras de la dictadura de Batista y después de la Revolución lo recuperamos. Estaba en los sótanos de los servicios de Inteligencia Militar, que era la institución que lo había incautado. Entonces, esa era nuestra lucha. Después de estar presos nos empezamos a dedicar a la vida clandestina para poder cambiar la vida del país y poder empezar a hacer cine. La vida nocturna antes de la Revolución, como es lógico yo no era un joven de gran poder adquisitivo.

OR: Que edad tenía usted entonces?

JGE: Tendría algo más de veinte años. Nosotros íbamos a lo que considerábamos que era lo mejor de la vida nocturna del país, porque fundamentalmente se estaba tratando de desarrollar el turismo y se estaban construyendo grandes hoteles y esos hoteles tenían un elemento muy importante que era el cabaret y las casas de juego. Eran centros muy poco auténticos desde el punto de vista musical y coreográfico. Era una imitación de lo que se estaba haciendo en Nueva York, por ejemplo. Sin embargo, en lo que llamamos la Playa de Marianao, a las afueras de la habana, había una serie de pequeños bares donde se ofrecía música. Era una cosa muy heterogénea, muy mezclada, había de todo. Uno de los lugares era muy importante para nosotros porque se hacía un tipo de música verdaderamente auténtica, que era lo que se conocía como 'El Chori'.

OR: No el 'Rumba Palace'?

JGE: No, 'El Chori' era el más importante. El Chori era un hombre negro, alto, corpulento que tocaba la percusión como nadie en esta país. Era una cosa extraordinaria. Cada vez que venía

alguien importante lo llevábamos a ese lugar. Por ejemplo, a Sabatini, el gran teórico del neorrealismo italiano, me acuerdo que tan pronto llegó a cuba lo llevamos al Chori. Que se fue convirtiendo en una figura legendaria. Al extremo de que nunca salía de este país. No le gustaban los aviones. Siempre se le podía localizar todo el año y con un grupo pequeño de músicos. Eran unos intérpretes de mucha calidad y muy auténticos sobre todo. Para nosotros la vida nocturna era fundamentalmente ir a ver al Chori.

OR: Y podría explicarme el tipo de ambiente había en 'El Chori'?

JGE: Muy popular, de bajos ingresos que hacía posible que nosotros fuéramos. Pero allí había de todo. Esa era una zona donde había prostitución, habían muchos marginales y sin embargo era allí donde se cultivaba una música muy auténtica.

OR: Habían muchos bailes, rumba?

JGE: Sí, pero también estaba el Rumba Palace. En una ocasión nosotros quisimos hacer un verdadero palacio de la rumba. Inclusive teníamos planes de trabajar con uno de los pintores más importantes que ha dado Cuba, que era Wilfredo Lam, hacer un gran fresco de Papá Montero, que era uno de los personajes de los poemas de Nicolás Guillén, muy caracterizado por la rumba, y convertir una escenografía como si fuera un solar, que eran las cuarterías donde vivían la gente más pobres de este país. Hacer una escenografía caracterizando ese tipo de vivienda, donde la gente de los solares verdaderos se asomaba a los balcones y veían como en los patios la gente bailaba y tocaba rumba. Pero no fue posible.

OR: Sabe si Wilfredo Lam llegó a diseñarlo?

JGE: No llegó, no pudimos desarrollar el proyecto. Te lo digo porque realmente esa zona era muy atractiva para nosotros por la autenticidad que había de la música.

OR: Quienes eran los que normalmente iban con usted a esa zona, del mundo intelectual y artístico de La Habana?

JGE: Gutiérrez de Alea, Alfredo Guevara, José Macina, la gente de la sociedad cultural de nuestro tiempo. Y siempre que venía, te repito, un invitado importante a este país allí lo llevábamos. Sin embargo, habían los grandes cabarets, estaba no sólo el Tropicana, estaba el Montmartre, el Sans-Souci, etc. Bueno en *Son o no son*, que es una película bastante experimental, yo doy bastante información sobre la cuestión de los cabarets en el país.

OR: Tengo aquí una cita suya publicada en *La doble moral del cine*. Usted escribió: 'Hay una base viva que continúa manifestándose y a la cual se hace imprescindible concederle el máximo de importancia. Están los bailes y están los centros nocturnos o cabarets. Focos, en nosotros, todavía potenciales de un acto vivo. Ni unos ni otros pueden

concebirse como zonas donde el pueblo acude a disipar el cansancio. Unos y otros deben se escenarios donde el pueblo se exprese y sea expresado'. Usted todavía tiene la misma opinión y cree que este es todavía el caso en la ciudad de La Habana?

JGE: Yo creo que no se ha logrado potenciar la importancia que tienen los centros nocturnos. Yo inclusive, con el triunfo de la Revolución estuve tratando de caracterizar los centros nocturnos, no repetir, como se suele hacer, la fórmula del Tropicana, que es una forma en base a un cuerpo de baile y figuras. Se repiten como si fueran tropicanitas en los demás centros nocturnos, y la idea nuestra siempre ha sido que cada uno tenga su propia caracterización. Pero no hay suficiente sensibilidad, en particular de los propios artistas, de tomar estos centros nocturnos, estos cabarets, seriamente. Algo se ha hecho, por ejemplo, hay dos coreógrafos, Alberto Alonso y Luís Trapas, que trataron y lograron una coreografía propia de este país. Es decir, nosotros tenemos ballet, con grandes coreógrafos y bailarines. Tenemos danza contemporánea, y tenemos folklóricos. Se presta toda la atención a estas tres opciones. Sin embargo, el cabaret no se le acaba de prestar la atención que merece. El cabaret, en definitiva, todavía vive un poco de los elementos que aportaron Alberto Alonso y Luís Trapas, coreográficamente hablando y creo que, así como en los Estados Unidos, por ejemplo, han aprovechado su infraestructura de centros nocturnos y desarrollar una coreografía propia de los espectáculos, donde se ha creado una coreografía que no tiene nada que envidiarle a las otras opciones danzarias, como el ballet o la danza moderna. Y sin embargo, aquí teniendo una tradición musical tan importante, no hemos logrado una opción verdaderamente diversa y al mismo tiempo consecuente con las características del país.

OR: Para muchos de nosotros en Europa, el cabaret y los lugares nocturnos también se ven mucho como lugares de contestación social, donde se cuestionan roles sociales, cuestiones de identidades sexuales, nacionales, de clase. Donde todos estos roles se ponen en cuestión constantemente, con la parodia, la ironía, la sátira. Usted cree que esto también se da en La Habana, antes y después del 59?

JGE: No, no en esa forma, porque, como puedo explicarlo. En Europa, en Alemania concretamente, se hizo un movimiento muy interesante a partir de los propios intelectuales. Allí estaba, por ejemplo, Bertolch Brech, e inclusive, al principio de la Unión Soviética, allí también se tomó en serio la cuestión de los cabarets y centros nocturnos. Pero aquí no se fue por ese camino. Se fue por el camino de la autenticidad en tanto que proyecto cultural y danzario, que ya eso fue un paso muy importante desde el punto de vista político y cultural. Y aun en esa dirección se ha logrado algo. El problema es que falta diversidad. Se repite la forma

del Tropicana, que para el Tropicana está bien. Es importante conservar eso incluso como museo, porque ese es un tipo de espectáculo de los años cuarenta. Pero, lo que es totalmente negativo es que se repita esa fórmula. Yo hice un espectáculo de cabaret en los 60s, donde no nos limitamos a los aspectos danzarios y musicales, sino que también... Porque como el cabaret, como aquí está siempre orientado al turismo, tiene que ser una fórmula en la cual el idioma no sea una limitación para esos que no hablan el idioma del país. Entonces es todo siempre my mímico, de pantomima. Sin embargo, en ese espectáculo que yo hice, había diálogo también, pero mínimo. Podías entenderlo incluso sin saber español y fue muy interesante porque el publico se divertía mucho. Desgraciadamente sólo pude hacer ese ensayo

OR: Se grabó? No tiene un record del espectáculo?

JGE: En esa época no teníamos el video. Desgraciadamente no lo tengo pero era muy interesante. Era otra opción distinta a los otros centros nocturnos en los 60s. A mi personalmente siempre me han interesado mucho la opción del cabaret porque es una opción en la cual el espectador se siente muy libre, porque si el show es malo no se le frustra la noche con su pareja, come, baila, es decir, él se realiza. Es una opción muy libre desde ese punto de vista. Cuando tu vas a ver una obra de teatro, si es mala se te frustró la noche.

OR: Le quería preguntar sobre su película *Cuba Baila,* la secuencia en particular en la que el marido va a un club nocturno y hay un espectáculo de rumba. Cual es la trascendencia de esta secuencia en particular dentro del contexto de la película, en la narración? Y también si pensó en las caracterizaciones: está la trabajadora sexual, los artistas, hay una pareja de turistas, una pareja de Afro-Cubanos, el mismo marido de clase media, un hombre blanco. Pensó los personajes en relación a lo que era el contexto de la narración?

JGE: Esa secuencia fue filmada en esos cabaretuchos de la Playa de Marianao

OR: Recuerda cual?

JGE: No recuerdo exactamente cual.

OR: Siguen existiendo?

JGE: No, eso ya desapareció. En el momento que estábamos filmando eso fue cuando explotó el barco la Cubre. Fue cuando le pusieron explosivos al barco. Fue una tragedia. Mientras filmábamos la rumba de repente escuchamos una explosión bárbara. Pero bueno, lo que intentábamos era tratar de ver como este personaje que está presionado por la mujer para buscar un lugar donde celebrar los quince de su hija, llega a uno de estos lugares que él normalmente no frecuenta. Pero va a todas partes, incluso hay un momento donde se va con un

hombre orquesta. Él está buscando todas las opciones posibles. Y en ese caso él se nota que no es de ese ambiente, ese ambiente de la prostituta, de la bailarina. Una atmósfera muy sensual tanto en el baile como en la gente de allí, y es él único que está fuera de ambiente. Por lo tanto, era una manera de decir que él lo estaba probando todo, pero ese no era su ambiente.

OR: De los grupos de artistas e intelectuales que iban con ustedes, estaba también Guillermo Cabrera Infante?

JGE: Sí es posible, es posible, porque Guillermo estuvo al principio con nosotros en la creación del ICAIC, en el Consejo de Dirección.

OR: Y el fotógrafo Constantino Arias?

JGE: No me acuerdo de él

OR: Me gustaría leerle una cita de G. Cabrera Infante. Es usted familiar con su obra?

JGE: Sí, claro

OR: Es de *Ella cantaba boleros,* publicada en el 96: 'Pero cuando regresó Titón de Italia, convertido en un cineasta diplomado, hablando de Roma y de ruinas [...], pude decirle, conocedor: «*Est rerum facta pulcherrima* Habana« y enseñarle a él, un nativo mi Habana viva.

[...] Esta muestra de La Habana invisible para Titón, exiliado en su casa con su piano y sus patentes ...'

Qué cree usted que él quiso decir con esta mención a Titón ?

JGE: Es un parágrafo prepotente, autosuficiente. Está diciendo algo de Titón que no se puede compartir. El debía estar muy molesto con Titón, porque Titón iba a los cabaretuchos de la playa de Marianao y estaba bastante relacionado con lo que era la Habana profunda. No se, creo que Guillermito está exagerando.

OR: En la obra de Cabrera Infante, él siempre se lamentó mucho de lo que había desaparecido en la ciudad de la habana. Su obra *Tres Tristes Tigres* es como una obra nostálgica. Su obra se desarrolla mucho en dos espacios, el Tropicana y el Club Las Vegas, donde había mucho bolero. Usted lo frecuentaba?

JGE: Yo he ido alguna que otra vez, pero para nosotros lo principal era Marianao. Pero a Las Vegas fui alguna vez, buscando en qué momento podía salir algo interesante.

OR: Antes del 59, estaba muy segregada la vida nocturna? Espacios donde sólo iban cubanos negros y espacios sólo de cubanos blancos? O habían espacios donde habían más intercambios culturales entre los dos grupos? Era muy radical la separación entre las vidas culturales de los dos grupos?

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JGE: Yo creo que en los grandes cabarets sí, es posible que hubiera segregación porque estaban en los grandes hoteles, donde había segregación. Pero en los pequeños centros nocturnos no recuerdo que hubiera separación, por ejemplo en Las Vegas, y también el Ali Bar donde iba Benny Moré. Yo creo que era fundamentalmente en los grandes cabarets.

OR: En estos lugares había entonces intercambios entre artistas de procedencia mas española y otros de procedencia mas africana?

JGE: Exacto,

OR: Y el público femenino, quienes eran?

JGE: El público femenino o iba acompañado o no iba. Si mal no recuerdo. Nosotros por ejemplo, creo que casi siempre íbamos los hombres a esos carabetuchos de Marianao, pero no recuerdo haber llevado a alguna compañera. Es decir, era como si no fuera apropiado llevar a una mujer a esos lugares. Pero no estoy seguro, fíjate, tengo mala memoria.

OR: Entonces sobre todo eran hombres blancos los que iban a estos lugares?

JGE: No en los carabetuchos blancos y negros, los de poca importancia. En los grandes sí, me imagino que sobre todo no sólo blancos, pero blancos con dinero. Los que iban al Tropicana, al Sans-Souci, o el Martre ...

OR: Le quería preguntar sobre la polémica del documental *PM*. Ahora que han pasado mas de cuarenta años, cual cree usted que fueron las razones reales de la polémica?

JGE: Yo creo que lo que estaba en el fondo de la polémica de todo eso es que había una contradicción muy grande entre los que estaban en *Lunes de Revolución* y los que estábamos en el ICAIC. Unos eran socialistas y los otros no. La situación no daba para tanto. Cuando el ICAIC decide no exhibir el documental no se plantea eliminarlo sino que se dejaran pasar unos días porque en esos momentos estábamos esperando un ataque de los Estados Unidos y se estaban creando las milicias para enfrentar ese ataque. Entonces se planteó postponer el estreno y como había esta contradicción, esa tirantez, la situación se desbordó. Si tu ves hoy el documental tu piensas, pero este documental no es para tanto. Es como si ves *El Mégano,* tú te preguntas, pero Batista se asustó con esto?

OR: Porque *PM* era solamente escenas de la vida nocturna de La Habana, en los bares?

JGE: Y *El Mégano* era sólo imágenes de los trabajadores del sur de La Habana. Es que está fuera de contexto, porque en ese momento era importante para Batista y la embajada norteamericana no incentivar la posibilidad de un cine nacional y *PM* en esos momentos, el ataque que estábamos esperando de los Estados Unidos aconsejaba aplazar la muestra del documental.

OR: Por qué exactamente? En qué sentido eran las imágenes de la vida nocturna de La Habana un peligro?

JGE: Porque en ese momento lo que necesitábamos era apoyar la creación de las milicias y esperar unos días, unas semanas para ver si se provocaba el ataque. Pero bueno llevamos cuarenta años con esta gente ...

OR: Tengo aquí una cita suya de una entrevista con Victor Fowler sobre la película *Son no son*, donde usted habla de la época cuando se cerraron los clubs nocturnos y cabarets por un período en La Habana. Usted tuvo en cuenta la polémica de *PM* cuando realizó esta película?

JGE: No recuerdo. Que tiene que ver?

OR: Se cerraron los club nocturnos. Sabe cuales fueron las razones de que se cerraran los clubs nocturnos?

JGE: Bueno, porque estábamos en plena etapa de desarrollar la economía. Era un problema de los grandes cabarets, no de los populares. De la gente con poder adquisitivo. Yo creo que no fue una medida infeliz, e inmediatamente hubo que eliminarla y recuperar los centros nocturnos y que la gente se acostara tarde si tenían que acostarse tarde. Son errores infantiles que se superan pero dejan su impacto. Fuera de contexto parecen increíbles. Las cosas hay siempre que verlas en el contexto.

OR: Sabe por cuantos años estuvieron cerrados?

JGE: No, no fueron años. Solo meses.

OR: Sobre *Son o no Son* le quería preguntar sobre una secuencia en particular en donde hay una pareja bailando un son, donde él realiza acrobacias. Sabe quienes eran? Eran populares?

JGE: Sí. Era una pareja formidable. El era un bailarín de son fantástico. Y ella igual, muy delgada pero con mucha gracia. Ellos se separaron. Y después desaparecieron. Eran muy buenos. La gente que mejor tipificaba el baile del son en este país.

El baile de pareja en Cuba es un baile muy poco democrático, porque el hombre es el centro y la mujer era como un satélite del hombre, comprende? En la rumba hay más igualdad. Aunque en el *guaguancó* el hombre trata de poseer a la mujer, de 'vacunarla', como se dice. Hay un documental que explica todo el proceso de la rumba y por qué hay prejuicio con la rumba. Es *La rumba* de Oscar Valdés. A veces despectivamente se dice que Cuba es un país de rumberos, cómo si fuera algo malo. Ha habido mucho prejuicio. La rumba no es una palabra

africana, sino española. Viene de la expresión 'mujeres de rumbo', es decir, las fiestas populares que son fiestas de gente de poca moral.

OR: Se refiere sobre todo a las mujeres que se van demasiado de fiesta.

JGE: Exacto, 'mujeres de rumbo', prostitutas.

English translation:

OR: I would like to talk to you about two of your films, *Cuba baila* and *Son o no son*, where you treated the subject of Havana's nightlife. Were you a participant of Havana nightlife prior to and after the 1959 Revolution?

JGE: More or less, after Alea and I finished our film studies in Italy. We studied at the Experimental Centre of Cinema in Rome. We came back to Havana and joined the group of intellectuals during those years. We organised the society of cinema. From those contacts we propagated the principles of Italian neo-realism in cinema and, finally, inspired by those principles, we realised the documentary *El Mégano*[ii], shot at the *Surgidero de Batanamó*, south Havana. After its first show, the film was confiscated by the police. I was put in prison and it was all a small process. We contacted some important people so the documentary could stay at the Society of Film Critics in Cuba, instead of staying at the Secret Services offices. However, this was not possible. We had to leave it in that very sinister institution of Batista's dictatorship and after the Revolution we managed to recover it. It was in the Secret Services office basement. So, that was our struggle. After our imprisonment we joined the clandestine political groups to contribute to change Cuban society and be able to make cinema. In the nightlife before the Revolution, as you might imagine, I was young and not very wealthy.

OR: How old were you then?

JGE: Early twenties. We would go to what we thought was the best of Cuba's nightlife, because fundamentally, the tourist industry was developing and they were building big hotels. Those hotels had a very important element, the cabaret and casino. They were inauthentic from a musical and choreographic point of view. They would show imitations of what was happening then in New York, for example. However, around what we call Marianao Beach, at the outskirts of Havana, there were several small bars with live music. They were very

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[1] *El Mégano* was a documentary realised by Julio García Espinosa documenting the working conditions of charcoal burners at the swamps south Havana. See Chanan, Michael. *Cuban Cinema* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004) pp. 105-109

heterogeneous, very mixed. There was a bit of everything. One of the most important places was 'El Chori', because it offered a very authentic type of music.

OR: Not the Rumba Palace?

JGE: No, 'El Chori' was the most important. El Chori was a black man; very tall, big-built who would play percussion like nobody else in this country. It was an extraordinary thing. Every time someone important came to the country we would take him to that place. For example, Sabatini, the great theorist of Italian neo-realism. I remember as soon as he arrived to Cuba we took him to 'El Chori', who was becoming a kind of legendary figure. He would never leave the country. He didn't like planes. You could always find him at the same place with a small group of musicians. They were very good interpreters and, particularly, very authentic. For us, nightlife was going to see 'El Chori'.

OR: What type of ambience was there at 'El Chori'?

JGE: Very popular, of low income, which made it possible for us to go there. But there you could find anything. It was an area of prostitution; there were many marginal people. However, it was there that a very authentic type of music was developing.

OR: Was there a lot of dancing? Rumba?

JGE: Yes, but there was also the Rumba Palace. On one occasion, we wanted to create a real rumba palace. We even made plans to work with one of the best painters from this country, Wilfredo Lam, to make a mural dedicated to Papa Montero, a character from Nicolas Guillén's poems, very characterised by *rumba*, and create a scenography that would be like a *solar*. *Solares* were the quarters inhabited by the poorest in this country. We wanted to make a scenography characterising this type of housing, where people would look out of their balconies to watch rumba being danced and played by others. But it was not possible.

OR: Do you know whether Wilfredo Lam got to design it?

JGE: No, he didn't get there. We couldn't develop that project. I'm telling you this because that area was very attractive to us due to the authenticity of its music.

OR: From the intellectual circles in Havana, whom would you go with to those places?

JGE: Gutiérrez de Alea, Alfredo Guevara, José Macina and other members of the cultural circles from our times. And every time, I tell you again, an important person came to Cuba we would take him there. However, there were the big cabarets. There was not only Tropicana. There was the Montmartre, the Sans-Souci, etc. Well, in *Son o no son*, which is a very experimental film, I give lots of information regarding the question of this country's cabarets.

OR: I've got here a quotation that you wrote in *La doble moral del cine*: 'There is a living foundation which still manifests itself and to which we must concede high importance. They are the festivals and the nocturnal centres or cabarets. Focus, among us (sic), still possibilities of a living act. Neither of them can be conceived as zones where the people go to rest their tiredness. Each of them must be spaces where the people express themselves and are expressed.' Are you still of the same opinion? Is this still the case in Havana?

JGE: I think there hasn't been recognition of the importance of nightlife centres. Even myself, with the triumph of the Revolution, I tried to characterise these centres, not to repeat, as it is usual, the Tropicana format, which is a form based in a dance troupe and a series of dance figures. They are repeated at the other nocturnal places as if they were little tropicanas, and our idea has always been for each of them to be peculiar, with its own personality. But there is not enough sensibility, even by the very artists, to take these places, these cabarets, seriously. Well, something has been done. For example, there are two choreographers, Alberto Alonso and Luís Trapas, who tried and managed to create a Cuban choreography by its own right. I mean we have ballet, with great choreographers and dancers. We have contemporary dance, and we have folklorists. The attention is only focused on these three options. However, cabaret doesn't get the attention it deserves. Cabaret is, basically, still living with the elements that Alonso and Trapas contributed. I think that, in the United States, for example, they have taken advantage of their nocturnal infrastructure and have developed a very personal choreography, a choreography that can compete in importance with the other dance forms, such as ballet and modern dance. However, over here with such an important musical tradition, we haven't managed really different options that are at the same time particular to this country.

OR: For many of us in Europe, cabaret and night-centres are also seen as spaces of social criticism, where traditional social roles are contested, and there is questioning of sexual identities, national and class. Where all those roles are constantly questioned with the use of parody, irony, satire. Do you think that is also the case in Havana, before and after 1959?

JGE: No, not in that way, because, how could I explain it? In Europe, particularly Germany, there was a very important movement from the intellectuals. There was for example, Bertolt Brecht, and even at the beginning of the Soviet Union, where they also took the question of cabarets and nocturnal centres seriously.

But over here the same didn't happen. It was a question of authenticity as cultural project, which was already quite an important step forward from a political and cultural point of view. In that direction something has been achieved. The problem is that we lack diversity. Tropicana forms are repeated, which is ok for the Tropicana. It's important to conserve that style, even as a museum form, because it's a 1940s type of spectacle. But, what is totally negative is that that formula keeps on being repeated. I organised a cabaret spectacle during the 1960s, where we didn't just focus on the dance and musical forms, but also ... Because over here the cabaret is always oriented to tourism, it needs to be in a way where language doesn't become a limitation to those who doesn't understand the language of the country. There is a lot of mimic, pantomime. However, in that spectacle I made, there was dialogue, though minimum. You could understand it even without knowing Spanish and it was very interesting because the public enjoyed it very much. Unfortunately, there was only one rehearsal.

OR: Did your record it?

JGE: We didn't have video recording at the time. Unfortunately, I don't have it, but it was very interesting. It was a different option to the other nocturnal centres during the 1960s. I have always been interested in cabaret because it is an option where the spectator feels freer. If the show is of bad quality that doesn't spoil his night. He eats, he dances, he is satisfied anyway. However, when you go to the theatre, if the play is bad that's the end of a good night.

OR: I would like to ask you about your film *Cuba Baila*, the particular sequence when the husband goes to one of the nightclubs where there is a rumba spectacle. What is the relevance of this sequence within the narration? And also, whether you thought of the characterisation: there is the sexual worker, the artists, a couple of North-American tourists, an Afro-Cuban couple, the main character, a white middle-class man, etc. Did you think of those characters in relation to the general narration of the film?

JGE: That sequence was shot in one of those small cabarets at Marianao.

OR: Do you remember which one?

JGE: No, I don't remember exactly which one

OR: Do they still exist?

JGE: No. All that has disappeared. When we were shooting that sequence the bombing of *La Cubre*[2] happened. It was when they put explosives in that ship. It was a tragedy. While filming

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[2] He talks here about a terrorist attack by counter-revolutionaries in Havana. There were a few of these attacks during the years that followed the 1959 Revolution. See Gott, Richard. *Cuba: A New History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004) p. 193

that rumba we heard a huge explosion. But well, what we tried was to show how that character, who was under pressure by his wife to find the right place to celebrate his daughter's fifteen birthday, even goes to one of these places, where he doesn't normally go. But he goes everywhere. He even ends up with a one-man orchestra. He is just searching for all the possible options. And in this case he feels that that place did not have his type of ambience, it had the ambience of the prostitute, of the dancer. A very sensual atmosphere in the dance and among the people there, and he's the only one out of place. Therefore, it was a way of saying he had tried everything but that particular place wasn't his place.

OR: Among the group of artists and intellectuals who would go there with you, was Cabrera Infante one of them?

JGE: Yes, that's possible, because Guillermo was with us at the beginning of the ICAIC, in the direction.

OR: and the photographer Constantino Arias?

JGE: I don't remember him

OR: I would like to read you something from Cabrera Infante. Are you familiar with his work?

JGE: Yes, of course.

OR: It is from *Ella cantaba boleros*, published in 1996: 'But when Titón came back from Italy, turned into a certified filmmaker, talking of Rome and ruins [...], I could tell him, knowledgeable: «Est rerum facta pulcherrima Havana« [*Rome, the finest thing on earth, was created*] and show to him, a native, my live Havana

[...]

This revelation of the invisible Havana to Titón, exiled in his house with his piano and his inventions ...' What do you think he meant with this mention to Titón?

JGE: That's very arrogant, self-sufficient. He's saying something about Titón that I cannot share. He was upset with Titón, because Titón would also go to Marianao cabarets and was well acquainted with underground Havana. I don't know, I think Guillermo was exaggerating.

OR: In his work, Cabrera Infante would always lament what had disappeared in Havana. His book *Three Trapped Tigers* is very nostalgic. He writes particularly in this book of two spaces, Tropicana and Las Vegas club, where there was a lot of bolero singing. Would you also go there?

JGE: I was there sometimes but for us the most important places where the ones in Marianao. But, I did go to Las Vegas sometimes, to see whether there was anything interesting coming up.

OR: Before 59, was nightlife in Havana very segregated? Spaces only for black Cubans and others only for white Cubans? Or, were there spaces where both groups would meet? Was the separation between both groups very radical?

JGE: I think that was the case in the big cabarets, because they were in the big hotels where there was segregation. But I don't remember separation in the small nightclubs, for example Las Vegas, and also the Ali Bar where Benny Moré would go often. I think that would happen just in the big cabarets.

OR: In those places, was there exchange between those of Spanish origins and those of African origin?

JGE: Exactly

OR: And the female public, who were they?

JGE: The female public would go with company or they wouldn't go, if I remember well. We, for example, I think it was just the men who would go to those places in Marianao. I don't remember having taken there any of my female friends. I mean it was like inappropriate to take a woman to those places. But I'm not sure. I've got a bad memory.

OR: Was it mainly white men who would go to those places?

JGE: In the small cabarets, whites and blacks, the low key ones. In the big ones yes, I assume, but they were not only whites, they were wealthy whites. Those who would go to Tropicana, Sans-Souci, or the Martre …

OR: I would like to ask you about the polemic around the documentary *PM*. Forty years on, what do you think were the real causes of that polemic?

JGE: I think, deeply, it was a polemic based in the existence of a very big contradiction between those in *Lunes de revolución* and those at the ICAIC. At the ICAIC they were socialists. The others weren't. The situation couldn't last any longer. When the ICAIC decided the documentary wouldn't be exhibited, it wasn't a question of disappearing the film but just to postpone its show for a few days, because at that time we were waiting for an attack by the United States and the militias to confront that attack were then being created. Then, it was decided to postpone the show's premier and because there was that contradiction, things got out of hand. If you see the documentary today, you probably think, "but this documentary is not such a big deal". It is the same with *El Mégano*. You might ask yourself, why did Batista

get so scared with this? It is because now you see it out of context. Things must always be seen in their context, when things were happening.

OR: Because *PM* was really just some shooting from Havana's nightlife, in the bars. Wasn't it?

JGE: And *El Mégano* was only images of workers in the south of Havana. At that moment it was important for the United States' embassy and Batista not to encourage a national cinema. *PM,* at the time it was decided that it would be a better idea to postpone its showing.

OR: But why exactly? Why did they think it was a dangerous film?

JGE: Because at that time what we needed was to support the creation of the militias and wait for some days, weeks, to see if the attack would happen. But well, we've been for forty years with these people ...

OR: I've got here another quote I got from your interviews with Victor Fowler regarding the film *Son o no son*, where you talk about the period when they closed the cabarets and nightclubs just for a while. Did you think of the polemics around *PM* when you decided to make this film?

JGE: I don't remember? What has it got to do with it?

OR: The closure of the cabarets and nightclubs? What were the reasons for that decision?

JGE: Well, because we were in a period when we were trying to develop the economy. It was a problem with the big cabarets, not the popular ones, with wealthy people. I think it wasn't a very happy measure, and they needed to back up immediately and recover the night centres and people going to bed late if they needed to. They are childish mistakes, which are over with but, nevertheless, have left their mark. Out of context they seem amazing. You always need to see things in their context, when they happened.

OR: Do you know for how many years they were closed?

JGE: No, they weren't years. Only months

OR: I would like to ask you regarding the couple dancing to a *son* in *Son o no son*. Were they popular then?

JGE: Yes. They were a fantastic couple. He was an amazing dancer. She too, very slim but with a lot of grace. Later they split up and disappeared. They were excellent. They were the people who best typified the dance of *son* in this country.

Couple dance in Cuba is not very democratic, because the man is at the centre and the woman is always a satellite of the man. Do you understand? In *rumba* there is more equality.

However, in the *guaguancó,* the man tries to possess the woman, to 'vaccinate' her, that's the expression. There is this documentary, *La Rumba* by Oscar Valdés. Sometimes, people say with contempt that this country is a country of *rumberos,* as if this meant something bad. There has been a lot of prejudice. Today it's more accepted. *Rumba* is not an African word, but Spanish, and it means 'wanderer woman', referring to popular festivals of questionable morals.

OR: Do you mean particularly the women? Those who party too much?

JGE: Exactly, 'wanderer women', prostitutes.

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Illustrations' sources:

Illustration 1: My own photograph
Illustration 2: Tria Giovan, *Cuba. The Elusive Island* (New York: Common Place Books, 1996)
Illustration 3: www.cubatravelusa.com
Illustrations 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 14: Museo Nacional Palacio de Bellas Artes, Havana
Illustration 12: http://www.oac.cdlib.org/
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Illustration 13: www.cubareserva.com
Illustration 14: www.travelgator.com
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Illustration 19: www.hicuba.com
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Illustrations 26 and 27: www.ilovehavana.com
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Illustration 29: from Segre, Roberto. *Diez años de arquitectura en Cuba Revolucionaria* (La Habana: Ediciones Union, 1969)
Illustrations 30, 31 and 32: from Loomis, John A. *Revolution of Forms: Cuba's Forgotten Art Schools.* (New York: Princenton Architecture Press, 1999)
Illustration 36: photograph by Ernesto Fernández in *Unos y Otros*. Photographs by Ernesto Fernández (La Habana: Editorial Arte y Literature, 1978)
Illustrations 47, 96 and 97: www.antanlontan-antilles.com
Illustrations 49, 72, 75-95, 99-103: Walker Evans Archive, Metropolitan Museum of New York.
Illustration 52: Raúl Corrales. Fototeca de Cuba, Havana.
Illustrations 59-61: Constantino Arias. Fototeca de Cuba, Havana.
Illustration 98: www.ife-ile.org
Illustration 106: Carlos Garaicoa in *Documenta X-The Book* (Kassel: Cantz Verlag, Documenta and Museum Fridericianum Veranstaltungs Gumstt, 1997)

Film tracks by chapter (from attached DVD):

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2. *Madagascar* (1994): opening sequence

Chapter II:
1. *A la Habana me voy* (1940): sequence introducing Havana (Capitolio, Avenida del Prado, Teatro Nacional, Hotel Nacional)
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3. *Soy Cuba* (1964): Las Yaguas sequence
4. *De Cierta Manera* (1973): Las Yaguas sequence
5. *Estampas Habaneras* (1939): representations of Afro-Cubans
6. *De Cierta Manera* (1973): representations of the Abakuás
7. *The Godfather II* (1974): meeting at the top of Havana hotel
8. *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968): airport sequence
9. *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968): binocular sequence
10. *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968): Sergio walks Havana's streets
11. *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (1968): opening sequence

Chapter V:
1. *The Godfather II* (1974): Hymn Roth and Michael Corleone conversation
2. *The Godfather II* (1974): Shanghai cabaret sequence
3. *Guys and Dolls* (1955): Havana sequences
4. *Weekend in Havana* (1941): hotel sequences
5. *Weekend in Havana* (1941): sequence at Club Madrileño

Chapter VI:
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3. *Cuba Baila* (1963): Playa de Marianao cabaret sequence
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5. *La Rumba* (1978): explanation of the Abakuá's origins of *rumba*
6. *La Rumba* (1978): last sequence

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Note on the use of the DVD: The DVD can be watched in PC Window Media Player and Mac DVD Player. There is a main menu with all the film titles. You only need to click on the title to see the particular tracks from that film. You can go back to the main menu any time by pressing the 'menu' button. In order to scan the DVD you need to go to 'control' in the menu bar and then 'scan forward' or 'scan backward'. You can alter the scan rate (faster or slower) by going again to 'control' and then 'scan rate' (just choose the rate you need). Some of the films tracks are separated into sections. Each section is titled in the DVD as it appears on this page.

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