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The Space of Cuban American Exile Narratives: Places, Maps and
Wayfinding

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the
degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

World Cultures

by

Elana Maia Gainor

Committee in charge:

Professor Ignacio López-Calvo, Chair
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2016

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2016

*I dedicate this dissertation to my grandfather, Marvin Schulman.
Thank you for everything.
I miss you dearly and think of you daily.*

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E D U C A T I O N

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“Navigating Spatial and Temporal Trajectories through a Lifetime of Exile. Pacific Ancient Modern Language Association. University of California, San Diego. November 3, 2013.

“Living in Exile: Spatial Production in a Representational-less World.” Pacific Ancient Modern Language Association. Seattle University. Oct. 21, 2012.

“The Role of Maps and Wayfinding in an Imagined World.” North Central Council of Latin Americanists, Hope College. Sept. 29, 2012

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Space of Cuban American Exile Narratives: Places, Maps and Wayfinding

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This dissertation considers the connections between Cuban American exile writers and spatial contexts that allow people to orient themselves in new surroundings. By employing a multi-disciplinary approach, I examine the impacts of physical movement and the literal readjustment people go through in new spaces to reconsider how exiles negotiate space. Addressing several literary genres, the process by which existing in space alters social constructs, sense of self, and basic understanding of one's surroundings is investigated from multiple spatial viewpoints. The introduction sets the historical context for exile and Cuba's dynamic history and also details how space functions across disciplines, particularly literature, cultural studies, and geography. Chapter one examines the active and passive nature of representational and representations of space in Pablo Medina's *The Marks of Birth*. Chapter two studies the real and imagined spaces in Daina Chaviano's *Island of Eternal Love*, contending that melancholia, nostalgia, and displacement create a perceived space that exists to acclimate exiles with their new homeland through various forms of wayfinding. Chapter three looks at trajectories of space and time in Carlos Eire's *Learning to Die in Miami*, with the goal of proving that a panoptic vision of oneself is how Cuban Americans manage the trauma of exile. Chapter four states that recursive space and the relationship between writer and reader Carlos Eire's *Waiting for Snow in Miami* allows space to be molded as one traverses through it. Finally, chapter five, asserts that exile space is a reticulated network. Using Stuart Hall's concept of identity formation and theories on collective space, the formation of collective consciousness as it applies to exiles is explored. Contributions of this study include furthering the correlations between geographical and literary research, and spatial reconstruction and reconsidering identity-based orientation within displaced communities. This project significant for continuing the study of Cuban American exiles in the U.S, combining multiple disciplines to analyze literature and providing a comprehensive

investigation of spatial theory as the foundation for unpacking the location-specific social issues and struggles of exiles.

The sunlight pointing down at us, as if, we were important, full of life, unbound. I wandered for a moment where his ribs had made a space for me, and there, beside the thundering waterfall of his heart, I rubbed my eyes and thought I'm lost.

Rafael Campo

Introduction

My interest in exile as a condition goes back over a decade. As a person who is highly sensitive to locations, the idea of being permanently and possibly endlessly displaced from a location was such a horrifying thought that I wanted to learn more. I immediately began reading about the historical background of exile and soon found myself fully immersed in the poetry of Cuban American exiles. Displacement is heartbreaking and traumatic and I was immediately reminded of my own grandmother who was forcibly removed from her home in Russia during World War II. With no notice, she was shipped via box car to a completely unfamiliar country and forced to work as an indentured servant in Germany. She was 16 years old and never saw her family again.

Shortly after the war, she met my grandfather and they moved to the United States together. Although, she was not a true exile, something I will discuss later, she never returned to her hometown of Minsk, which coincidentally, like Cuba, has been under different forms of governance dozens of times. Because my grandfather was in the army, he and my grandmother moved around the country, each time working to establish themselves in a new location. Due to the horrors of the war and German occupation, my grandmother never shared the details about what she went through or what it was like to be displaced from her homeland and family. I often wondered what it must have been like for her to never return to her homeland or see any of her family ever again.

In an attempt to understand, I invested much of my time reading about the pain and trauma experienced by Cuban exiles and, the more I came to understand about the dynamics of multiple modalities of spatial theory, the clearer it became that there was definitely a gap in the available scholarship. Scholars and literary theorists had clear ideas about space and its relationship to power, but I could not find a deep examination of space, culture and identity in a manner that incorporated social science ideologies as they specifically relate to exile. For example, Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre, Claude Lévi-Straus, Amy Kaminsky, Edward Said and Chinua Achebe have the dichotomy between space and hegemonic power at the forefront of several of their theories. This includes detailed discussions of displaced communities. Specifically, the questions of how various versions of spatial theory inform exile identity were not addressed. Analysis about

Cuban American exile literature is common, countless Cuban Americans have conducted their own theoretical analysis as well as creative works of nonfiction, fiction and poetry. Popular Cuban novelists, such as Cristina García, Reinaldo Arenas, and Carlos Eire have been comingled with theoretical discourse from Cuban American scholars Gustavo Pérez Firmat, Isabel Álvarez Borland, and Ruth Behar.

Reading extensively through the works of the aforementioned authors and creators of this collective exile space that informs exile identity I realized that other forms of spatial orientation (mapping, location observation), are mentioned, but not clearly described in social science-based terminology/methodology. If further applied to exile identity, these approaches could aid in qualifying some of the experiences and highly informative creative works produced by Cuban American exiles, which in turn produces the platform to reconsider how exiles navigate space. For the sake of traversing the landscape of exile and spatial orientation in a clear and coherent manner, I am empathetic to exile as a condition. This is done because what is happening here is a viewing of how any displaced person negotiates new locations. Exiles, particularly Cuban American exiles, add a sense of nostalgia that is heightened (this is further discussed later). In these introductory stages of expanding on spatial theory and encompassing multiple view points, a compassionate outlook is more adept for flushing out these initial ideas and deciding if different methods of spatial orientation are useful in the first place.

With the increase and prevalence of Digital Humanities scholarship, there has been a call for alternative methods of literary analysis. First and foremost, a call to action came in Franco Moretti's *Maps, Graphs, Trees* (2007). In this text, Moretti explicitly asks scholars to branch out and look at literature from a wider view. The main issues that arose from this call were questions about how data mined from literature via meta- or distance readings could be equated to scholarly research. It could have a distinct and useful meaning within an academia that is not quite sure how to utilize this very innovative method of literary analysis.

Moretti plays with some variances of the literary analysis in three other texts. Moretti's most relevant works include *Distance Reading* (2013), where he argues that in order to understand literature, we must use a wide sample of texts, gather collective data, and then analyze said data. *Atlas of the European Novel* (1998), in which Moretti uses cartography, geography and cultural geography to extract data about a wide range of literary maps, thus evaluating the connections between space and literature. And finally, *Signs Taken for Wonders* (1993), where Moretti applies social science methodologies by using, sociological, psychoanalytic and structuralist approaches of investigation to come to intuitive and pertinent conclusions about literature. While these studies are interesting, the most realistic and

plausible idea for this dissertation was to take part spatial theory, part social science practices, and apply them directly to literature written by exiles. I have attempted to proposition them close enough to more traditional literary analysis so that they are easier to understand and relatable to more comprehensible standards of studies about literature. Based on extensive research, which is presented in subsequent chapters, I feel that this non-tradition research can reach deeper and possibly lead to groundbreaking changes across multiple disciplines. Moving beyond the obvious forms of literary theory, close reading and analysis provides the ability to begin to expand drastically on the way that we see the relationship between exile, space, interspatiality and intersubjectivity.

There is no doubt that location and exile have been thoroughly discussed (something I will outline), but cultural geography-based methods of accessing spatial landscapes as they appear in the narratives and memoirs of Cuban American exiles are not prevalent. Viewing multiple forms of spatial theory as it applies to literature is imperative to a full spectrum view of how exiles orient themselves to their new surroundings. This type of theory breaks apart the linear structure of narratives and creates a wider view while actually looking closely at the text. This relationship deserves consideration as the goal of this dissertation is to reconsider the connections between the work of Cuban American exile writers and spatial contexts that allow people to come to terms what with it means to be living in exile. Through this reconsideration, I come to new conclusions about how exiles adapt to unfamiliar locations and form identity and culture.

Can the method by which we understand movement in literature be adjudicated and molded into something else? The answer is yes, and I prove this to be true by analyzing literature illustrating what social science practices as well as more traditional ideas of spatial theory can do to widen the manner by which we understand spatial orientation in the aforementioned texts. I employ an interdisciplinary approach to examine the impacts of physical movement and the literal and metaphorical readjustment people go through in new spaces to reconsider how exiles negotiate space. Addressing several literary genres, including fiction, creative nonfiction, memoir and autobiography, the process by which existing in space alters social constructs, sense of self, identity and basic understanding of one's surrounding is thoroughly surveyed.

The genres are mixed because for this context it was not necessarily the genre, but the subject matter that was most important. The included texts, all of which are examined in a standard close reading method deal with topics of spatial orientation. The fact that they range in genre does not matter since even the fictional texts are loosely based on real life circumstances and are mostly story-like versions of real experiences and events. In addition, all included genres deal with the same struggles. Again,

it is not the characters in these chosen texts that are most important, but the way the characters in these chosen texts describe and contend with space and movement from one location to the next.

Each chapter encompasses different theoretical approaches yet there is some noticeable overlap. The chapters are purposefully written as separate entities that, through the course of the dissertation, all lead to the idea that what we have been missing in our literary-based analysis is the inherent connectivity of the structure of space. What we are moving towards is a greater sense of how to see spatial theory across disciplines, genres and various groups of displaced people. Moving away from the traditional form is best suited for this type of theoretical framework as several of the theories here in stand-alone. For example, the chapters on wayfinding, reticulated space and recursive space are set up to clearly showcase how these specific spatial ideologies can alter and enhance the way we see space in the included literature.

Constructs of Exile and Historical Background

The time period studied goes from 1950 to the present. As this is not a history-based view, the comprehensive history of Cuba is not needed as we are at a point where the general history is common knowledge and in this case, the history does not alter how or why the analysis takes place. The relevant facts, most importantly that Cuban American exiles are geographically close to home (in most cases) and that they have endured one of the longest exiles of the modern era are at the forefront of this analysis. I survey the writing of legitimate exiles and provide a full spectrum analysis of how existing space informs new concepts of space as we move through time in both geographical and mental contexts. This introduction sets the historical context for exile and Cuba's complex history and details how space functions across disciplines, particularly literature, cultural studies, and geography. These methods continue the study of Cuban American exiles in the U.S, perpetuating interdisciplinary studies as a modality by which we can assess identity and culture, and providing a comprehensive investigation of spatial theory as the foundation for unpacking the social issues and struggles of exiles

One of the most interesting aspects about the authors presented here is that they are all legitimate exiles who remain in exile to this day. They have all been displaced from their homeland by political tribulations that were/are beyond their control. While Cuba's history is one of appropriation and domination, nothing else in recent history quite matches what happened in Cuba in late 1958 and early 1959. When Fidel Castro took over, many Cubans were very optimistic as conditions in the country were far from ideal and there was a collective hope and desire for positive change. Some of the most prominent citizens of the country were forced out by way of fear for their lives. Some left hoping to preserve their financial status and others left

because they simply wanted to be removed from the uncertainty. Ironically, and likely unbeknownst to them at the time, they were choosing to enter into one of the most uncertain space imaginable, as movement from one location to another “not just traveling *through* space or across it,” but changing space as we know it (Massey 118). Therefore, the attempt to diffuse a situation that was considered to be unsavory actually caused a situation of equal if not more substantial obstacles.

Cuban exiles are a rare group of people. They are not classified as refugees or expatriates; instead, they are true exiles who are supposedly, and perhaps originally, waiting “for a change of government or the tyrant’s death, which will allow him [them] to come home” (McCarthy 49). However, with the passage of time, the desire to return to ‘home’ has completely vanished for most Cuban exiles and there is no way they would ever willingly return. Different from simply a person who is no longer living in his or her home country and who can return at any time, an exile cannot return home without fear of government-based punishment.

Different still are refugees, who are “the very image of helplessness, choiceless, incomprehension, driven from his home by forces outside his understanding and control” (McCarthy 50). The exile, especially in the case of Cubans, has made a choice to leave, a clear, decisive choice. There are children in this equation (like Carlos Eire who was sent from Cuba with only his brother) who did not personally choose to leave, as their departure was calculated, paid for and planned by their parents. Regardless of the exact terms of exile, they move through time and space waiting for change. The act of waiting is akin to a time/space continuum whereby the ability to move forward or backwards, or any direction is stymied the grand unknown forces that accompany the act of being in limbo.

While I do believe that Cuban American exiles as a group are very unique (the uniqueness is pointed out several times throughout the dissertation), and I would be hard-pressed to find another group of United States-based exiles so large, so content with their originating land pre-exile and also so emotionally affected by the location-derived aspects of cultural and national identity, it is not that Cuban American exiles are more worthy of analysis when compared to other displaced groups. The uniqueness here is related directly to space. There are few other large displaced populations that have written so extensively on spatial related problems with exile. This is not to say that there are not many other exiles, refugees and expatriates that live in similar circumstances; it is simply that there is something special about the tropical notion of Cuba and the mere 80 miles between Cuba and the U.S. that creates a distinct sort of mysticism and romantic nostalgia that is overtly present in much of the literature that specifically deals with space and locations and how people orient themselves to said locations.

For the purpose of this dissertation, an exile is a person displaced from their homeland by way of fear or desperation. Exiles herein are longing and wishing to return home to a place that no longer exists and it is this sense, that nostalgia really sets the exiles in this text apart from other non-Cuban exiles. The other interesting aspect is the strong, innate sense of national pride that is bestowed upon Cubans from birth. Taking from the Spanish, most Cubans, and even visitors to the island of Cuba, called it the “pearl of the Antilles” and this ideology – the mind frame that Cuba is superior to all others, plays into the deep sense of nostalgia for Cuban American exiles. Other displaced groups may also be served by the ideas presented here. What I hope is that the methodology applied here will eventually lead the way for more theory about non-linear patterns in literature of not only exile, but ultimately, all displaced people. The non-linear pattern will generate a process of space where we can see the way we navigate texts and view connectivity as a structure (all chapters point to this) that define spatial understanding in and out of exile.

There is an idea that the exile who “stops waiting and adapts to the new circumstances” is “not an exile any more” (McCarthy 49). While I do not consider this to be true as it relates to the texts used herein, it is worth considering if somewhere deep down the notion of losing one’s exile status perpetuates the pain and trauma of exile. This would, of course, factor into the ability and desire to contend with new locations. Also worthy of consideration is whether or not escaping exile is even possible. If exile is treated like a condition, there is no simple cure or way to no longer be afflicted by its symptoms. Exile “accepted as a destiny, in the way we accept an incurable illness, should help us see throughout self-delusions” (Milosz 36). Therefore, exile and the attributes that go with it are unchangeable. Even when exiles are able to improve their mental wellbeing, they are still in exile. In addition, even those who are gone for so long that they have no desire to return are afflicted by the predicament of wanting what they cannot have. This is basic human nature. One can add that to the idea of forcible removal, and the inability to even visit and the association with Cuban American exile are almost never-ending. Therefore, even though this particular type of exile is long standing and some may think that Cuban American exiles do not fit into the technical form of exile, they do as the constructs, or rather the banishment for political or punitive reason applies whether or not the person would choose to go back if they had the option.

For so many Cuban exiles, partially due to the fact that many thought that their return to Cuba was imminent, the idea of stopping the wait is not part of their reality. Being driven out of a place that one did not want to leave may cause people to lose themselves. This idea is broached in chapters three and five, but the way we see ourselves is so dependent of familiarity and power structures and networks amongst people, that this becomes yet

another problem for those in exile. Eventually, “after many years in exile one tries to imagine what it is like not living in exile” (Milosz 38). Try as one will, imagining oneself in a different time/space dimension is just that – something imagined. It is not real and carries little to no weight in reality.

Exiles exist in two different realities: that of Cuba and that of exile. Thusly, exiles occupy space in a way that is unlike many others who are displaced. There is a constant sense of placing oneself in various spatial contexts. When a person resides in one country, “the privileged place, by centrifugally enlarging itself, becomes more or less identified with his [this] country as a whole. Exile displaces that center or rather creates two centers” (Milosz 38). This is exactly where the network between these spaces becomes so important and why it repeatedly appears in all five chapters of this dissertation and in various contexts in almost all literature and theory about exile. I argue that the concept of two centers, so to speak, is created by the challenges of orienting two new locations. There is a literal coming to terms with varying spaces, and until this happens, which is something presented in chapters three and four, most exiles, especially those depicted herein, are miserable and openly struggling with their new lives in a different country.

Mixing Theories

Many of the notions of exile that formulate the uniqueness surrounding Cuban exiles have been widely studied (post-colonial refugee and migration theory). These chapters are composed with this knowledge in the background and spatial theory in the foreground. Spatial theory, particularly spatial theory that encompasses cross-discipline ideas of how space functions are not commonly used for literary analysis. The capacity to move beyond the normal limits of literary theory and into more uncharted territory is a method by which we can gain invaluable insight into how space exists and molds the literature of Cuban exiles. Because the melding of certain ideas about traversing space and time has not been directly applied to Cuban American exiles, there is new ground to cover and many questions to ask and answer. The fact that Cuban exiles living in the United States can live in or visit the southernmost points of Florida and be just eighty miles from their place of origin is fascinating, but not overly unique, as many other exiles are in the same position living across imaginary borders.

The physical closeness sets the stage for acculturation or rather for an enhanced acceptance or ability to merge two lifestyles and two cultures. Gustavo Pérez-Firmat’s *Life on the Hyphen* (2004) postulates that being Cuban and also being American, and specifically, the hyphen that exists between them acts as a positive integration between two cultures and identities. Pérez-Firmat’s book is widely quoted, but in this advanced stage of multiculturalism and comfortability engaging in interdisciplinary discourse, the hyphen is obsolete and is therefore not used between the words “Cuban” and “American.” It no longer needs to represent the joining of two cultures or

two sets of identities, since space connects these aspects in a reticulated manner that is so much larger than a hyphen. We as scholars and purveyors of culture no longer need it. Nearly sixty years after Fidel Castro's takeover, Cuba American culture is its own culture, no longer requiring the hyphen to be linked.

Taking it a step further and in line with Doreen Massey's theories in *For Space* (2005), where she asserts that space is positively affected by knowledge of history and the passage of time, Amy Kaminsky, in *After Exile* (1999), argues that even if exiles were able to return to their homeland, the homeland would exist in a completely different context, a forced context where one is grappling to make sense of it all, and therefore identity itself becomes forced as well. Forced identity is something that all authors herein struggle with, however, the debates surrounding the organic or inorganic foundations of identity is not included here, aside from observing how space is constructed for people living an exiled existence. When everything is imagined and the role of the memories related to an entire society, culture and literal location are simply reconfigurations of imaginary countries, the spatial context must be explored in detail, across various realms, perspectives and relationships. Again, this is where the idea of connectivity as a structure make sense and becomes most relevant.

This is not unlike what other theorist believe. For example, Homi K. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture* (1994), speaks of the time and space dimension where cultural creation may happen. This, of course, applies to exiles as what is happening for all of the writers examined here, is an internal battle of some sort to create identity and culture. Most important from Bhabha's work is the idea that to see cultural and answer questions of identity, one must look between normative notions of history and people to location and space, a third space as he calls it or what I refer to as interspatiality (Bhabha 56). While these exact theories are not explicitly discussed, many ideas about spatial theory have formed here. The idea that space and culture go together has benefitted greatly and been thoroughly discussed because of Bhabha's work.

Theories about exile and, more generally, displacement as a condition are common. Edward Said's *Reflections of Exile and Other Essays* (2002) points out the differences between expatriates and those who are truly in exile. Similarly, to other exile theorists and writers, exile is represented as a traumatic experience that gives writers suffering from this condition a chance to express their loss of relationship with their original homeland. For Said, however, exile is a process that holds very close to it negative and positive connotations. Negative meanings equal a continual procession of an endless condition and positive meanings equal a great variety of ways in which one can view life. Many Cuban writers, Reinaldo Arenas, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Zoé Valdés Cristina García, Ruth Behar, to name a few, as well as

the writers in this dissertation, Carlos Eire, Ana Menéndez, Pablo Medina and Daína Chaviano (there is a chapter dedicated to each of them), are able to see the positive aspects of exile. Whether or not this is simply a coping mechanism remains to be seen, but the positive attributes can be found in most of this literature.

The perspectives mentioned by Said are at the forefront of the mind of anyone who lives between two homelands. What is unique about exile as a condition is that it has created a common ground between scholars and theorists. While anyone who experiences exile or sets forth to learn about it may come to slightly different conclusions about the effects it has on those who are existing in such a state, all agree that the displacement of exiles causes severe feelings of loss, trauma and a deep longing (nostalgia) for parts of a world or even parts of themselves that no longer exist. This nostalgia drives the narrative of exiles. Perhaps they hope that the process will be cathartic, but it seems that the longing and misery are actually perpetuated by exile narratives. Instead of a linear progression where the end result could be resolutions, we have introspective narratives that continue down the role of longing and despair. The ability to see how this process unfolds is rare but we do get a glimpse of it by viewing Eire's two texts in chapters three and four. His nostalgia is lessened over time, but it literally takes a lifetime to process through and write about these changes.

The general contexts of dual sense of identity (hybridity) are not mentioned in great detail, but those who developed many of these ideas (Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, Néstor García Canclini) are important to the understanding of mixing cultures. Additionally, it may have been the acceptance of the mixing of multiple cultures that started the acknowledgement of interdisciplinary scholarship. Moving beyond the common contributors to exile and post-colonial theory is something that has been transpiring for years. There is nothing wrong with the past theories that serve as the building block for where we are headed, but as a society our capacity for non-linear or spatial patterns is increasing and we must use other methods to expand our view of Cuban American exiles and displaced people in general. The quest for the nature of non-linear structure of narratives (many narratives are non-linear anyway) is what makes these subjects stand out. How do we ever begin to reconcile space as it applies to the vast expanse between not only physical land, but mental landscapes? We simply have to be willing to employ what may (only at first) appear to be radical approaches paired with more standard methods until one day soon, we will have an entirely different vision of analysis, displacement and space.

When multiple methods of analysis are combined, what transpires is a wider view of topics at hand. Instead of a narrow view of the social and cultural attributes on literature, what begins is a collective sense of space. The totality is narrowed here for the purpose of analysis, but what emerges

are new methods to assess space as it applies to those who are displaced. This sense of space transcends Cuban American exiles and can ultimately be applied to any displaced group. What we eventually see is that our ideas of culture, space and identity are a collective display that research and analysis of the topics at hand are moving closer towards Moretti's call to action in the conclusion of *Maps, Graphs, Trees*.

Moretti's concluding point is that researchers must step outside the box of standard research that we have deemed scholarly in order to increase our knowledge about subjects and ideas that we have not yet thoroughly examined. We may not be completely successful at first, but these new methods must have a starting point. This is what is transpiring in this text. This is a leap to reconsider space in literature and come to the conclusion that there are, indeed, complex structures linking many topics and ideologies together behind all the surface variations. In an attempt to utilize multiple theories to come to a final common ground, five seemingly separate spatial methods are employed in each chapter, with similarities and differences that play towards the rhizomatic nature of literary and spatial analysis. These specific methods were chosen because they each allowed for a different, unexamined part of space within literature to be elucidated and expanded. They provide detailed information into the technique exiles use to navigate space in a non-linear way, which is not the typical mode by which scholars have come to conduct literary analysis.

Benjamin Fraser's recent book *Towards and Urban Cultural Studies* (2015) urges scholars to consider the "importance of an interdisciplinary framework" by "maintaining the humanities emphasis on cultural texts" (24). Fraser is particularly interested in the connections between cultural and urban studies, and feels that it is only through multiple approaches that there can be tangible advances in studies and research in these topics. What Fraser makes clear is that integrating multiple modalities of theory generates a "complex culture enfolding the total human experience" (11). The analysis in all the chapters leads to this as an ultimate conclusion, because the end result of integrating many forms of theory and methods of analysis is a greater sense of collective consciousness or cumulative human experience that views the narrative as a non-linear subject showcased by interspatiality and intersubjectivity that, at some point in the future, may have the power to blur even further the lines that cause displacement, pain, sorrow and loss associated with movement from location to another.

Fraser believes that "disciplinary reconciliation" may be "one strategy among many disalienating us alienating propositions inherent to capitalist modernity" (11). Going off of Lefebvre's concept of lived space, Fraser reminds his audience that spatial awareness becomes something that people must perform. Thus the integration of space across disciplines becomes a spatial practice, "which embraces production and reproduction, and the particular

locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation” (33). The lack of interdisciplinary discourse and comingling of these topics with the prevalence of space in Cuban American exile literature has fostered the way in which space is viewed in each chapter of this dissertation.

Structure of the Dissertation

Each chapter is a literary close reading that examines aspects of space, place, and time as they relate to the traumatic condition of Cuban American exile. This is viewed as a process of conceptualizing the way in which one stands in space and time. Three of the five chapters in this study use common ideas of space to examine the works of well-known Cuban American exile writers. The remaining two chapters discuss space in ways that, to my knowledge, have not been applied to Cuban American exile literature at all. The common thread for all the writers considered in this dissertation is an intense desire to answer the “who am I” question. Of course, there is no absolute answer and the variance of answers and meanings surpass space and time. The answer to the question is relative, but should be considered when reading each chapter. These specific authors were chosen because their narratives transcend typical non-linear construction and function in a way that lends itself to spatial analysis. This means that they found spaces, places, locations and emotions and applied them to movement from one location to another. Geographical referenced information, mapping the pain of exile, desire to hold onto to their Cubanness and most importantly, feelings of confusion and displacement surrounding how these specific writers best orient themselves in unfamiliar locations are pertinent pieces of the methods by which exile is expressed in the included texts.

Chapter One, “Coping with Exile: Producing Space in a Representational World,” examines the active and passive natures of representational space (lived) and representations of space (conceived) in Pablo Medina’s *The Marks of Birth* (2004). With the theoretical background of spatial concepts as defined by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1991), this chapter shows that Lefebvre’s Eurocentric definitions of space may not apply to Cuban American exiles. It asks readers to consider how one functions in space that is constructed for them and how that function shifts as one becomes their own producer of space. For the exiles in this chapter, representational space and representations of space are defined by both the homeland (Cuba) and the new homeland (the United States).

The unique twist to Pablo Medina’s *The Marks of Birth* is that the main character of is notably unattractive. Because of social norms and ideologies regarding aesthetics, the protagonist, Antón, suffers from the spatial constraints associated with his appearance. The chapter argues that instead of representations of space, that most are living based solely on conceptions, there is a world that combines Lefebvre’s notions of space to

establish a state between these displaced realities. This is where a new form of spatial production is fashioned.

Even though human beings generally believe that we can hold onto “established relations between objects and people represented in spaces,” we see through the characters in Medina’s text that this simply not true (Lefebvre 41). The notions of space that are used to define aspects of existence, identity and acclimation are so changeable that they become absorbed into our own ideologies as we progress through time. Analyzing how productions of space are altered through exile is a necessary part of understanding exile as a condition that can ultimately be applicable to displaced people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. Theorizing these methods of spatial productions leads to a point in which it becomes important to view the functions between our personal perceptions of space.

To delve into these differences, Chapter Two, “Maps and Wayfinding in the Worldview of Exiles,” studies the real and imagined spaces in Daína Chaviano’s *Island of Eternal Love* (2008). I contend that the melancholia, nostalgia, and displacement in the novel create a perceived space that exists for those who must come to terms with their homeland through mental wayfinding as opposed to a physical understanding is at the heart of this chapter. Geography-based theories of space are employed to describe how exiles move through imagined and real spaces in a more linear manner.

Specifically, mapping and wayfinding become the central theme, as Chaviano’s main character, Cecilia, literally and mentally navigates through Miami attempting to make sense of her surroundings and find her way. Elements of this journey include mental passages back through time. To incorporate this facet of space, Doreen Massey’s theories from her text *For Space* are central to interpreting how exile operates historically through space and time. For Massey, space is temporary, but also a product of the interrelated nature of our existence. Because of the connectedness, space, as she sees, it is always changing and comprised of layers upon layers: “Space conquers time by being set up as the *representation of history/life/the real world*” (30). This comes to fruition in *The Island of Eternal Love*.

Tim Ingold’s *Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (2000) and Alfred Gell’s article “How to Read a Map: Remarks on the Practical Logic of Navigation” (1985) provide definitions of mapping and wayfinding. Most important for this chapter is wayfinding, better known as the way in which we orient ourselves through our current surroundings. There are two forms of this practice: first, mental mapping, whereby the subject builds correlations between spatial objects, and second, practical mastery, whereby subjects use previous mental maps to reflect off of and thus produce new ways in which to traverse space and time.

The format and descriptions in the text used for this chapter are the perfect avenue for this analysis. They portray the ways in which exiles use these forms of mental movement to navigate exile identity. The point here is that exiles, and all people who grapple with identity after being displaced, are actually in complete control of their own formation of self after the trauma of displacement. According to Edward Said, “to concentrate on exile as a contemporary political punishment, you must therefore map territories of experience beyond those mapped by the literature of exile itself” (175). Contemplating these “territories of experience” by applying geographical contexts to how one orients oneself in space and time, allows for a diverse view of exile.

What is missing from chapters one and two is the exploration of how an exile’s vision of him or herself shapes their reality as an exile. As exiles move through a plethora of feelings and emotions, the way that exile relates to and affects them is altered through time. Chapter three, “Navigating Spatial and Temporal Trajectories through a Lifetime of Exile in Carlos Eire’s *Learning to Die in Miami*,” offers distinct perspective as we are invited into his experiences and offered his multiple interpretations. Eire’s self-aware mentality coupled with the idea that he is watching himself while being monitored by the (pre-exile) hegemonic forces of his homeland and the (post-exile) controlling forces of his new homeland, are reminiscent of Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995), where we are asked to consider how a panoptic view of oneself and others shapes our behaviors and impressions of ourselves.

For Eire, Cuba functions as an illusion-filled world that he sees through a panoptic lens. The idea here is that interacting with the new homeland and its inhabitants strictly on their respective terms will exponentially reduce the notion of being constantly viewed as a subject. Eire’s overbearing feeling that he is expected to behave in accordance with predetermined expectations is a normal facet of his life and main focus for this chapter. All exiles contend with perceptions related to panoptic idioms whereby they are coping with understanding the dichotomy between locations and the process by which one decides where they belong.

Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes* (1992) and Annette Kolodny’s *The Lay of the Land* (1975) provide the theoretical framework to discuss the context in which the cultural impacts of moving from one location to another, together with the adjustment by way of acceptance and rejection that comes with acclimating to a new land. Pratt calls these impacts “contact zones,” which set in motion the themes of chapter four and five, where collective notions of space are surveyed.

Chapter Four, “The Memoir: Recursive Space and Exile in Carlos Eire’s *Waiting for Snow in Havana*,” uses Eire’s prequel memoir, where, as an accomplished adult, he is able to reflect back on the events leading up to

his exile. He also reflects back over his life and manner in which his life been altered, in positive and negative ways, by exile. This chapter expands the video game-based dynamic of recursive space and asks the reader to consider how we shape our space by simply moving through it. More specifically, this chapter deals with how one creates space by moving through it recursively to form it around oneself as one progresses through it. Eire's prequel memoir, displays a full circle evolution of exile through his lifetime, thus providing the most unique and fascinating epoch of the combination of space and exile.

Using A. Wood's article "Recursive Space: Play and Creating Space" (2012) as the main theoretical context, I posit that space is recursive in that, as we traverse through it, there is constant feedback. The processes related to this feedback create a repetitive dialogue. Wood originally applies these concepts to video games and the relationship between player and coder. This chapter pushes these ideas into the realm of literature and culture, arguing that this same dynamic takes place in the space of Eire's text as well as in his own spatial infrastructure upon which he builds his identity.

This chapter also draws from Terrence Deacon's *Incomplete Nature: How Mind Emerged from Matter* (2012) and Michael Tomasello's *A Natural History of Human Thinking* (2014) for insight into how the human mind processes information. What is unique about his chapter is that it draws almost exclusively from texts that are not typically applied to the literature, let alone the humanities, thus showing that the possibilities for interdisciplinary scholarship are endless and ultimately untapped.

Chapter five, titled "Exiled Networks: Reticulated Space in Anna Menéndez's *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd*," appropriates a form of space most often associated social sciences and mathematics. This space, called reticulated space, refers to the network of information that surrounds and informs our knowledge of ourselves and our surroundings. This chapter combines Joël Bonnemaïson's *Culture and Space, Conceiving a new Cultural Geography* (2005) and two short stories from Ana Menéndez's *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd* (2002), to provide a window into the correlation between space as a network that creates identity and collective consciousness. Bonnemaïson, a cultural geographer, asks his reader to see space as a "web of values and meanings" (2). Without calling this formation a reticulation, and by looking back at the previous four chapters, one can see how much of what we know about space as it relates to exiles comes from a spatial network that exists on its own all around us and is based on a founding place (Bonnemaïson 9).

When Menéndez's short stories are conceptualized in a holistic manner, they create a network of spatial markers that depict the condition of exile. Relying on Stuart Hall's formation of how identity functions, this chapter shifts the sense of self from Hall references to as "never unified" and "increasingly fragmented and fractured" (4) to a version of identity where

collective consciousness via reticulated networks heals some of the gaps and fissures of identity for Cuban American exiles.

An island bore me a land filled with double mirrors, so that it was no longer an island but a space

Ricardo Pau-Llosa

Chapter One: Coping with Exile: Producing Space in a Representational World

When studying literature about displacement, trauma and, particularly, exile, readers are often aware of various types of space. The range of space includes facets for both the mental and physical conceptions of the world as well as our specific surroundings. This chapter explores the active and passive nature of representational space (lived) and representations of space (conceived) as defined by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1991). While Lefebvre maintains a sense of separation between such spaces as they apply to societies and their surroundings, the separation, when applied to Cuban American exiles, virtually disappears. The dissolution of this space couplet is evident, for example, when examining Pablo Medina's *The Marks of Birth* (2004), since without any notion of representations of space, representational space falls apart.

According to Lefebvre, a representation of space is the “conceptualized space” of hegemonic planners (38). This space is generally described as the “dominant space in any society” that follows a verbal, coherent, and intellectual system of signs (Lefebvre 39). Representational space, on the other hand, is space of the “inhabitants” and “users” (Lefebvre 39). This is the “dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (Lefebvre 39). Such spaces are related with “less coherent systems of non-verbal systems and signs” (Lefebvre 39).

Representations of space are constructed in a literal sense through architecture, but more so as a “project embedded in a spatial context” that produces a “representation that will not vanish into the symbolic or imaginary realms” (Lefebvre 41). These representations may seem logical and stable, but to Lefebvre, the big picture is that they are “always relative and in the process of change” (41). Where representations are rooted in ideology and knowledge, representational space is “redolent with imaginary and symbolic elements,” and has its “source in history – in the history of a people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people” (Lefebvre 41). In effect, representations of space, which are largely based on history, become so fragmented for exiles that it is questionable whether they ever exist.

Medina's book title, *The Marks of Birth*, refers to spatial representations and pushes readers to question how we are shaped by our own surroundings. The marks mentioned in the title relate not only to representational and representations of space, but also to physical characteristics that mark us. The birthmark on Antón García-Turner, a

central character in Medina's text, serves as an analogy for this situation through its multiple meanings about memories, ideals, and conceptions. It signifies the hegemonic production that conceives the representations of space cast upon a society and reveals the aftereffects of representational space. This type of space is created when representations of space melt away and representational spaces shift from being passively inhabited to being the core of spatial production.

To understand this trajectory, we must start prior to exile, at the moment when spaces are formed and then depleted. Even before exile as an action, departures from the home country and the definition of hegemonic powers and the representations of space are shifting. This disturbance in spatial production perpetuates the blurred lines between representational space and representations of space. The Cuban exile arrives in a new country with no knowledge of the established representations of space. First, the exile establishes some sort of home base. Then, through living in this alleged representation of space, he or she creates a representational space, and therein lies one of many paradoxes of the spatial context: this representational space is no longer passive because new culture is produced through it, regardless of the hegemonic attributes of the assumed producer of the representation of space where the representational space exists. This, however, does not mean that Lefebvre's modes of space are obsolete; it simply means that they are not moving in the way that he anticipates, that the manner in which exile is "produced by human beings for other human beings" (Said 174) changes the systematic alignment that designates who is and who is not a producer of space.

Representations of space and representational space meld together for the exile because both become dominant producers of space. While Lefebvre posits that these form of space have varying qualities and are just pieces of spatial productions, the distinction and the ability to move between conceived and lived space is severely altered by exile. Spatial production in the conceived and lived realms is transformed, equaling a paradigmatic shift in the method by which uprooted (or exiled) persons identify themselves. According to Lefebvre, such shifts render his models of space abstract and without logic. Therefore, representational spaces and representations of space merge together, without ideology, to become a new space that transcends Lefebvre's definitions and guidelines (Lefebvre 41). Where representations of space were once yielding to rules of cohesiveness and consistency, they are now representational space, which is "qualitative, fluid dynamic" (Lefebvre 42). Production from either type of space is halted and accelerated in the sense that there is no way to qualify or quantify it without the conceptual means. Exiles are completely removed and cut off from their history, which is at the core of this space. Instead of a space where one can

produce thoughts and ideas, there is a stagnant space where many who are in exile appear to be trapped.

This may be why it is common for exiles to feel displaced, as if they were living in limbo between two worlds. According to Edward Said, an "exile is never in the state of being satisfied, placid, or secure" (186). These feelings respond to a lack of strong concepts of representations of space. Lefebvre states that representational space is comprised of history, "childhood memories, dreams, or uterine symbols" (Lefebvre 39). Although the exile would still have access to these mental components, they would only be accessible through what Chinua Achebe calls a "diminished existence" (70): "What is both unfortunate and unjust is the pain the person dispossessed is forced to bear in the act of dispossession itself and subsequently in the trauma of the diminished existence" (Achebe 70). This relates to a question that is present, to some regard, in all the chapters of this dissertation: "Who am I?"

Those who are displaced suffer from extreme feeling of nothingness and, as a result, the answer to identity-related questions that are related to representational space is "I am nothing." The memories that create representations of space are painful for those in exile. If simply accessing these memories or ideas is something that carries with it adverse reactions, then how exactly are they accessed? How much do they mean if they make the exile's entire existence seem unsavory and full of pain? These questions do not have concrete answers, but they are something that those examining this space in conjunction with exile must keep at the forefront of our minds.

The Pain of Exile

Medina makes pain very relatable by creating a lead character that is blighted by his physical appearance since the moment he is born. Anyone reading and empathizing with the characters of *The Marks of Birth* can relate to having some type of physical imperfection altering one's daily existence. Placing value on aesthetics is a tenant of our society. Antón is marked from birth, at first simply by his physical appearance and later by the spaces that surround him: "Even wrapped in the fine Holland sheets presented to him by maternal cousins, the boy looked like a freak, more rodent than human" (5). As a result, Antón's grandmother, Felicia, believes that he will never make it in the world, a fear that begins to dominate her every waking and sleeping hour. Because the boy is born into this physical appearance, he is passively living in the space that is conceived by the hegemonic powers who have defined beauty and acceptability. Essentially, what Felicia thinks is that someone as ugly as Antón has no place in the world. She wholeheartedly believes that his looks will set the context for every part of his life. From birth, Antón receives the messages that he is not worthy of the same respect and benefits in life as others. His existence is diminished by the family's matriarch and society before he even goes into

exile. Perhaps Medina uses this as an analogy to make more relatable a concept that is difficult to understand: being deemed unworthy by an entire society simply for being who you are mimics how many exiles may feel upon entering a new homeland. The mere fact that one is in exile means that one's existence may be diminished.

Antón's grandmother acts as a dominant force in his life by producing a space where his representational space is delegated by his looks. Felicia believes that she, as the "unofficial head of the family had no small part in setting the tone and direction of its existence on this earth" (Medina 6). She is, therefore, a producer of space and expects the rest of her family to passively exist in the realm that she has conceived. This dynamic also parallels the relationship between the exile and his or her role in a new homeland. Because Antón is not attractive, Felicia sees him as worthless; in her mind he will not make a mark for his family. Under these circumstances, she is the hegemonic power, the creator of home life and the designator of space. The termination of the dominant space in both the over-arching governmental sphere and the sphere of the household is inverted from the first pages of the book when Medina informs readers that the political climate is tense. He also reveals that the representational space on the island of Barata (Medina's representation of Cuba, a representation of space that ironically means cheap in Spanish) and the imaginary main city of the book (Havana) are losing dominant ideological power.

This brings us back to Antón's birthmark, shaped like a map of Barata, a map of his life. It is his own piece of conceived space that Felicia believed would act as the dominant negative force in his life.

At this early stage in the text, Antón's infancy leaves him impervious to the spaces caused and occurring because of his marks of birth. While Antón escapes such stressors, his aesthetic appearance causes Felicia to revisit her own representational spaces. After his baptism, she begins to think of her childhood and the town where she grew up. The thoughts of her childhood and the move from her small town to a larger city trigger more recent memories of the latest spatial shifts in her life.

Luis, Felicia's adulterous husband and sole caretaker of the family, suddenly died and in order to support her family, which was something she did without any hesitation, she found herself alongside the same type of women with whom her husband cheated on her (Medina 9). Therefore, we now have Felicia, who came from an upper-class existence where working was not required, thrust into the throes of manual labor with people whom she considers lower than herself. This adjustment and knowledge of different variations of representational space oblige Felicia to be more aware of the changes space encompasses and ensures that the "pre-existing space was destroyed from top to bottom" (Lefebvre 152).

Even with the destruction of the previous space and Felicia's displacement that mimics the displacement of exile, she feels that her space is not akin to the people with whom she shares representations of space. She feels that she is "oceans away from them," while she is really side-by-side (Medina 9). This difference comes from Felicia's desire to be set apart from that which she feels is subordinate and to ultimately resist another destruction of space. Again, there is a clear parallel to the displacement of exile and how one might acclimate or, rather, try to acclimate to a new space. Felicia recognizes that the hegemonic forces in her country are losing their ideological standings, which will bring about another rapid change.

Felicia outwardly lives in a world of denial about the impending shift. Aside from nightmares and a general sense of uneasiness, her recreated space (after Luis's death) remains unaltered until Antón's birth and a subsequent lunch date with her brother Antonio. Antonio is an idealist intellectual who feels that space is being dominated in the wrong way. In a proactive attempt to show Felicia that change is inevitable, he takes her to lunch and lets his thoughts be known. As they eat a lunch that they both recognize as decadent and bizarrely excessive, Antonio states:

"The red snapper's face, who does it look like?" Felicia didn't need to answer. It was a common fact that the President looked like a fish.
 "Corruption is the sauce that makes people stomach him. And in the end everyone benefits"
 "Antonio, how can you say that?"
 "Because it's true. So long as there is enough sauce left over for the other politicians to swim in, the President stays in power, the money flows freely, people have jobs, and we can sleep soundly at night. The rest is ideological crap. Eat your fish and enjoy the sauce." (Medina 14)

Through this dialogue, we know that the ideology is failing; the people of Barata know this and therefore, representations of space are "relative and in the process of change" (Lefebvre 41). What Antonio does not realize is that Felicia is not completely blind to the changes before her. She feels them and her anxiety and neurosis increase as she waits for impending doom. As Lefebvre states, "Logic will sooner or later break" representations of space "up because of their lack of consistency" (41). Moreover, it is logic that tears at Felicia and shapes her vision of Antonio.

This lack of consistency is further explored when Felicia considers her love for her homeland, and its capital city in particular: "This is the most wonderful city in the world. Paris is for arrogant fools; London is cold and clammy; Rome is where the Pope shits. No, thank you" (Medina 12). At this moment, the representational spaces and representations of space are working for Felicia. She does not envision a time where she will leave her

homeland, because it encompasses her ideologies and her identity. In her mind, she has gone through the idea of living in other cities, but has decided that none of them can compare to Havana. The cities Felicia uses for her comparison are all locations with vast representations of space and dense populations that live in this space. Paris, London, and Rome are considered great cities and, in essence, the cultural centers of France, Britain, and Italy – all of which are widely shaped by their hegemonic governments. Aligning the imaginary capital city of Barata with these three metropolises shows that Felicia accepts the hegemonic dominance that conceives the space where she lives.

Acceptance of hegemonic powers does not necessarily indicate that Felicia agrees with the way space is produced and represented in her country. She enjoys her pre-revolution luxuries and becomes extremely upset when all of her favorite food items are no longer available to her, but the value she places on Antón's outward appearance shows her real confusion. She is so deeply perturbed by Antón's physical features that she allows them to disrupt her representational spaces. Felicia often finds herself feeling like an outsider when wondering why no one else in her family is afflicted by Antón's looks. After Antón is born, she is perplexed when Antonio flippantly mentions his appearance:

“Is it the baby that bothers you?” he said. Felicia stopped rocking and looked away. She said she did not want to talk about it, but meant otherwise. After a moment of silence, she asked her brother if he had seen him. “Just now. A strange looking child. Put together by a committee without a blueprint.” “I had all the best plans. With his looks little can be done,” she admitted.

“Felicia, since when have you bothered with appearances?”

“Appearances help.”

“The boy will do fine.” (Medina 11)

From this passage, it is clear that Felicia had a plan for Antón. The fact that he has been born into the world with a look she does not approve of means that whatever idealized foresight she had for him may not come to fruition as he does not fit the idealized mold she had been hoping for. Instead he is diminished by his appearance. He is cursed in a way and this is another analogy for how Felicia feels about her homeland. In some ways, because of his Barata-shaped birthmark, Antón is Cuba, but he is also the impending new homeland as he signifies change. Although Antonio mentions “blueprints” as a figurative correlation to explain what may have happened when Antón developed in the womb, this reference is completely literal for Felicia: she truly hoped that Antón would be a conceived production of space

and now with the improper plans, she believes that her project, her hegemonic conception is worthless.

After lunch with Antonio, Felicia dreams of a creature whom she later calls the “devil in disguise” (Medina 22). She is so distraught by her dream that she consults her best friend and spiritual guide Marina, and they determine that this so-called devil is actually a representation of Antón. As Felicia’s spatial representations unravel due to the conceived space in which she exists not allowing for feeble looking “creatures” like Antón, she tells Marina: “He’s (Antón) a great disappointment;” to which Marina replies, “He will surprise you. Trust your inner light –it is telling you something” (Medina 220). If Antón represents the new, the force that will push Cubans out of their comfort zone, Felicia’s aversion to him makes sense. Marina, on the other hand, is not so fearful of change and sees that Antón and, more important, what Antón represents is not necessarily negative.

In an attempt to grasp Marina’s guidance, Felicia visits Antón the next day. For the first time since his birth, she takes the time to touch him and thoroughly inspect him. Initially, she is not encouraged, but soon she notices Antón’s birthmark and realizes that she too has the same stain above her right kidney. As she glances and touches Antón’s naked body, she comes to his genitals and thinks to herself, “Here is the future. This will people your land” (Medina 27). In this moment, Felicia knows that Antón remains a producer of space. He will create offspring and this is her substitute for the aesthetically-based plans she had for him prior to birth. He will create history, take part in rituals and define symbols, he will produce the inhabitants that exist in representational space and will continue the network of thoughts and emotions that create Cuban identity.

As Felicia comes to terms with Antón’s role in life, she remembers Marina’s words:

Your hope will be born of earth. Foresight comes after looking hard through the whirlwind of confusion, after your inner eye surrenders all expectation (outer light) and creates its own light, with which it can identify the forms that fortune presents to it. Only then can you revel in change and see clearly that every transmutation is one more revolution of the wheel of fortune. Once you learn to revolve with the wheel, all time stops, which allows you to leave the horizontal and conduces to vertical growth. (Medina 21)

With these ideas circling in her mind and immediately after the shift in Antón’s spatial constructs, Felicia falls into a speechless state and her doctor determines that she is “suffering from hysteria” (Medina 29). This physical ailment signifies Felicia’s awareness and understanding that perhaps Antón’s unfavorable physical characteristics are of no matter and that her

feeling, or rather assumptions about how he would fit in into conceived spaces are suddenly futile. Felicia's representations of space are shifting and modifying the "spatial textures which are informed by effective knowledge and ideology" (Lefebvre 42). The marks of birth mean so much more than the shallow exterior elements; the idea that physical appearance somehow equals self-worth is needless. Felicia now understands that her initial judgment of her own grandchild was cold-hearted. Her own temerity shames her; she sees the error of the ideology that guides her and can no longer speak. There ceases to be a reason for her to communicate with others during this time. Perhaps she catches a glimpse of the future of her people and her homeland, or realizes that Antón is an analogy for the future of Cuba, imperfect, but nevertheless still existing.

Antonio and Antón

These same spaces are being modified for Antonio as well. His space is literally destroyed by the coming of Nicolás Campión, Barata's new revolutionary leader. Fearing for his life, Antonio uses Felicia's house as a refuge where he feels he can "hide in relative safety" (Medina 102). The rest of the family fears that Antonio will bring chaos into their household at the hands of the government, but Antonio assures them: "I'm getting old. The police won't come. The rebels won't. Leave me to my parrots and prepare yourselves. The government is going to fall soon. Worry about Nicolás Campión. He is what's coming" (Medina 106). The lived and conceived spaces of the family unit are jarred by Antonio's presence in the house. When Antonio comes to live with Felicia, he cuts off contact from the outside world. Antonio is stifled and because of this, he passes on knowledge and ideology to Antón and his pet parrots. This desire is propagated by the spatial shifts of the country and dissolution of his own personal representational space.

Antón is ready to learn and embraces the lessons from his uncle. The whole family knows that he is different from other children. He is born reading Plato and speaking about calculus. This acceleration of skills is a symbol for the speed at which Antón will be plunged into adulthood after exile. He encompasses the knowledge of all of Cuba, as his consciousness is a collective one, and knows things that others cannot understand. He is a symbol for his homeland. Even before Antonio's lessons, Antón is on the verge of breaking through the constructs of space at all times. He acts on his own accord, is egged on by Antonio and, for the most part, his family seems amused by his personality. In an effort to dispel the current ideologies, Antonio began to "to teach the boy a vast body of eccentric facts and obscure anecdotes that bore no relationship to each other than that they occurred to Antonio during the hour of instruction" (Medina 108). Soon, Antón has a plethora of facts memorized and recites them at school much to the displeasure of the principal. Coincidentally, just as Antón is going to be kicked out of school, the political climate in the country shifts and the school

closes down. Antón does not belong in the school or in his homeland. He has outgrown the infrastructure at the most primitive level and is preparing for not only his departure from the school, but also for his departure from Cuba.

Immediately after Campión takes over, Antón senses that there is something off about the representational space of the city. He thinks to himself:

half the city was still celebrating; the other half, including his family had returned to their normal lives. There was work to do and business to take care of. It was then that Antón sensed momentarily that radical change is illusory, and that the slow current of time flows on unimpeded by the earth-shatters of history. (115)

Antonio's lessons are what enable Antón to anticipate the spatial deviations that lie before him. Suddenly, the family is rushing to leave the island and Antón's idea that change is illusory takes on a different meaning, because now fleeing the homeland has become real and tangible. There is nothing imaginary about this change, but it does not make sense to Antón until he is out to sea, on his way to the United States. He thinks back to the representational and recreations of space and realizes that they are no longer absolute to him; he is not sure what they mean, since they are not concrete. He is no longer a product of conceived space and he cannot live passively in representational space. Suddenly, Antón is an outsider not only to the new country that he is fast approaching, but also to the country that he is steadily leaving. The morning after their exile, Antón awakes to a true glimpse of his surroundings:

Around him was the flat, calm sea. The landmarks that had once defined him –the trees of the back yard, the kitchen where he would sit and listen to Munda's stories, the very ground he walked daily from his house to Felicia's and back –were gone and the only solid spot left to him was a thirty-foot pile of weather-worn wood, which could, at the merest swell, fall to pieces. (Medina 133)

This may be the first moment when Antón is truly aware of the multitude of spaces that surround him. When we decode space, we become aware of "just how many spaces exist, each of them susceptible to multiple decodings" (Lefebvre 163). Antón realizes that he is defined by his spaces. The representational and representations of space come together to create a calm sense of certainty that produced his identity and sense of confidence as a Baratan (Cuban). The homeland disappears and can no longer be visited. Likewise, the relationship between exile and homeland melds together while

simultaneously drifting apart to create a new type of space, a space that as Lefebvre suggests, is fluid and logical in a manner that makes it truly consistent.

Luckily for Antón, he is not appalled at the thought of leaving his home country. He, unlike his parents and grandmother, thinks, “leaving the island was like waking from a dream. Bad or good, he didn’t yet know” (Medina 137). He tries to make sense of his exile and “the area where ideology and knowledge are barely distinguishable is subsumed under the broader notion of representation, which thus supplants the concept of ideology and becomes a serviceable toll for the analysis of spaces...” (Lefebvre 45). Antón spends his entire life understanding this toll and it is not until the very end of the plot, and ultimately his life, that this toll culminates.

Adjustments in Space

When they arrive in Key West, Florida, Antón and his parents obtain a hotel room to rest and wait for family friend, Lucho to greet them at the airport. They stay at the first hotel they see and the family is surprised and internally relieved that the desk clerk “responded in perfect Spanish” (Medina 142). They are uncomfortable and nervous that one of the townspeople will know that they have just arrived from Cuba by way of a secret boat. When they get to their room, there is a vibrating bed. The dichotomy here is that most Americans think of vibrating beds as cheap and for use in rooms that rent by the hour. For Antón and his family, this bed is such a novelty that it makes them all laugh. It is strange and somehow brings about a sense of physical comfort in their new surroundings. For the family, the bed acts as a representation of a representational space. But now they are in Florida producing their own space, a space that is in many ways free of the hegemonic control that dictated lives on Barata. The separation between the two still exists, yet the boundaries are blended as both are created because of exile. Thus, Medina states, “in a matter of minutes, Fernando (Antón’s father) was his old self again, patient and tolerant and kind as a palm tree” (144). The representational spaces are abstract enough that they follow the family. Now, however, the family produces its own space. They are not passively living in a world that was constructed for them, but are living in an environment that they have to construct for themselves. The buildings themselves, the literal conceptions of space, are already standing, but the hegemonic forces directing how they are to feel are out of context and can no longer demand how space should be – at least for now.

While Antón and his parents are adjusting to their new life in the United States, Felicia is still in Barata without her family. As the one who is left behind, Felicia is distraught and perhaps feels even more uncomfortable with her space than ever. Felicia feels the distance from her family and senses that space has shifted. She “stood at her back door and saw her

family being swallowed by the morning dark into a future she was not a part of” (Medina 163). This future means that she no longer shares representations of space with her family. They still have their memories, but they now exist under different ideologies and new types of knowledge. At this point, Felicia is weakening in the sense that she loses the ability to produce space. Without her family, she is subject to the conceived and lived space as it is defined by the new government. She is trapped and her family is gone. She lives passively in the space that she is provided, even though the physical space is the same as before the revolution and the departure of her family.

Only Felicia’s imagination is powerful now and before she has contact with her family, she imagines that they “had been captured and were being questioned by the secret police, or that they had been lost at sea and were at the moment being torn to pieces by Caribbean sharks, or that the boat had been blown off course by a storm and shipwrecked on a desolate shore (Medina 165). The manner in which her imagination tries to alter or define the reality that is already set into motion, regardless of what is actually transpiring is what Lefebvre describes as a “passively experienced space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (39). At this point in her life, Felicia is passively living in a representation of space. She waits for word from her family and waits for her new government to define the space that surrounds her. She is displaced without even leaving her homeland or the comfort of her own home.

Her only consolation is that she has her brother Antonio, but as the family originally feared, this new Baratan hegemonic power leads to Antonio’s capture and subsequent death. Through the loss of Antonio, Felicia again becomes a dominant force in her own creation of space and she painstakingly makes her way to the United States. She is reunited with her family, with Antón. The transition was not easy as “the world in English was not a world to her at all. She tried to have Antón teach her a few English phrases, but the times they sat together he seemed diffident and distrustful and none too eager to help her...” (Medina 183). Similarly, to the situation in which she was suffering after her family left Cuba, Felicia’s sense of space is fragmented.

We do not know if Antón is distrustful and unwilling to help his grandmother. This may or may not be reality, but whatever the case, it is Felicia’s reality and all these feelings conjure up more uneasiness and make her more aware of her status as an exile and an outsider. The passive and active nature does not apply to her in the same way it applied to Antón and his parents. While they are willing to recreate space in the U.S., Felicia is not. The productive process of space is related to history and Felicia is cut off from her history (Lefebvre 46). Every society has its own space and we can call the exile community, even the small García-Tuner family, a miniature society. As exiles, they work to create this space and this is what Lefebvre

calls a societal process (34). Years pass and soon the family becomes the microcosm of a society with a multitude of spaces, even though, according to Lefebvre, “the producers of space have always acted in accordance with a representation, which the ‘users’ passively experience whatever was imposed upon them inasmuch as it was more or less thoroughly inserted into, or justified, be their representational space” (43). Despite the fact that the family is not in the position to take on the role of spatial production in a power-related sense, they do more than simply accept the space that is handed to them. The space they are handed is so barren that they must create it. They must make a new history with new symbols and meanings to call their own.

The symbolic and imaginary elements of space are convoluted when there is no conceptualization. Lefebvre asks his reader to consider whether or not societal artifacts mean anything without ideology. His answer is yes. Societal artifacts are representational symbols even when ideology has dissipated. Facets of identity are carried over regardless of location, even when ideologies go along with belonging to a country. Hegemonies lose the power to create space when entire communities are banished from their country and the country itself abandons all past ideologies. For example, a building without a concept means nothing as does lived space without a context. This context is related to nationalism. According to Said, “We come to nationalism and its essential association with exile. Nationalism is an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage” (176). This is lost after exile and as such, spatial representations are also lost. Both must be reproduced so that lived spaces become active, shifting, and as fluid as representations of space. This is the pain of exile, “the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted” (Said 174). Somehow, Antón found a way to minimize the predicament through obscurity. The “anonymity of the streets” of New York equaled his hope, growth, and freedom (Medina 151). When he exists in a space without clear boundaries of lived and conceived, without the stigma of being Baratan, exiled, or displaced he feels at ease. This resentment of attachment to anything that resembles a solid foundation follows Antón throughout his entire life and comes to fruition at the time of Felicia’s funeral.

From his first experiences in the United States, Antón knows: “In the new land there could be no ‘my country,’ because that was an illusion, not an answer. In the new land, ‘my country’ became ‘myself’” (Medina 215). With this weighing heavily on his mind, he attends Felicia’s funeral and while it is a tragic day for the family, Felicia’s dying wish that her ashes be returned to Barata is all anyone can think about. As the matriarch and dominant force of the family and all of her friends, everyone wants to complete Felicia’s final desire even though they know it is unattainable. Venturing back into this

unknown space of the homeland is so far away from reality that it is not even a possibility. The ideologies of the island were restricted to the exiled family and because of that, the representation of space was unfeasible. As Lefebvre points out, “everyday life figures in representational spaces – or perhaps it would be more accurate that it forms such spaces” these people had no real idea of how to return to the homeland” (116). With metaphoric return blocked off, literal return is impossible.

While the rest of the family remains stagnant in their non-Cuban space, Antón has a revelation that follows closely with his optimism for hope and freedom: for him, “Felicia’s death means the end of the family” (Medina 269). Felicia, the producer of space for the entire family, becomes their Barata. Felicia and what she represents are gone. She was the country and without her, a situation that is not necessarily negative, he can stand on his own. Even though the family had gone separate ways, her existence acted as a hegemonic ideology that gave a sense of purpose to the family, especially to Antón. For this reason, he joins the U.S. army, becomes a pilot, and plans to participate in the invasion of Barata. At Felicia’s funeral, all of his fears about the disbanding of his space come true. As he kneels in front of his grandmother’s body:

he noticed the smell, sweet, pungent, and organic, coming from all around him and settling over Felicia. It was a scent he had smelled before thought, before language, before he knew what it was to live or to die, to suffer and to dream, before he had a name, before the world was the world. (Medina 271)

This encounter with Felicia’s corpse transports him back to Barata and suddenly nothing else seems more important or worthy of his life than returning Felicia’s ashes to the homeland.

Conclusion

Felicia represents Antón’s ideology and his grounding force. She acted as the dominant force in his spatial life, created his space, and allowed him to be the foremost imperative force in his sense of self as it relates to space. In Lefebvre's words, “What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose codes it embodies?” (Lefebvre 44). Without Felicia, representational and representations of space are archaic. There is no production and without production, there is no society and no history. This is what motivates Antón to steal a plane and return Felicia’s ashes to the homeland.

Although, Antón does not make a big production out of his return with his family, “Half a dozen people, up early in the capitol that day, reported something incredible: a small American plane flying ten feet off the ocean swooped up over the breakwater and dropped what appeared to be a rain of

ashes over the Boulevard of Fallen Heroes” (276). In stealing the plane Antón himself becomes one of these fallen heroes; he defied spatial constructs. Ideological and physical dividers that bind exiles from the homeland become irrelevant to Antón. He takes an American plane that was going to be employed to invade Barata and uses it to return something monumental, something that exists as a representational space to the homeland. Conceived and lived space and their definitions mean nothing because Antón takes over to become a producer in both realms. After spreading the ashes, “the plane circled back out to sea in the direction of el Norte. It was the last time anyone saw or heard of Antón García-Turner” (Medina 276). The irony is that he entered and exited the United States anonymously and then enters and exits his homeland in the exact same manner. Nameless, nationless and lacking in identity. Disconnection from the representational and representations of space, allowed Antón to supersede them and not focus his attention on space or his homeland. In the end, the only truth is that, “the only thing we can count on is the irremediable passage of time, which does not stop with one’s death, but continues in spite of it” (Medina 115). Whether Antón is living or not, he, just like his grandmother, leaves a legacy that contuse on in one way or another. There is a progression of time, a progression of space, and nothing can stop it. Antón and Felicia create new perceptions and conceptions of space when Lefebvre’s representations do not pertain them. They produce space on their own terms by letting go of the spatial constructs that were supposed to define them and leaving space to unfold on its own after their deaths.

Chapter two takes these representations of space and moves them to a context that deals with location and literal memory. This dichotomy is similar to the relationships portrayed in this chapter, but instead of Lefebvre as the theoretical background, we shift to a more tangible realm of space where the role of geographical identification is at the forefront of the exile experience. According to Lefebvre, “established relations between objects and people represented in spaces” (55) will not last, but what we see in subsequent chapters is that these relationships not only last, but become the building blocks for identity as a complex organism that exists collectively through space and time among cultures regardless of location. The changes in space that shift from representations to solid concepts rely on the idea that objects mean something collectively to exiles. The chapter begins by describing the chosen literature and then continues by recounting the process of spatial orientation, specifically wayfinding. I then proceed to argue that exiles may orient themselves to new locations and come to terms with exile by using object, both mental (from memory) and from maps to become familiar with and in turn accept their new surroundings.

Memories floated down from the trees: cane fields, the smokehouse and its hanging meats, breeze of orange and bamboo, a singing at dawn.

Pablo Medina

Chapter Two: Maps and Wayfinding in the Worldview of Exiles

Geographers and psychologists have conducted numerous studies on the way the mind codifies landscape information for the sake of mapping and wayfinding. This chapter takes some of this information and applies it to the way Cuban American exile writer Daína Chaviano regulates exile in *The Island of Eternal Love* (2008). This novel explores the journey into a new homeland and subsequently into exile. The concepts of mapping and wayfinding, which are sometimes stable, sometimes fluid and sometimes authoritative, are altered for the sake of this chapter. The meanings themselves are shifted from a geographical, social science context into the realm of the humanities. The melancholia, nostalgia and displacement related to Cuban American exiles in the United States creates a space based on location and memories that is distinctly related to this subset of exiles. By exploring the role of space in memories, imaginations, and visually rich descriptions of locations within Chaviano's text, new concepts of how space exists for those who must come to terms with their homeland through wayfinding and mapping are created.

The characters in *The Island of Eternal Love* visualize a space that represents a lost homeland. This space is hence appropriated and converted into one that can only be conceived of in the context of exile. This interdisciplinary close reading inverts the emphasis of location, maps and wayfinding. The focus assumes that we generally agree that maps are made to define boundaries and to orient those who travel. I agree that wayfinding occurs and continue to hone in on how the different methods by which physical space is abstract or familiar form come to fruition for the Cuban American exile whose homeland is linked with pain, confusion, melancholia, and lasting compulsory removal from the homeland.

While there are clearly multiple viewpoints about mapping and wayfinding and a long history of how geographers and psychologists define these two tenants as they apply to identity, this chapter will focus primarily on the definitions of mapping and wayfinding set forth by Tim Ingold's *Perception of the Environment: Essays in Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* and Alfred Gell's article "How to Read a Map: Remarks on the Practical Logic of Navigation." Ingold and Gell's arguments revolve around the existence of two types of wayfinding and how the overarching map is situated in this framework. In this chapter, I will show how both types construct various stages of exile identity and how the exile, in fact, uses both types to navigate through their displaced life.

All humans use memories to map and navigate their surroundings, but Cuban American exiles go through their day-to-day lives without being able to return to the place whence they originated. Because time changes the homeland, some exiles know that these memory-based maps or, more precisely, their memories are not connected to anything that actually exists. *The Island of Eternal Love* is a story about how Cecilia, the main character and an exile, mediates these changes and creates a new space that exists contrapuntally with the old space with which she grapples to identify. Cecilia comes to understand these changes alongside a mysterious storyteller named Amalia who shows her that space does not exist in stasis around us. According to Doreen Massey, space should be understood “as an open ongoing production” (55) that is changeable and altered by time. The idea that space is malleable has an emotional impact on identity. Specifically, those who are in exile and grossly subject to the complexities and interrelations of spatial and temporal facets of their surroundings may feel the emotional impact of attempting to navigate spatial understanding as an evolving process.

The Processes of Wayfinding

The process of wayfinding “encompasses all of the ways in which people and animals orient themselves in physical space and navigate from place to place” (ohiorivertrail.org n.p.). This orientation is usually completed via multiple mental, emotional and physical cues. It is a subjective experience that varies from person to person, as everyone sees the world in his or her own way. According to Ingold, wayfinding “resembles story-telling” and this is what takes us back to Chaviano’s text and the multiple location-heavy stories within it that serve to orient not only Cecilia, but also the reader (219).

As Cecilia learns more and more about what, at the time, she does not even realize is her own history, her wayfinding journey begins. In this journey, she is, as Ingold posits, apprehending the world from within: “one makes one’s way through it, not over or across it” (Ingold 241). Chaviano uses Amalia’s stories to weave in and out of different temporal periods and to show us how Cecilia, and her family before her, acclimated first to life as immigrants and second to life as exiles. The detail-rich descriptions of the surroundings of all of Chaviano’s characters shows us that “wayfinding depends upon the attunement of the traveller's movements in response to the movements of his or her surroundings, of other people, animals, the wind, celestial bodies and so on” (Ingold 241). There is a clear syncing up between various attributes of spatial formations. What we do does not depend singularly on our own accord, but rather on our sense of literally everything that surrounds us. There is an Occam’s razor effect here. The dynamic may seem complex at first but the simplest explanation is the correct one -- we are attuned to everything that surrounds us as what we are surrounded by makes us who and what we are.

Although Ingold and Gell do not agree on the exact details of the process of wayfinding, it is generally agreed that there are two methods: mental mapping and practical mastery. Both forms of wayfinding incorporate movement between fluid or fixed representation of the spatial world. Pragmatically speaking, it is the person within that moves with space because space is always ongoing. Anthropologists Kirill Istomin and Mark J. Dwyer offer a succinct summation of the two methods provided above. The components of mental mapping “whereby humans build abstract cognitive representations of the spatial relations between objects” (Istomin & Dwyer 21) are less personal than practical mastery, which is “informal, subjective, and based on habit and familiarity” (Gell 273). Mental maps feature “relative stability” and “once a position has been determined in relation to another encoded object in the map, one’s position to all other objects becomes automatically known” (Istomin and Dwyer 30). Therefore, wayfinding according to the mental map theory means that the traveler is “plotting a route in relation to the objects and places (landmarks or hallmarks) encoded in a mental map; during the course of a person’s travel, movement is made from one landmark to another” (Istomin & Dwyer 30).

With practical mastery wayfinding:

the subject identifies his position by matching the landscape image which opens up around him with one previously filed. In order to proceed towards a chosen destination, he moves so as to create around himself a chain of linked landscape images corresponding to an image of higher order, extended in time as well as in space. (Gell 274-75)

Therefore, while progressing through the journey, one learns about where one is going. Travelers do not procure their location based on landmarks that advise them of their location.

Both forms of wayfinding fit with Massey’s idea of space as ongoing, always changing and related to geography and history. The “internal negotiation” of space/place is based on “constructed relationally” (Massey 11). Gell and Ingold work off of this relationality and Massey believes that spatial interconnections cannot be likened to the interconnections of, say, phenomenology. Instead, the interrelations are not set in stone and the future of space is open (Massey 12). It is this openness that Massey uses to assert that space is made of historical trajectories: “If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of a plurality” (Massey 9). This plurality means that space should be seen “as the dimension of multiple trajectories, simultaneity of stories-so-far” (Massey 24). Of course, stories so far denote history and history signifies time. How these trajectories come together and form/inform our ideas about space and how we

orient ourselves provide those with a diminished homeland with more substance to grasp when recreating a place to call home and when contemplating the pain and trauma that informs exile.

Gaps in Time and Space

In an attempt to rectify the gaps between her own sense of time, space and history, Cecilia, wanders around Miami in a daze due to her anguish over being in exile. She feels alone and out of place, which is typical for someone in her position. Cecilia left Cuba in 1994 and never wanted to return. At this early stage in the story, four years after her initial exile, “she was still afloat. She wanted nothing to do with the country she has left behind, but she still felt like a stranger in a city that housed the largest number of Cubans in the world after Havana” (Chaviano 6). At no point in the story does Cecilia completely give up on her desire to come to terms with her exile. She has a few close friends and often visits Cuban nightclubs in an attempt to be social, to alleviate her loneliness and melancholy, and to see if she can establish methods to assimilate somewhere again. She ventures out into the world hoping that her physical location and her existence in space and time will become clear as she experiences it.

Cuban nightclubs illustrate Cecilia’s desire to hold on to surroundings that are familiar and remind her of the homeland. When Cecilia enters the bar on the night she meets Amalia, she thinks to herself, “a sort of energy floated in the bar, a whiff of enchantment, as if the door to another universe had opened” (5). Of course, this universe is one that she has physically left behind (Cuba) and in its place a halfway world exists. This halfway universe evokes memories of her homeland and as she listens to a bolero playing in the background, she soon finds herself missing the nuances of her homeland: “She realized she was beginning to miss the gestures and sayings, even certain expressions she had detested when she lived on the island, an entire lexicon of murky neighborhoods that she was now dying to hear in this city” (Chaviano 6). Hoping to resolve the conflict over her feelings for Miami and Cuba, Cecilia attempts something outside of the normal realm of her job as a reporter; she decides to write a story about a house that vanishes and reappears in various areas of Miami. Cecilia’s friend Gaia, from Cuba, had actually seen the house appear and it is from her that Cecilia procures her first description.

The house is portrayed as “ancient, wooden... Two stories. It looked like it had been built to face the sea. The top floor had a balcony all around” and “crowned by a slanted roof, similar to the earliest constructions built in Miami a century ago” (Chaviano 25, 63). At the time, Cecilia does not realize that the house belongs in Cuba and she is essentially in denial that the house is related to Cuba for most of her encounter with it. She will not allow herself to see it as a landmark or a code that she can utilize to find her way. The house does not orient her; instead, it de-oriens her and her overall confusion

and inability to find her way in Miami is heightened. In the beginning, Cecilia perceives the space of the house as a static surface despite the fact that it observably moves through space and time by appearing at different locations at distinctive times.

Cecilia's mistake here is to assume that the house is a "continuous surface" that is reminiscent of something authoritative that bears down on her (Massey 63). Even though this is exactly what she should not do, she allows the rigidness of the house to act as "the colonizer, as the only active agent [that], crosses to find the to-be colonized simply 'there.' This would be space not as a smooth surface but as the sphere of coexistence of a multiplicity of trajectories" (Massey 63). In this instance, the house acts as the conqueror because it makes Cecilia feel out of place, uncomfortable and oppressed. The house is mysterious to Cecilia and it becomes her "Holy Grail" (Chaviano 149). It turns into a "source of anxiety" as she empathizes with its historical implications (Chaviano 149). Its effects on her become so great that "she didn't need to see it in order to feel the traces of melancholy left behind at the locations where the house had appeared or the feelings of nostalgia in the air, bordering on sadness, that lingered after the vision had vanished" (Chaviano 150). As the house stands throughout much of the book, Cecilia is not able to grasp it. Because of this, she is unable to orient herself around the house and wayfinding is therefore impossible.

What we see in the present-day sections of Chaviano's text is Cecilia trying everything to navigate through an unrecognizable landscape. There is no stability, no landmarks and no interconnections that Cecilia can comprehend. She is contending with how to understand what the house actually means and interestingly, it is not until she makes a physical map that she is able to solidify some of the house's meanings. Even though the map itself is not as fortuitous and she had hoped, its stability is just what she needs.

At Gaia's suggestion, Cecilia uses a red crayon to mark all the house sighting locations on a Miami city map, but despite all of her efforts, "she didn't see any special pattern or anything else that indicated a logical sequence" (Chaviano 229). Even though a pattern is not provided, at first, Cecilia develops a bird's eye view of the trajectory of the house. The map she creates allows her to "traverse the surface of the map whose layout is fixed in advance" (Ingold 155). After she takes this step, wayfinding can begin. She can now orient herself by feeling her "way *through* a world that is itself in motion" (Ingold 155). In fact, Cecilia was always oriented by the house because it appears near her. Its locations on the map followed her and all the places she had lived in the four years she has been in Miami. This, combined with the house only appearing on Cuban national holidays, makes the appearances temporal and historical. The house shows Cecilia that "places do not have locations but histories bound together by itineraries of their

inhabitants, places exist not in space, but as nodes in a matrix of movement” (Ingold 219). Cecilia knows this to be part of the house’s history, since her map, the good old-fashioned version, did not provide answers. The house is innately connected to her and the locations where it appears on the map are relevant and significant to important places in her life or places where she has lived during her time in Miami.

By mapping the locations where the house appears, Cecilia is essentially creating “narrative re-enactments of journeys made” (Ingold 155). These re-enactments are also present in the stories Amalia shares with Cecilia. Amalia’s stories have multiple dynamic meanings, but they allow Cecilia to process and obtain mental maps with various stages and places of her own history and homeland. It is through these understandings that Cecilia is able to adjust, by way of wayfinding, to her life in Miami. The stories Amalia tells her allow her to form mental representations among objects. In this context, the objects are pieces of her past, specifically past families, and countries that for most of her life existed in a detached state. Although Cecilia knew of their existence, there was no point of reference for her to connect them. To find the way via mental maps, one must be able to use encodings and landmarks that help appraise their own positions in space. The descriptions between objects, features and locations and the connections between them are the core of mental mapping (Istomin & Dwyer 30).

When Amalia’s stories begin, Cecilia does not know that they are directly related to her and that she, in fact, is a descendant of the people in the stories and will end up marrying one of the characters. One of the first stories Amalia narrates to Cecilia concerns two slaves, Florencio and Caridad, who are Amalia’s maternal grandparents of Spanish and African descent, respectively. They are in love and after slavery is abolished, they create a life together. They open a store in Havana and before they know it, they are comfortable with their surroundings and the store is flourishing. However, it is precisely this comfortability that leads to their eventual demise. After upping the sales from his store by merging into different parts of the city and collecting a large sum on money, Florencio does not concentrate on his route home; instead, "since he knew the way by heart, he rode along thinking about what he would do with that money. For a while now he had toyed with an idea, and he thought that at last the moment had arrived: he would sell his place and buy another one in a better part of the city” (Chaviano 57). The significance here is that Florencio knows the route through the city by heart. There is no need for him to pay attention because the mental representations between objects through the city tip him off to his location. For Cecilia, who is conflicted by the feelings she has for her homeland, this detail combined with the end of Florencio’s story where he is murdered and the store is burned to the ground, sends a message that leaving a familiar area can have dire consequences. However, this story is a

landmark in itself as it becomes the context for the next story and others until we are told of Amalia's own life.

These stories present a historical trajectory that is somewhat fluid, but relegated by the notion that Cecilia sits passively listening as Amalia recounts them. In this way, Cecilia navigates through them with a bird's eye view. In Massey's words "Neither time nor space is reducible to the other; they are distinct. They are, however, co-implicated. On the side of space, there is the necessary production of change through practice of interrelation" (Massey 55). When Amalia describes the country she was forced to leave behind, she reflects that "a country is like a painting: you can see it better from a distance and that distance had allowed her to understand many things" (Chaviano 262). In this way, the mental maps allow one to traverse through a landscape based on "propositions that are true (or taken to be true) independent of how one is located in relation to the objects and places described to them" (Istomin & Dwyer 30). This supposes that there are dual spatial existences at play and that which seems to be true or real does not necessarily reflect how one feels about their location. Therefore, exiles, according to Amy Kaminsky, "spatially originate somewhere and is not present there or is present somewhere from which s/he does not originate" (43). And this is functional as what is real and what is described or appearing in the mind may come from various places. This works for wayfinding, since the place from where one originates is not mutually exclusive with where one is present. Similarly, where one draws from to suppose what is real or what is description of the relationships of objects and spaces is mutable. The caveat for the exile, specifically Cecilia (and actually Chaviano as well in this case), is that objects are, in essence, the same. The homeland exists as both object and a subject, since it comes from abstract memory and specific references that are related by the connections between them. Cecilia wants to see "space as the completed project. As a coherent closed system" (Massey 106). This is why she creates the map of the house locations. She hopes that reverting back to an old familiar method of negotiating space will give her answers. The map "tells of an order of things. With the map we can locate ourselves and find our way" (Massey 106). The bird's eye view is too confusing, since there is no certain view of space for those in exile and what we see throughout this text and the others presented in subsequent chapters is a major, unmistakable disconnect between space, place and time. Cecilia, perhaps Chaviano's alter-ego, struggles to grapple with these connections throughout the novel.

Even though practical mastery wayfinding is based on habit and familiarity, which are considered to be fairly stable, spatial perceptions are always moving when one wayfinds with this method. These perceptions are based on fluid concepts, such as activities and the attitude of the subject creating and traversing through space. Space is not an object, but the subject.

Instead of the bird's eye view that encompasses mental mapping, wayfinding of this form is a movement of paths and journeys that helps travelers move from one place to another; as one travels, one become oriented (Istomin & Dwyer 30).

Since Cecilia has no frame of reference in Miami, she cannot see the map of her current location in a mental mapping context. She thinks, "she was a hermit here. Here she had no past. It was left behind in a city she struggled to forget, along with her happy childhood, her lost adolescence, her dead parents" (Chaviano 76). Cecilia feels alone because she feels that she has no history in Miami and there is no one for her to connect with. She carries on as though this is fact, even though her aunt, Loló lives in town. Cecilia's time with Amalia reminds her that "nothing is firm in exile; its spatial instability turns out to be only one form of uncertainty" (Kaminsky 57). While this originally sounds like a negative effect of exile, it is in fact the way that Cecilia comes to terms with her forced new life. Her desire to connect with someone reminds her of her aunt and Cecilia embarks on a trip to visit her. On her way to her aunt's house, she initially tried to find the apartment by memory. This approach is not successful since all the streets seem to look similar and blend together and she "had to pull out a piece of paper and look at the numbers" to find her way (Chaviano 77). Even though she is moving beyond the map and its limitations, she is sucked back down and reminded that she cannot completely traverse through the world. It is not the visit with Loló that is significant for Cecilia, but the journey she takes to arrive there. In going to the apartment, she sees the only roots she knows in Miami. With Loló's bird screaming "Viva Fidel" and the reminiscing of the homeland, Cecilia is perplexed and almost stoic when she recounts the visit.

Later in the text, Cecilia finds herself longing for Havana and realizes that one of the reasons she has failed to adapt to life in Miami is the fact that it is impossible to walk around in Miami the same way she walked around Havana: "you don't know how I'd love to lose myself on some street and forget about everything" (Chaviano 192). Cecilia acknowledges that she cannot find anything comparable to various locations in Cuba and, for this reason, she feels displaced. She is searching for the familiar pieces that will allow her to engage in practical mastery wayfinding.

Beginning at the End

The mental implications of her displacement range far and wide. Cecilia simply does not know where to start with her new sense of hybridized identity. To begin:

there is the place of origin, now split into the mental projection of the exiles memory in the geopolitical space the exile knows to exist and change even [her] absence. Second, there is still the space-y place of exile, the new place the exile knows, at least at first, as

undifferentiated strangeness, against which, not through which, [she] identifies [herself]. (Kaminsky 46)

So what we have here are multiple layers, all of which have an important impact on how Cecilia functions in the world surrounding her. She is on the edge of multiple cliffs, so to speak, and must find a way to resolve all of the inconsistencies, while coming to a conclusion about her sense of self.

For Cecilia, Miami stands still and "when nothing moves there is nothing to which one can respond: at such times-as before a storm, during an eclipse -the experienced traveler can lose his bearings even in familiar terrain" (Ingold 242). This lack of movement is awakened by the house and its movements. As Cecilia begins to pay attention to the details that surround her, she starts to truly find her way around Miami. According to Ingold, "the ordinary wayfinder is not generally troubled by detail. Quite to the contrary, the richer and more varied the texture of the environment, the easier it is to find one's way about" (Ingold 241). Cecilia's predicament is that Miami is dry and meaningless. Until she finds a way to see the details, there is nothing for her to perceive or memorize. There are no routes for her to encode and even though she may physically move from one place to another, she does not become oriented until she notices the intricacies Miami offers her. For this reason, she finds herself enchanted by Amalia's stories: Cecilia "listened with the hope that some episode would spill over into her own life... The more she found out, the more she wanted to know" (Chaviano 98). The details in the stories create a spatial understanding and allow her to move through space.

As soon as Cecilia recognizes the importance of the details, she "at once she realized her debt to Miami. There she had learned stories and saying, customs and flavors, ways of speaking and working: treasures of a tradition that had been lost in Cuba" (Chaviano 262). These traditions are the landmarks, encodings and landscape images that aid in Cecilia's journey. Massey reflects on the range of space here:

Space can never be definitively purified. If space is the sphere of the multiplicity, the product of social relations, and those relations are real material practices, and always ongoing, then space can never be closed, there will always be loose ends, always relations with the beyond, always potential elements of chance. (95)

If Massey's ideas are taken to be true, then perhaps it is the desire to have clear, concise details that trouble those in exile. Perhaps it is the longing or need to fully understand that space is ongoing and always will be that can relieve some of Cecilia's trauma of exile.

The stories in the text are moving time and space, even though this may not seem completely evident as the stories progress. This movement is

subtle, but it happens with Cecilia passively viewing her own life and ends with her actively moving through it. This is a difficult transition and at first, Amalia shows the process to Cecilia in elusive settings. For example, even landmarks that are a focal point to mental mapping are variable. Cecilia is made aware of this in a story about Amalia's Spanish paternal grandmother, Angela. When Angela was a child she and her parents relocated to a town called Torrelila that "didn't even appear on the maps" (Chaviano 82). The notion that this town does not appear on maps suggests that it is a place that must be traversed. Its inhabitants must feel their way through and actively involve themselves not only residing in the town, but also by simply locating its place and time in the trajectory.

The women in Angela's family are mediums and one day, while out in the forest exploring, Angela sees Pan. She is able to quickly recognize him because she "instantly recalled the story of the devil in the mountains" (Chaviano 88). When she asks him what he is doing hiding in a cave in the woods, he tells her that humans threw him out and when people forgot him, a god, "there's nothing to do but hide" (Chaviano 89). Angela is immediately confused as she believes in only one god. Pan replies, "There are as many as humans want. They create us and they destroy us. We can endure loneliness, but not their indifference; it's the only thing that makes us moral" (Chaviano 89). This anecdote is a parallel for how history shapes how we orient ourselves.

Humans remember and forget beginnings and endings, present and past, and this changes the historical trajectory that constructs spatial representations that allow us to find our way. Attributes of life and how we live are forgotten and remembered. Therefore, our whole understanding of everything that occurs around us is compounded by intricate layers, all of which inform and construct space and our understanding of it. Thus, since we as humans create and destroy beginnings, endings, memories and histories, space is merely at our whim. A collective history or a life that seemingly has no beginning or ending encapsulates the exile experience at the heart of Chaviano's book.

Amalia's stories are fragmented so that the sense of space and the path each character in the story may or may not take is unknown. On the Chinese side of the story, Amalia introduces Cecilia to her husband's grandfather, SÍu Mend. SÍu Mend came to Cuba following his own grandfather and was so "dazzled by the city of lights (Havana), he had almost forgotten his homeland" (Chaviano 70). He was enraptured by the rebel stories he heard from his grandfather who fought against the Spanish army. Eventually, SÍu Mend goes back to China for his family, but he never forgot Cuba. It became a home away from home for him, a place that he envisioned opportunity and greatness. His "nostalgia stayed trapped in the silent nets of his memory, suppressed by his more urgent duties" (Chaviano 70). Here, Cecilia learns

that the longing for Cuba, the nostalgia that goes along with deeply desiring to be in a location runs deep. Nostalgia plays into Cecilia's memories so intently that she realized that even the smallest detail could remind her of Cuba. She questions what makes her memories flourish at any given moment and wonders how the perceptions of others affected her own recall of Cuba. Cecilia is not certain if she has been "influenced by those old folks who insisted that in Cuba everything tasted different, smelled different, looked different... as if the island were paradise and she was on another planet" (Chaviano 113). Unwilling to recognize the nostalgia attached to Cuba, the protagonist hopes to be just fleetingly influenced by others. She naively tried so hard not to idealize her homeland that she made herself miserable in the process and in her avoidance, did exactly what she hoped not to do.

Whatever the case, Cecilia is convinced that she is not meant to be wrapped up in the negative connotations that belong to Cuba's history. She does not want negative historical inferences defining her and compromising part of who she is or hopes to be. The protagonist thinks to herself that curses should not be "carried in one's heart. At least not in hers" (Chaviano 113). For Cecilia and the other characters in Amalia's stories, "space is more than distance. It is the sphere of open ended configurations within multiplicities" (Massey 91). The actuality here is that the configurations that the characters believe to be true are basically dependent on their own perceptions of reality. This makes sense for Cecilia, as her feelings for Miami operate in this exact fashion when she reflects:

Miami had become an enigma. She was starting to suspect that a kind of spirituality remained, which the elders had lovingly tried to rescue from the sacrificial pyre: the glow was just hidden in forgotten little corners of the city, often far from the beaten path. Maybe the city was a time capsule, an attic where the remains of a splendid past were stored, waiting to return to their place of origin. (Chaviano 114)

Cecilia's questions about locations awaken the same memories that she has spent the past four years trying to forget. She was always attempting to "exile a memory that was half nightmare, half longing..." (Chaviano 177). The text conveys that stories have beginnings and ends that are known and this cements them in space, time, and place. Real life, the present, with no set ending or beginning (since you do not know the true beginning until you know the end) has a sense of being unreal since it is unknown. The past, "characters lost in time and distance" are what are real to Cecilia (Chaviano 65). As she decided to go to Little Havana instead of her own bleak apartment, she thinks to herself "the past lurks around every corner"

(Chaviano 65). It is this past that grounds Cecilia and acts as a map, a guiding force in her quest for space and belonging.

Conclusion

Since the stories come from Amalia, it would seem logical that she is the true creator of the space in the novel. As her stories form the historical trajectory that Cecilia uses for mental and mastery wayfinding for orientation, most readers are likely not shocked by the revelation that Amalia does not really exist. Chaviano presents her as a sort of ghost, a supernatural being that Cecilia could see since mediumship runs in her blood. This is one possible layer of the story, but Amalia may also have existed solely as a way for Cecilia to remedy her quandaries with exile. At the end of Amalia's stories, Cecilia realized that her own life is not quite so "unbearable" (Chaviano 264). When Cecilia meets Miguel, Amalia's grandson, she immediately senses the allusion that they will be romantically involved and she will no longer be unlucky in love, isolated, and alone. Her burgeoning romantic partnership with Miguel is another method by which she will orient herself in her new homeland. Therefore, his appearance is just another example of a space that is always in flux.

Miguel's chief function is to urge Cecilia to stop looking back in time for her orientation. According to Massey, "you can't go back in space-time. To think that you can is to deprive others of their ongoing independent stories" (Massey 125). Perhaps this is the whole obstacle Cecilia encounters. Her inability to access her stories leaves her completely unable to wayfind and escape the pain of exile. Regardless of the mental state one is left in after exile, one fact remains: No one is going back and even if they did, the contents, in the time capsule Cecilia hopes exists, would have a mitigated meaning: "you can trace backwards on a page/map does not mean you can in space-time. What you *can* do is meet up with others, catch up with where another's history has got to 'now', but where that 'now' is itself constituted by nothing more than – precisely – that meeting-up (again)" (Massey 125). Amalia allows Cecilia to make these travels mentally and this is how she manages to understand herself. She is able to "travel between places" and "move between collections of trajectories and to reinsert" herself in the ones which she relates (Massey 130).

In this context, Kaminsky states that "the space of home, so tightly bound up with the exile's identity, not only has lost its fixity but has become site of engulfment. To invoke the space of home in this state is to risk shattering already precarious sense of self" (42). The first half of this statement rings true, but what we see Cecilia do through this entire text is to try to invoke the space of home. She deeply wants to determine where she should be in space and time. That is her entire motivating force; her life revolves around understanding home. This is the pain of exile. The whole challenge is that the person in exile is trying to spatially represent a home

that they are not able to traverse. At one point, Cecilia concedes, “All roads led to Havana. It didn’t matter how far she might travel: one way or another, her city managed to catch up with her” (Chaviano 177). Every road, every memory goes where she perceives them. She controls and creates the context. In this context, Said states, “Once banished, the exile lives an anomalous and miserable life, with the stigma of being an outsider” (181). The misery never goes away, but Chaviano’s point here is to show that exiles can and do shift the negative perspectives and contexts that stigmatize them. They do this through wayfinding or rather orienting themselves to their new surrounding and making sense of their new landscapes.

Wayfinding, orienting one’s self “to find one’s way is to advance along the line of growth, in a world which is never quite the same from one movement to the next, and whose future configuration can never be fully known” (Ingold 242). Being bound by the constructs of a map, where descriptions are pre-determined is not a way to become oriented or to truly find the way. Thus, Eduardo Galeano states, “Even the map lies. We learn world geography on a map that does not show the world as it is, but rather as its masters demand that it be” (qtd by Kaminsky 41). Once we incorporate the map with our own perceptions, contexts of space, landscape imagery and spatial representations, nothing can be demanded. Cecilia, as a Cuban American exile, can advance and grow via this interaction with space and she makes that progression before our eyes. By feeling her way through her landscape, Cecilia, wayfinds to deal with exile.

This form of navigation is present in most Cuban American exile literature. The exile is, according to Foucault “seen without ever seeing,” but with the conceptualizing of space and the progression of cultural geography, the awareness of this dichotomy comes to the surface and I question whether or not this idea is accurate. Chapter three deals with this shift exclusively as we see exiles in a different position – one unlike the two previous chapters. Specifically, the perception one has of oneself is examined to show how exile is navigated by those who are in the transitory space where being oneself and understanding how to behave and react come to play. In this chapter, I argue that a warped sense of perception makes it difficult for exiles to adjust to their new location/space. I continue by stating that the sense of displacement is heightened by the idea that one is being monitored at all times and thus completing spatial orientation is problematic, if not impossible.

Before me is the night, the crashing of the world. I lie back on the sand, bound to freedom. The future is returning

Pablo Medina

Chapter Three: Navigating Spatial and Temporal Trajectories through a Lifetime of Exile in Carlos Eire's *Learning to Die in Miami*

The function of space and the way we perceive and receive it is always changing. Space and our construction and destruction of it may be reticent or voluble, but regardless of how it moves with time, these movements alter illusion and reality. The idea that moving from one space to another is reminiscent of leaving Plato's cave and is at the heart of Cuban American exile Carlos Eire's autobiography *Learning to Die in Miami* (2010). Trajectories of space and time in *Learning to Die in Miami* show that a panoptic vision of oneself is how Eire maps out his new environments and comes to term with living as an exile. Eire's text provides a complete experience with exile from pre- and post-exile through childhood to adulthood. This wide range allows for a unique, full spectrum analysis of how one traverses space and time. Through this complete view, the nostalgia and displacement and subsequent repositioning related to Cuban American exiles creates a condition based on space and time. The differences between notions of space and time are illuminated as they appear in memories, locations and social contexts.

Eire describes the perception of reality versus illusion as he moves from one space to another when he says, "leaving the cave and entering the 'real' world requires major adjustments in thinking. Plato had foreseen that, of course. He knew that those who escaped from the world of illusion would have trouble adjusting to the light and dealing with the real world" (51). In this chapter, I will focus primarily on the spatial connotations of this quotation expanding on the multiple interpretations it has as it applies to Eire. Cuba functions as an illusion-filled world, but so do his expectations of what the United States should be like. For years after his arrival and as he traverses from one location to another, his illusions are slowly, quickly and sometimes painfully replaced by that which is real. These shifts in what he considers real are part of what cause Eire's feeling of disconnection throughout his text. Along these lines, Doreen Massey asks us to "refuse the distinction" between "place (as meaningful, lived and everyday) and space (as what? the outside? the abstract? the meaningless)" (Massey 6). Eire is struggling to do this and as he finally does, we see him reach an eternal feeling of comfort as he embraces the book's title and learns to be content with space and place not as two separate entities, but as one.

The idea of space and place as a meeting of two trajectories was discussed in chapter two, and Massey's theories are still very relevant here. Eire explains new perceptions of space and place simply: "New world, new life, new rules" (Eire 66). Eire streamlines this shift because he realizes that he really has no other choice but to adapt, as quickly as possible, to his new life. He presents the facts of his exile: he arrives at a new location, his life changes, his life becomes different because he exists in a new space and time. According to Massey, the way in which we nowadays often tell that story, or any of the tales of 'voyages of discovery', is in terms of crossing and conquering space" (4). At first, we may not typically think of someone in the position of exile to be conquering much of anything, but that is what is happening. The conquering does not materialize in the manner we are used to, but, in effect, Eire learns to conquer and harness control over his own space,

Eire, as an exile, experiences an increased sense of the implications of these changes: his physical interchanges to many new locations, which are detailed in the text, are not just a change in scenery; his social status changes; he no longer lives with his mother and father; he attends a different school; he lives in a different house; he makes and loses his friends; his native language becomes obsolete. The United States is a new space with no sense of history and he is living in a completely different life, down to the type of food he eats and the brand of clothing he wears.

When Eire comes out of the cave (Cuba), everything is new, but his ideas of how feelings and other aspects of life function around him are unclear and inverted: "Jagged is smooth. Bitter is sweet. Sorrow is joy. Dark is light. Black is white" (Eire 258). He continues, "Everything is the opposite of what it should be. I'm no longer who I was two months before, and neither is the world itself" (258). What he once thought existed is partially constructed due to an inversion of power. Eire lives in a panoptic life where he feels like an outsider being watched, but he does not know by whom. He feels like someone who is jagged when everyone else is smooth. Because of this, "he is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault 200). He is a displaced foreigner in a land that he has built up in his mind as a utopia when he came from what he saw as the epitome of dystopia. Naïve as a child, he believes that the answer to his problems is the United States. The power of the United States is visible and unverified. This means that the inmate, in this case Eire, "will constantly have before his eyes" the outline of power and he "must never know if he is being looked at any one moment" (Foucault 201). This is partly the reason Eire feels so uneasy in Cuba and after exile, in the United States. The sense of what is acceptable or how one is being perceived by others is so unsettling that it makes the trauma of exile constant, inescapable and real, regardless of what happens.

The veritable ramifications of a huge geographical shift in location are unclear to him. Like many other exiles, Eire expected a new location to be unproblematic. He expected that the United States would be similar to pre-Castro Cuba, but somehow better. Shortly after arriving in the U.S., Eire acquires United States coins and is reminded of how useless money is in Cuba. He says, "It felt great to once again handle these little symbols of everything hated by Che and Fidel" (Eire 18). These coins are a passive method of retribution. Fidel and Che can take away his homeland, his family, his life, but he has this forbidden money in his hand and there is nothing they can do to stop him. When he first arrives, his new space, the United State, is free of their constraints, or so he thinks. What he has not yet realized is that exile is an executed form of punishment that will follow him around for most of his life if he allows the panoptic sense to be a negative impact in his life. The coins are meaningless attributes and while they may bring him short-term satisfaction, they eventually lead him to conceptualize space too simply. Even though Cuba is his homeland, he starts to intellectualize it the same way that he conceptualized the United States before his arrival and for many of the initial years he spent trying to adjust.

If we think about space too simply, we can "conceive of other places, peoples, cultures as simply phenomena 'on' this surface" (Massey 4). As a child coming to a foreign land, this is what Eire does. According to Massey, these simplistic terms mean that the histories attached to these spaces are nullified. Whoever was here before we arrived was also "living and producing" (4). It is not only the history of the new land that is at risk. More important, it is the history of what Eire has left behind. When Eire arrives in Miami, he feels at home, even though these feelings of what home is supposed to be like are superficial: "This new place was home...Yet, I recognized nothing. The cityscape I saw buzzing past me on expressways and highways looked nothing like what I'd imagined" (8-9). Upon arriving, he innately knows that there is more to the United States than the surface he was expecting. The phenomena that was the United States has to blossom into something tangible and livable, so that Eire can survive the rest of his life in this new place that is suddenly so much more than a surface. The same goes for Cuba. His thoughts of it diminish into abstract space, as he moves further away from peace as a person living in exile and closer to confusion and displacement.

Panoptic Visions in Exile

As Eire and his brother, Tony, try hard to forget their Cuban roots, they meet others who cannot stop focusing on them. In one of the many foster homes in which Eire resides with other Cubans who are struggling to forget their heritage as well, he says: "our [Cubans in the United States] chief unforgivable sin is our past, and what they'll seek to beat out of us is anything that reminds them of that past: our softer tone of voice, our

mannerisms, our politeness, our cluelessness, and our refusal to use bad words” (Eire 128). The commentary about behavior and the ways in which Eire emanates his own Cubanness lead to a state where Eire is very much aware of how he is perceived by others. This constant feeling of being viewed by non-Cubans in a belittling manner drives him to control and modify his own behaviors to adapt to his new country better.

Knowing that his entire being is watched in some way initiates a panoptic scenario that pushes Eire to shed his Cuban skin. The powers that are watching him, normalizing his behaviors, subtly controlling how he feels and acts, are telling him: do not be Cuban; you will adjust to a new society with greater ease if you are not Cuban. The fewer Cuban markers, the better.

When Eire feels as though he is constantly a spectacle, something that others are watching, space is unraveled. In this sense, Foucault states, “The panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and recognize immediately” (200). This dynamic exacerbates the pain of exile. No one wants to be Cuban if being Cuban means drawing more attention to oneself, since more attention equals more uneasiness, more heartache, and more face time with a harsh reality that includes being displaced and rejected in a new country where nothing is familiar (place) and all locations are new, confusing, abstract (space). Eire constantly sees what makes him not American and he knows that those around him see it too.

The panoptic condition becomes a governing factor in daily life as Eire is trapped in new surroundings that may ultimately feel like he and emotional and metaphorical prison. As Eire begins his life in exile, “the body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property” (Foucault 11). Foucault’s meaning resonates with the exile because the simple act of being in the United States, isolated from the homeland and removed from all national liberties, is a punishment and a deprivation of basic rights. He deserves to live in his homeland if he so chooses. As a child, he has done nothing wrong and his exile seems quite unjust.

Eire lives in a constant state of punishment and just as the panopticon serves to do, Eire’s behavior is passively, yet forcibly normalized. At one of his many jobs, he describes issues with his boss: “He went to great lengths to make me uncomfortable by constantly bringing up the subject of my ethnicity and complaining about how many spics worked at his store” (214). Experiences like this combined with Eire’s encounters with various foster homes and others he meets along his journeys. He has quickly learned that his survival is dependent on whether he fits into his new surroundings and settles into the new space where he now finds himself a permanent resident.

At times, it appears that he feels he is an outsider and all eyes are on him all the time. Whether this is exactly true is irrelevant, but his own

displacement makes him believe it to be a facet of reality. He has convinced himself that he does not want to go back to Cuba. He does not want to be Cuban and he misses and despises being Cuban at the same time. Panopticism causes him to be hyper-aware of how he is perceived by those around him and of how he himself identifies his surroundings. He believes what he thinks he should believe. Does he really never want to go back to Cuba? Does he really hate the country? No, but he genuinely believes that these are the remedies to his problems. All of his anger and displacement comes from the love of Cuba, yet suddenly his world revolves around his ability to forget and pretend it does not exist. This is a coping mechanism to ease the pain of exile, to ease the adjustment period in this unknown space and settle into a new dynamic where he is not yet comfortable.

Early in the text, Eire goes swimming in a gorgeous pool in Miami. He is instantly drawn to the pool, loves it and its color reminds him of home: "It's blue like the water in Havana, but with none of the creatures lurking at the bottom" (Eire 62). Pools are emblems of Caribbean waters and the creature motif, or the sense of unpredictability and unknown comes up several times within this text. The pool relieves Eire's anxiety and makes him feel fresh: "the pool becomes the center of my universe," he says (61). It gives him something to compare to Cuba. It is "like Cuba, but better" he thinks. This is simply his way of negating nostalgia. This salvation land pool is missing the creatures that he is used to seeing in pools of his homeland. The allusion is that the creatures are negative, but they may merely symbolize mystery, the unknown, the feeling of being surrounded by something natural, something eternal. The pool in the United States is crystal clear. There are no shadows and everyone can see right into the water from every angle. In this clear pool, it is not just the creatures one has to worry about – it is everyone. Eire does not know where the unpredictability is coming from. It will sneak up on him because life in the United States is much different than it appears.

Regardless of the pool's many meanings, there is an implication that rings through: the pool reminds Eire of home. It conjures up memories of home, memories of a place that has been reduced to space, as Eire tries his absolute hardest to forget all about the history of his homeland: "Is there any pain more exquisite than that which is caused by the realization that what you desire most deeply will always be absent and totally beyond your grasp" (Eire 248). It is important to note that this quotation comes at the end of Eire's novel. By this time, Eire can tell us the unequivocal truth – that missing your home hurts, immensely, but that the pain is bittersweet.

Moving through Space and Time

According to Massey, nostalgia in space and time "constitutively plays with notions of space and time" and in doing so the "imagination of going home so frequently means going 'back' in both space and time. Back to the

old familiar things, to the way things used to be” (124). Eire struggles with this through his book. As a child, he detests the idea of going back to Cuba or at least he tells himself that until he begins to believe that Cuba is not a place he wants to be. He does it enough to block Cuba out of his mind and stop ruminating on his parents back home. While he tries not to think of Cuba, it is really all he thinks about. The more time that goes by, the more abstract Cuba becomes and as this happens, he makes room for his new land to shift to place. If nostalgia is related to the desire to go back in space and time but Eire convinces himself that he does not want to go back, he is left in an in-between limbo-like state. He misses something that he hates and a place where he does not want to return. For him, notions of space continue down a path to such utter abstractions that they are close to being rendered completely useless.

The whole arrival to the salvation land begins with interesting connotations, as Eire and his brother arrive in the United States via airplane. Traversing space and arriving in a new place when just hours earlier, you were someplace else is a way to skip ahead and slightly alter the perception of time and location. Less than an hour prior to the plane landing, the brothers were in an alternate universe. Traveling this way creates a surface effect where the movement is personified and overflowing with feelings and emotions.

Upon arriving in South Florida with other Cuban children, Eire’s reflects, “Earlier today, I left behind my parents, my entire family, all of my possessions, and my native land, and at this moment I don’t really know whether I’ll see any of them ever again” (1). At this moment, he has no idea what is going to happen and instead of trying to control his fate, he accepts it. All things considered, he shows vast equanimity: “Everything in this narrative was preordained, including our inability to predict our fate. Most of us still marvel at our peculiar niche in history, as invisible footnotes” (Eire x). There are no accidents in Eire’s world and as an adult he can look back to his childhood and present it with a great sense of composure. Yet in going back and recounting his memories, he is actually altering space and time. Looking back, traversing backwards is something Eire is accustomed to.

Accepting the preordained nature of life may also be Eire’s method for accepting his life. He was exiled, torn from a very comfortable life that suddenly went sour. His whole universe was different in the blink of an eye. For him, it was preordained and you cannot argue with fate. Eire does not have to like how his life transpired, but there is no other way it could have occurred. Conceptualizing the events in this life as fate is almost like admitting that he is powerless to the wrath of the world that he lives in. He has given up on arguing or directing his energy to anything besides coming to terms with his life in the United States.

Luckily for Eire and his brother, they spend some of their initial exile with distant family members and friends, which created a sense of ease and intimacy: “When I get to my house, I can’t believe my good fortune: My house parents are people I know, friends of my mom and dad. Familiar faces in a strange place...” (Eire 7). This sense of familiarity in the middle of so many vast unknowns increases Eire’s sense that in leaving Cuba, he has fled somewhere truly terrible. As he falls asleep in his new house, he can only think of his physical escape from Cuba: “All I care about is the fact that I’ve escaped from Cuba, which is the same as escaping from hell, and that I am in a new land...” (Eire 8). This new land is what Mary Louise Pratt calls a “Contact Zone,” which she defines as the “space of imperial encounters, that space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations” (8). Carlos Eire, the adult, is a well-adjusted, educated, successful person. He is a popular professor, writer, husband and father. He is acclimated to the United States after being here for most of his life. His job at multiple universities likely keeps him well versed, cultured and in an environment where being an exile and a Cuban national is accepted and embraced. His history has helped his career. In spite of all this or because of it, he still struggles with his Cuban past and sense of identity. As an adult man, he still writes about the way his childhood in Cuba and his hybridization into a Cuban American has affected his life. This text is cathartic for him. It is only now, as an adult, that he has come to terms with the realities of exile and the illusions of his past. Regardless of his status in society or his own niche in the world, he has spent his adult life in the United States in a contact zone.

He established relations with others and most important with himself, and the geographic separation of the contact zone manifests into a caustic relationship with everything that Eire regards as Cuban. When Eire first goes into a grocery store in the United States, he is blown away by the plethora of food available. This is obviously something that we take for granted on a daily basis, but it creates another fracture in Eire’s reality. The abundance of items leaves Eire feeling displaced, as this new world is even more far removed from his homeland: “The difference between the place I’d just left and the place where I now found myself couldn’t have been starker” (Eire 18). He feels extremely uncomfortable out of his element and he is not sure how to carry himself. This is a common theme as he has experienced similar feelings in his foster homes and places of employment. The innate sense of displacement makes the new location that Eire so desperately wants to see as a familiar area (a place) into an even deeper abstract realm (a space): “I’d died and gone to another dimension” (19). This rupture in space and place is, for a child, so inherently displaced that he finds himself in unrecognizable territory. Eire’s challenge is to make sense of spaces and places, as they are informed and, at the same time, unraveled by notions of

past and present versions of place, space and historical knowledge upon which our thoughts are built. After the incident in the grocery store, Eire wishes he could have been born in the United States. He thinks it is eternally unfair and “decided right then and there” that he would “become an American and forget about being Cuban, at least for the time being” (Eire 19). Would being born in the United States make him a better person? Would being born in the United States be easier? Would being born in the United States make him less of a spectacle? No one has the answers to these questions, but as a child, Eire thinks this way and assumes that his life would be easier or better. The unknown related to these questions adds the “what if” to Eire’s overall sense of distress as an exiled child in a new land.

Punishments of Exile

Eire cannot be Cuban anymore; this is the solution. The way to not be punished by exile is to forget about Cuba. Unfortunately, the best way to forget would be to not be Cuban at all. Perhaps removing the “Cuban” from his identity would make the way in which he feels targeted for his differences less punitive. Foucault says that the:

major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary. (Foucault 201)

This is why the grocery store, workplaces and foster home are places of contention that evoke a deep sense of displacement. He feels uncomfortable in situations where he is not sure the “proper” way to behave. Anywhere Eire goes, even a grocery store, reminds him that the place he lived before, his homeland, was lacking and the place he lives now, his salvation land (or so he hoped) is expecting, and rather commanding a specific response from him. The grocery store is a panoptic scenario that contextualized how he fit into the United States and where the glaring pain of exile is always on display. He is in a state of limbo, never knowing who, what or when it will come out.

As a child, because of television, romanticizing and personification of American items, Eire falls in love with a “place”: “It was an ideal world and ours paled in comparison.” Even though the revolution cut off all contact with this ideal world, “they couldn’t take away what was stored in our memories, or at least what was stored in my memory” (Eire 8). Whether these memories may correspond with reality is of no real concern, as they become Eire’s expectations: “this was the real world, and I had finally crossed over into it” (9). Therefore, if the place he came from is considered an illusion, the logical conclusion is that his memories and histories are also an illusion.

If we use Massey's theories for guidance as to how space, time and place are related, then it is easy to see a large fissure in the backdrop that fashions identity, sense of home, and general well-being for an exile. Confusion and displacement about the very fundamentals that give someone a sense of self, is what blights Eire and other exiles. The idea that the United States is a salvation land does not last forever and it is not long before Eire realizes that his history is following him, regardless of where he goes.

Eire realizes this in one of his first foster homes and suffers a moment of terror. He looks at the window and he is suddenly "totally alone in a dark void, crushed by a great force from all sides, annihilated by something totally impersonal and uncaring: the force of nothing, of nothingness itself" (13). Eire decides that these feelings of being abandoned and alone are a sort of hell: "This oppressively vast emptiness felt eternal and inescapable" (13). This is the first time he realizes that being in the United States will not remedy the condition of exile. No matter where he is, he has to come to terms with being a child who is virtually alone in a strange, unfamiliar land.

Certain elements do ease his uneasiness. When Eire first sees snow he finds himself renewed and the vastness begins to be less confining. He is connected to the earth in a new, refreshed way. Snow equals a new life and the real shift from space to place. He remembers, "being in it is almost more than I can take. Every sensation is new. I'm overwhelmed.... The way everything is transformed by it, purified, redeemed" (244-45). This is one of the first moments when he can describe the way in which he is changing and becoming more than a Cuban exile in a new land.

Even though he starts to exist with a heightened sense of renewal, the reminders and triggers of his homeland are inescapable. He is always at risk of being a victim of his Cubanness and at any moment his feelings of nostalgia, dread, connectedness and lack of connectedness for Cuba can resurface. The more these displaced feeling surface, the more uncomfortable he feels and the risk that he will be afflicted by the panoptic condition increases. Additionally, "the more numerous those anonymous and temporary observers are, the greater the risk of being surprised and the greater his anxious awareness of being observed" (Foucault 202). Because of this, Eire lives his life on the edge. Once he is aware of how alone he truly is, there is a snowball effect, so to speak. The feelings of utter isolation and abandonment could fester up and overtake him at any place and time. The simple differences that remind Eire that he is not in Cuba anymore come to serve as these observers.

Even as an adult, Eire hunts for a real sense of home. Eventually, realizing that a location is not going to fill his voids, he travels to a location he believes will-- Spain. Still plagued by feelings of displacement, Eire refuses to discreetly accept these sentiments. He tells himself, "I need to come home. Cuba is not my real home, and never was. It's a hopeless mess,

that odious island, beyond fixing. I'd spent years pouring over maps, looking for this spot, longing for it" (Eire 79). Eire wants so badly to find a place that makes him feel a certain way that he projects his feelings of what home "should" be like onto various locations he encounters along his life's journeys. Surveying a map, searching through random locations is traversing through abstract space. It means nothing except for what your mind wants it to mean. Eire decides on Spain because of his family history on his father's side, and simply because he equates Spain with a tangible, stable history that does not function like Cuba's disintegrating antiquity.

His distant family loved Spain. No undue pain is attached to Spain. There are also no first-person memories. Spain is like a blank canvas. When Eire arrived in the United States, he thought his mind would function like a blank canvas as well. As a child coming into the United States, Eire references Brazilian educator Paulo Freire; "Our brains were still pristine, more or less, proverbial blank slates" (Eire 58). He applies this to his and Tony's ability to learn English. He thinks it is harder to learn as an adult because the mind is spoiled; the mind is full of memories, histories, and ideas of how life should or should not be. Little does Eire know that his own desire for a clear mind, a blank slate, leads him to Spain, Paris and a multitude of other locations. He may have learned English with ease and the language may have lessened the burdens of exile, but language is also a punishment. No more Spanish for those who want to denounce being Cuban. English is the only acceptable form, but even his easy fluency cannot fill the voids of space.

What Eire is searching for is not a location, a space or even a new homeland:

When you your own body betrays you, it's one thing. A big nose, or buckteeth, or vertigo are not your fault. You can chalk it up to biology and a crummy set of genes. But when your own people betray you, it's a whole different ball game, because they make you hate yourself with a passion simply for being one of them. (69)

There is hope that by way of *finding* a new group of people to relate with the self-loathing he carried with him will dissipate. Perhaps the feelings of betrayal that penetrate to the deepest depths of his core will subside. Conceivable, he could be optimistic that there may be an alternate side of himself that is side of him that is not as prejudicial as being Cuban. This is why he searches for pieces of himself all over the world.

When Eire visits Paris he thinks, "How strange it is that this place I've never visited before should feel so much like home, more so than any other spot on earth" (Eire 265). What Eire looks for is not the location itself. What he must come to terms with is that he is Cuban and the comfortableness with

his life will only come when and if he accepts that in order to come to find any location as more than that abstract space, he must embrace his history and the events that have moved forward in time to position him in the place/space that he currently exists in. What Eire finally decides is that his memoir is a cathartic process about “life in a new country and the journey to one *casa nueva* after another” (Eire 301).

Eire spends his entire life grappling with the dichotomy between locations and the process by which one decides where they belong. Foucault says:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (202-03)

In this sense, Eire is his own worst enemy. On a lonely New Year’s Eve in one of the more abysmal foster homes, Eire’s remembers: “We all refuse to show any enthusiasm as the clock strikes midnight as we go to bed shortly afterward. So what if it’s 1963? We’re all stuck here, and the date on the calendar changes nothing” (Eire 145). One month Eire hates Cuba, the next month he is stuck in the United States. In this circumstance, his shift in optimistic outlook is directly related to the conditions of the foster home. It is a particularly unacceptable place. Even though he is with other Cubans, he is seeing the worst in his own people here. The adults in the house are abusive and the other children leave much to be desired. They know that Eire and his brother come from a wealthy Cuban family and although they are all in a crisis now, they do their best to punish Eire for his past. Not only is he in exile and abandoned by his family and homeland, but he is also an outsider amongst his own people. As he subjugates himself for being Cuban and for being displaced in multiple spaces, his own space in which he lives proliferates the condition. As a child, having no means by which to escape this situation, Eire becomes supplanted yet again.

Nurtured by Space

Shifts in space and time are convoluted and unnerving: “arriving in a new place means joining up with, somehow linking into, the collection of interwoven stories of which that place is made” (Massey 119). This is the essence of Eire’s text. Space and time move together. Everything that we pick up, mentally and physically, is our way of “weaving” the “collection of interwoven stories of which place is made” into a “more or less coherent feeling of being ‘here’, ‘now’. Linking up again with trajectories you encountered the last time you” (Massey 119). Eire eventually learns how to make space work for him when he learns to connect to the spaces around him

and to reduce the abstract nature of being an exile. In an attempt to make these connections and ease the monotony of their daily lives, Eire and his brother “borrow” a boat and take it on a joy ride up one of Florida’s many tributaries: “I immediately sense huge shapes under us, of course, I see nothing. It’s too dark to see anything. But the mere mention of gators and manatees sets me to imagine their presence” (Eire 200). Suddenly, the unknown from the pools and the creatures in Cuba also flourishes in the United States.

Imagination of one’s fears is enough to summon one’s fears and regulate one’s behaviors. As with the pool, it does not matter if the creatures real or not; the simple perception of them generates their existence. At first, Eire is terrified by the thought of these creatures but in time, going up the river brings him a sense of calming serenity. He says that going up the river reminds him of his mother, the “very same calm, the same dissolving of boundaries between me and the pulsating source of life” (Eire 202). He is connected with space and becoming comfortable in his surroundings. For a brief moment, despite the alligators and the manatee, he can relax and let his inherent feelings of displacements fade into the background. Unfortunately, this vacation from his usual feelings is fleeting since the boat is actually stolen, but nevertheless, Eire and his brother enjoy these feeling so much that the nightly trips up the river become more and more frequent and the joy and freedom it brings them is worth the risk. For, perhaps the first time, Eire feels autonomous in the United States instead of confined.

According to Annette Kolodny, the early travelers thought of America as “not merely an object of domination and exploitation, but as a maternal ‘garden,’ receiving and nurturing human children” (5). For an exile, this is the reverse. The exile is the one being dominated and exploited. Eire is not nurtured during his time away from his parents until he goes up the river. Finally, he and Tony and feel nurtured by the waters of the tributary and the place that surrounds them. At this point, Eire feels and sees a glimpse of what it is like to be a traveler who traverses space and time by choice and not under duress. He feels what it is like to be nurtured by a location, to feel space shift away from the abstract.

Conclusion

Space can work two ways, as “an expanse we travel across” in the manner by which we envision it to our benefit. Exiles intimately experience space both ways. The time on the boat gives Eire a different and much needed take on space. The exile constantly tries to negotiate space in a way that will facilitate their hybridization into the new land. Pratt refers to this is as an “autoethnography” that “refers to instances in which the colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage *with* the colonizer’s terms” (9). This goes back to the panoptic vision and the idea that interacting with the salvation land on the salvation land’s terms will

exponentially reduce the notion of being constantly viewed and thus expected to behave in accordance with predetermined expectations. Eire's entire book may be thought of an autoethnography as he contends with making sense with being a Cuban American. The progression from childhood, Cuban exile to adult Cuban American embodies this predicament. From childhood, Eire has wondered how he can best fit in, how he can best describe himself in the terms of the united states, his salvation land, which acts like a colonizer long before Eire even sets foot on a plane bound for Florida.

Eire's salvation is that now, as an adult, he knows "what's supposed to happen is not always what happens, simply because there's a much larger and intricately complex plan that's way beyond our ken, and eternal plan" (Eire 117). This is how Eire rationalized the fall of Cuba, the way things turned out, the terrible places he lived at for too long and the great places that he did not live at for long enough. This also explains the movement of time and space. According to Eire, this eternal plan may surface in "our dreams and are hard to recognize for what they are" (Eire 117).

Eire ends his text by reminding himself and his readers that "The pain caused by absence can feel so good because it's a symptom of love" (Eire 248). It is possible to live in a panoptic scenario as an exile and move from illusion to reality. In fact, Eire flourished in this environment. Massey says, "As we move through space, from one location to another, we alter space by participating "in its continual production" (Massey 118). With this simple act of producing space and creating history in the United States, Eire becomes part of his salvation land and realized that his history in Cuba is not a detriment to his being, but an advantage. Once he becomes a producer of space living outside of the cave, he inches his way out of the contact zone, and his subjugation of himself can no longer tie him down.

The next chapter deals with how one creates space by moving through it recursively to form it one progresses through it. This is not unlike the other formations of space already explored here and in previous chapters, but it does lend itself to a slightly different interpretation. Using Eire's sequel memoir, we are able to see the full circle evolution of exile through one's lifetime, thus providing the most unique and fascinating epoch of the combination of space and exile. Specifically, I argue that we, as writers and readers, move through space and our surroundings similarly to how a video game coder and player move through a video game. This showcases the movement through and the ability to connect with the constructs left by others to forms a space that relies on intersubjectivity between all involved. This is the start of the major point of this dissertation and the idea that space is collective and our ability and willingness to see the wider spectrum can and will reposition our entire view of space as a major tenant of identity and culture in literature.

Soy un ajiaco de contradicciones. I have mixed feelings about everything, Name you tema, I'll hedge: name your cera, I'll straddle it like a Cubano

Gustavo Pérez-Firmat

Chapter Four: The Memoir: Recursive Space and Exile in Carlos Eire's
Waiting for Snow in Havana

Space begets space. We are used to hearing this applied to actions, but since space is not an outward action, thinking of space this way may be counterintuitive. When we hear the saying “love begets love” or “anger begets anger,” we normally believe that this dynamic occurs due to the feedback between human beings. Perhaps space can function in this same manner, that is, as a repetitive action between people and objects. The existence of feedback between two objects or images is not a new concept. However, with the increase of technology, new methodologies for thinking about space are coming forth. While most scholars use the term “recursive space” to apply towards video games and to the relationship between gamers and code or that between gamer and the space on the screen, this chapter will focus on the recursive space in literature, specifically in Carlos Eire's *Waiting for Snow in Havana* (2003). This unique text is a memoir where Eire directly addresses his reader, thus creating a feedback-based dialogue where the author examines a lifetime of spatial construction.

Eire spends a great deal of his text discussing the relationship between objects. Therefore, space is created in two ways simultaneously. Without complicit intention, Eire creates a space that is very similar to that of a video game by inviting his readers along on his journey of self-discovery.

Throughout the text, we as readers, come to our own conclusions about Eire's life as an exile, based on our own social and cultural delineations. While one space is created by way of the reader, another is created as Eire himself writes his memoir and defines what being Cuban, a father, a scholar, an exile means to him.

While the relationship between video game and memoir may not seem obvious at first, there are a few basic tenants to understand in order to move forward. Essentially, space is recursive, based on feedback between the state of the game (relations between objects) and the state of the gamer, which includes his or her knowledge, skill, mood, and attention. The idea of recursive space is developed in two ways: “First, as another means of describing a gamer's engagement with space, one that gives a greater account of the participation of technology. Second, it gives us a way of thinking about playing as a process of creating space” (Wood 88). In this context, how does the layout of a video game apply to a memoir like *Waiting for Snow in Havana*? In this case, Eire functions as both the gamer and the creator of

space, since he wrote the text. He navigates his own text as he extrapolates his own experiences and feelings and we, as readers, increase the feedback and the recursiveness of this space. This is because "recursive space proposes a mode of engagement in which the gamer is both embedded within a space defined by the organization of objects, and also creating that space at one and the same time but altering organizations of objects" (Wood 93). Eire acts as gamer in both ways; not only does he give the reader cues so that we organize his experience by using our own ideas and concepts, but he creates a text-based work that we traverse. There is constant feedback and thus we repeat the process again and again, making it recursive.

In this context, Wood states, "Simply moving an avatar through a space reconfigures the objects that make up the space, which has the potential to activate all kinds of parameters requiring a gamer to respond with an input. This input generates another configuration that elicits another input and so on" (92). Eire is his own avatar and his objects--some physical, some imaginary--make his text. He is always returning to his own motifs, objects and images, describing and redescribing in a continuous loop where his own feedback and his intended feedback with his readers develop spaces. Therefore, "Feedback between the state of the game (which would be Cuba, 'relations between objects') and the state of the gamer" (Wood abstract n.p.) sets the constructs for how space is created in and out of Eire's text. Writing develops recursive space as the author describes his own engagement with space and thinks about writing itself as a process of creating space.

From this perspective, according to Tomasello, "When humans interact with one another, especially communication, they are able to imagine themselves in the role of the other and to take the others' perspective on themselves" (2). This increases the feedback loop that is required for space to be recursive. This idea is magnified when it comes to Eire's memoir, since what we read is a collection of memories--some whole, some fragmented--that are meant to evoke a sense of understanding, specifically empathy for what the writer has gone through. Eire is particularly skilled at drawing out his readers' desire to imagine his childhood in Cuba and to feel his pain right along with him. He sets this tone from the very beginning of his text when he states:

This is not a work of fiction. But the author would like it to be. We improve when we become fiction, each one of us, and when the past becomes a novel our memories are sharpened. Memory is the most potent truth. Show me history untouched by memories and you show me lies. Show me lies not based on memories and you show me the worst lies of all. (Preámbulo n.p.)

He wants his readers to know that what he is writing in this text is real and true, yet there is also a level of fiction involved: as something is created via distant memories, the lines between truth and lies may be blurry. Still, since he wishes that this story was not so true to him, we, as readers, humans who are going to interact and engage with his version space, know that there is some serious emotion and possibly pain tangled in his story. As we read, on some level, we remember our own childhoods and our own relationships with others and imagine what it would be like to have Eire's childhood—to be displaced from the familiar, alone and forced to restart life with very little tangible history. Thus, Eire states, “To live with the memories, too, it helps to have lucid moments that others mistake for delusions” (247). However, as objective readers of Eire's text we have to remember that it is difficult to determine what is based on real life or what is fictional.

Memories of Exile

Taking the time to go through the process to make one's memories accessible to others and then taking the time to read and unpack these memories is the way that:

Human communicators conceptualize situations and entities via external communicative vehicles for other persons; these other persons then attempt to determine why the communicator thinks that these situations and entities will be relevant for them. This dialogue process involves not only skills and motivations for shared intentionality but also a number of complex recursive inferences about others' intentions. (Tomasello 3)

The process of recursive space in literature may lend itself best to memoir-type communication/writing, since the author addresses the audience in the first person directly. Eire does this repeatedly throughout his text, which may be part of the reason his writing is so well accepted and enjoyable to read. The more complicated rationale comes in when we consider Eire's purported intentions: does he purposefully attempt to elicit a controlled response from his readers or is he simply doing what comes naturally for someone in his position (i.e., a displaced exile making sense of identity, trauma and loss, but also a human being who operates under constructed social and cultural cues)? We cannot assume “that human subjective experience is a simple and well-characterized phenomenon. It is of course neither simple nor easy to describe, even if it is the most ubiquitous aspect of everything we know” (Deacon 464). If the human experience is in fact subjective, and I agree that it is, Eire has no way of knowing for sure how his written memories will affect his readers. Therefore, the space or the way one navigates his memoir will change from person to person, just like the relationship between coder and gamer, where the coder sets the general

guidelines and the gamer configures and reconfigures space. Since this idea could be applied to all facets of human interaction, the notion of recursive space and the feedback required to propagate it could actually be a part of our daily experiences as humans.

Early in *Waiting for Snow in Havana*, Eire attempts to demonstrate the predicament of being Cuban. In doing so, he wants to create an uncertain space that is part real, part imagined and part idealized. It is a trilogy that functions as a binary since Eire consistently grapples with the notion of, in the simplest way, good and bad, and in the more complicated spectrum, give and take between the conditions of life:

Havana by day. Hot, yes, and radiant. The sunlight seemed at once dense and utterly clear. The shadows were so crisp, so cool. The clouds in the blue sky, each one a poem; some haiku, some epic. The sunsets: forget it, no competition. Nothing could compare to the sight of that glowing red disk being swallowed by the turquoise sea and the tangerine light bathing everything, making all of creation glow as if from within. (12)

This is the canvas for spatial creation. In this process, he engages with the reader and questions his own sense of space to create this two-sided vision. Readers may visualize a paradise where the climate or footprint is ideal, but in that same ideality lies its downfall: “Havana was not the United States,” he says. “That was the beauty of it, and the horror. So much freedom, so little freedom. As beautiful as a giant turquoise wave poised right over your head” (Eire 13). Blue, tropical, warm water is for the most part, a very positive image. Warm water reminds us of birth, relaxation. The ocean signifies a connection with the earth, freedom and refreshment. At the same time, this amazing water can drown us, make us cold and suck us out to sea, which is a big, vast unknown where most cannot survive for long. In a single wave, there is life and death – the most serious and maybe purest parts of life. In creating this imagery, Eire constructs space by reminding us of the relationship between objects and images and also by showing us that space is unscrupulous in that landscapes contend with negative and positive influences and images. The system in which space exists in literature relies on the idea that the recursive concept is subjective, changing with each person and their own elucidation and interpretation of Eire’s memories.

Eire gives himself and his readers a set of parameters so that they use it to configure our own ideas of space. Wood calls space in video games “a reconfiguration of the relationships between the objects that coexist on the screen. As each configuration of objects sets the parameters of what is seen on the screen, these configurations are often referred to as space” (88). If we think of the text of Eire’s memoir as a series of repetitive images and objects

that he configures and reconfigures to create space, we can see how semiotics come into play. In the simplest terms, what Eire presents are signs and symbols that must be decoded to traverse space. There is “the capacity for semiotic processes to control behavior and shape the worldview of whole cultures. Indeed, it is often argued that the very nature of the interpretive process is subject to the whims of the power of hegemonic semiotic influence” (Deacon 368). Eire, as the writer, has a certain power over us as readers. At the same time, the way in which he creates space is laden with the obvious and subtle gestures of what is happening in Cuba. What he describes in his book is a complete hegemonic takeover by Fidel Castro. This too shapes all the objects/images that are presented in the text.

Wood states that "Object space refers to the space taken up by any object. It defines the space taken up by a tree, a table, chair, vehicle, animal or human, or some more abstract entity. Objects are notionally tethered to an origin, which gives the object orientation and also their relationship to each other" (71). What Eire offers are memories of objects, which include lizards, fireworks, clouds, sharks, speakers that broadcast the revolution, Coca-Cola, comic books, antiques, cars, Cuban foliage, and pools. All of these objects remind Eire of what it means to be Cuban. At the same time, he also depicts clear images of what a street in Cuba looked like, his activities as a child and how he sees space that relates to Cuba throughout his entire life, no matter his mental state or location. There is a constant feedback loop since he acts as both programmer (writer of the text) and player (navigator of the text). Because of the nature of feedback between the components of space, the “potential to see space as recursive is apparent, as space is configured both through the demands of the programming through the game design, but also controlled by the player" (Wood 95). What spatial construction does is offer a wide breadth and supply of ideology to create it. Space can be vast and all encompassing (as discussed in chapter five) or it can be narrow and constricting. The point here is that we will use what is available to us to understand it, move through it and create it. In the case of someone like Eire, an exile who feels dominated by hegemonic forces, the tools used to contend with space may be quite narrow. Conceptualizing how this dynamics function is tricky. One thought is the following: “If the only tool you have is a hammer, you will tend to treat everything as a nail” (Deacon 482). Human beings have thoughts about how objects serve us and it is common to remain in a comfort zone and approach objects with tactics that are typical. The desire to become stagnant in familiar applications may happen not because there are no other useful applications, but because it is natural gravitate towards terms that are predefined for us. Since in this case, both Eire and those who read the text as players, have “a greater understanding that recursive space is configured according to the ways in which a player activates code" (Wood 96). What makes space is not just how

objects, images and semiotics relate to Eire, but also how they relate to everyone who reads his text. The key is employing a tool, but allowing oneself to remain open, multiple uses: “The implicit author may feel as if his whole being is recursive: In the past thirty-eight years I’ve seen eight thousand nine hundred and seventeen clouds in the shape of the island of Cuba. I know this because I keep count, and the number is always etched in my brain and in my heart” (Eire 148-49). This repetitive imagery is one of the ways in which Eire engages with space. He has seen the clouds all over the world, from the Arctic Circle to the Mississippi River. They make him contemplate life. They are not mementos of his past but rather, he says: “under them I pine not for what I have lost but for what I’ve never had and perhaps shall never have. What is always out of reach. These Cuba clouds are not so much reminders of my past as omens for the future” (Eire 150). The clouds create their own dialogue whereby Eire intellectualizes his future. The possibilities of how life can progress are endless and Eire participates in this as “space is actively created when a gamer [writer] becomes entangled with the game [text] world and the possibility of the games code [landscape of the text]” (Wood 88). Gamer becomes writer, game world becomes text and game code becomes landscape of the text, which includes objects and imagery like the clouds that Eire and the reader navigate to make sense of *Waiting for Snow in Havana*. This engagement generates the entire world of the text, be it Eire’s Cuba or the reader’s version

Categories of Being Cuban

There is a surreptitious agenda at play in the text, and the social and cultural experiences of the writer and reader shape these spaces (Wood 88). Culture and artifacts make “possible certain types of individual thinking” (Tomasello 1). Philosophers such as Hegel and others, have argued that “The social practices, institutions and ideologies of a particular culture at a particular historical epoch constitute a necessary conceptual framework for individual human reason” (Tomasello 1). Eire portrays an “us” versus “them” mentality. Being from a privileged family due to his father’s position as a judge, Eire is raised knowing that there is a difference between his family and the poorer people of Cuba. On an outing with his father, he observes several boys of his same age searching the ocean floor for coins. He writes, “Those poor boys diving for coins in the water so dark that one couldn’t see a shark coming seemed to me the bravest humans on earth” (20). This snippet of insight has many meanings. Sharks are a reoccurring image that haunt Eire for most of his life and likely represent the uncontrollable, the powerful and the inescapable, similarly to the beautiful but also deadly waves or the healing yet scorching sun discussed earlier in this chapter. Eire often mentions these lucid states where he sees clouds and lizards or sharks.

Eire is also aware of categories of Cuban-ness, including an upper echelon of people surrounding him in Cuba. For example, he attended “the

finest primary school in Havana” with President Batista’s son (Eire 26). Even as a child, he found himself wondering “what kind of special treatment President Batista’s children got” at his school (27). His space is shaped by these undercurrents. He is part of many different groups and thus this lifestyle “became one big collaborative activity, creating a much larger and more permanent shared world, that is to say, a culture. The resulting group-mindedness among all members of the cultural group” relies upon the ability to collectively construct common ground by way of cultural conventions and norms (Tomasello 5). With the dissolution of this in Eire’s book, there is no more coherent group; it is now “us” versus “them.” The aspects that he identifies as “them” are now the very aspects that used to define him—his Cuban-ness, his own country, his home. Consequently:

Just as each partner in a joint collaborative activity has her own individual role, each partner in a joint attentional engagement has her own individual perspective-and knows that the other has her own individual perspective as well. (Tomasello 4)

Those who are thrust into exile no longer know exactly what to think. The groups with which they have associated for their entire lives are now partially what causes them so much grief. What are acceptable perspectives, then? Eire does not know and he spends his life coping with these changes, as do thousands of other Cuban children and adults exiled to various countries all over the world.

Even with the extreme uprooting, Eire still identifies himself as a Cuban and associates himself with a certain group of Cubans with specific behaviors deemed appropriate and acceptable. As Tomasello explains, group identification “means that groups each have their own set of conventional cultural practices. Conventional cultural practices are things that we do, that we all know and cultural common ground that we do, and that we all expect another and cultural common ground to do in appropriate circumstances” (85). The Revolution inverts these standards and Eire and his brothers, once doing their best to acclimate to life in the U.S. meet many other Cubans who do not behave in a way that Eire deems acceptable or even reminiscent of how he believes Cubans used to behave.

When Eire arrives in the United States, he finds himself with his own group of people, but their roles are drastically reversed. He is now a poor, *déclassé*, a homeless Cuban child, morphing into a Cuban American who is making sense out of a practically incoherent world. He barely speaks English and does not know if he will ever see his parents again. His worldview has completely changed. What he sees in front of him is different than what he is used to seeing. Tomasello says, “if I see something one way, and then round the corner to see another, this does not give me two perspectives on the same

thing, because I do not have multiple perspectives available to me to simultaneously for comparison (44). This seems counterintuitive, and it is in many scenarios, but in the case of recursive space, where feedback, or some function of repetition is required between two parties, two non-comparable views will not attend to recursiveness. “But,” as Tomasello continues, “when two people are attending the same thing simultaneously-and it is in their common ground that they are both doing so-then space is created (44). Thus, as we read what Eire has written, as we attend to it, that creates space – space of memories, of our memories, space for feedback between the common ground between two humans.

Eire transposes his Cuba onto his readers, out into the world and slowly it begins to exist clearer than it would without his memories and our understanding of them. It does not just simply evaporate, as Eire likes to say. Perhaps his book is his way of putting the pieces back together (discussed in chapter 5), presenting his reader with a framework to understand the predicament of exile. Therefore, just like a game coder and gamer, writer and reader traverse the landscape to create space recursively through repetition and feedback between two where there are, somehow, multiple perspectives available concurrently, because there are so many different routes. Yet they reach a common ground, each one creating a new space and relying on different objects and imagery to make the way.

Many Cubans have a common ground among them, since national pride is an integral part of their childhood and sense of self. What teachers told children in school before the revolution gave them a very strong sense of nationality and attachment to a certain location. In school, Eire was reminded very often that “Yes, Cuba is a paradise. There is no other place on earth as lovely as Cuba, and that’s why you should be so proud of your country. You’re all very lucky to live in a paradise” (25). In no negative context, this ideology likely ensured that Cuban children thought that their homeland was special and they really believed it was like no other place on earth. This belief system propagated the pain of exile since it meant that no other place could ever be as good as the homeland, which is a common theme of all the exile-based texts examined in these five chapters.

Text as a Game

Now, the game-as Wood refers to it-and the text-as I have been referring to it in this chapter, happens to be Eire’s life story. For Eire, “Progress through the game [life] is recursively contingent on the space” he has “created as a consequence of those encounters” (Wood 93). These encounters are the meat of Eire’s text and include all his memories, how he remembers them, how he contextualized them, and how he lets them define him. Eire is very aware of the space of consequence, since this is how he has lived his entire life. What is interesting is that he passes this quandary down

to his own children. What he presents to his readers this time is not a memory of the past, but a tangible piece of what he does in his life now:

Nowadays I play a game with my own three children. I ask them suddenly and unexpectedly at the oddest moments: “What is the law?” They know the answer, and they pronounce the words I’ve taught them, slowly and ponderously: “we shall not walk on all fours. We shall not drink blood.” To this quiz on the Law I have added a third response of my own: “We shall not inhale poison.” My children think I’m joking when I launch into this pop quiz. But I’m deadly serious. I want them to know that there is a law, and that there is a beast inside of each of them, always itching to ignore it and to break free. I want them to know, too, that there is a whip snapping over their heads, silent for now, gentle and silent. Someday, I tell them, they will hear the crack of the whip and realize they are wielding it themselves, standing erect, abstaining from blood, seeing poison for what it is, and avoiding it like the plague. (41)

The notion of “law” or a manifestation of order from a person who lived first-hand through an absolute dissolution of every possible characteristic of what was once considered order is a strange scenario that highlights the transient nature of our own perceptions. The irony here is that the point of Eire’s quiz for his children is that however we imagine our surroundings to be, we may just find that it is all exactly the opposite and it is our job, if we want to survive, to remain in control of how we react when the veil is lifted. It is our responsibility to protect ourselves, to moderate ourselves and not heed to the demands or judgments we perceive from others. This anecdote transcends being a remedy for exile and becomes a motto for how to cope with life.

How Eire handles this as he moves from location to location once he arrives in the United States is worth examining. When his mother is finally able to join him, they call Chicago home, and aptly much of Eire’s major assimilation into American culture happens in this city, even though he has been away from Cuba for nearly three years and is a teenager when he arrives. Eire says, “Chicago. I hated everything about the place” (Eire 202). Of course, this could have something to do with the weather, since he arrived in November, and the fact that he lived in somewhat deplorable conditions. Eire is fifteen and in the height of his teen angst period when he arrives in Chicago. He attends school all day and then works at night. His whole life is comprised of walking from one location to another, riding trains and buses, going home, sleeping and repeating.

According to Franco Moretti, “The city dwellers’ life is dominated by a nightmare -- a trifling one, to be sure -- unknown to other human beings: the terror of ‘missing something,’ and specifically of missing it because of ‘getting

there too late” (119). This is how Eire lives. He cannot be late to school, work, or for his responsibilities at home. When and if he is late, his life will fall apart. This creates a constant suspense-like state, which is something with which Eire has grown accustomed to living. He uses his time in Chicago, living in a basement apartment with his mother and brother, to give his readers a stark glimpse of the polar opposite life that is now his reality. One minute he is sitting in a cold midnight train and the next minute he has “Gone back to Miramar. To the beach, at the Club Náutico. I saw clouds, beautiful white clouds, hovering over the turquoise sea” (204). These descriptions stop “the flow of the plot and reveal the fundamental meanings of the text” (Moretti 111). The juxtaposition between this seemingly beautiful life in Cuba and a miserable life in the United States where conditions are so bleak that an immigration official suggests he drop out of school when he is sixteen, leaves readers feeling some of Eire’s malaise.

Chicago becomes much more than merely a location. The entire city, (and this also follows Eire to other cities where he lives or visits) becomes a major obstacle that his frail, displaced self is not ready, equipped or prepared to handle. Miraculously, Eire is able to surmount the challenges presented to him even though in “the city-unless one has the force of a cannonball or is committed to martyrdom-one must learn how to get around thousands of unmovable objects” (Moretti 123). Upon his arrival from Cuba, Eire is not a martyr or a cannonball. However, we do see him slowly become skilled at navigating the cityscape, hence leading to his overall success at coming to a resolution about how he allowed his exile to shape his life. His eventually succeed and has a full and efficacious life.

Eire’s writing “reveals that the meaning of the city is not to be found in any particular place, but manifests itself only through a temporal trajectory (Moretti 112). Obviously, he goes on to become quite successful and after reading his story, I would go so far as to call his life path a triumph for the children who unwittingly became Cuban American exiles. Eire attributes this to the sheer radiance of Cuba: “With all the light, Cubans have a hard time letting go. Even if they only lived in the place for one day before being whisked away, the sunlight is forever trapped in their blood. We love much too deeply” (Eire 222). Even though he believes it is the essence of Cuba that gave him all the strength to remember his roots and carry on, he also knows that it was also in Cuba where he became irreversibly changed. One of his favorite places remains close to his heart and memory:

the Roxy [a theater he frequented as a child in Havana] holds a special place in my memory. It was there, on that sidewalk, that I first felt that repulsive feeling of someone trying to invade my mind and soul. It was the first lancing. The blade of Fidel’s scalpel had attempted the first incision, the first step towards the gradual head transplant. (244)

In hindsight, it is easy for Eire to recognize that he will become an entirely different person. Identifying the start of it, before he even left Cuba, the time when he endured just the slightest conceptual change goes back to the creation of space and the slight changes that completely alter the trajectory and the constructs of it.

In the beginning of this chapter, I briefly mentioned that space begets space. One of the “main points about recursive space is that play generates space, and this gives us a different way of thinking about spatial engagement” (Wood 99). We are constantly involved, “we engage with it and create it at the same time” (Wood 88). The space of the memoir exists mostly in our minds, but as we engage with it, it is shifting and changing. Eire interacts with this by “Telling stories by organizing spatial features, designed in part via relationships among objects” (Wood 89). Even though these characteristics do not appear in 3-D on a screen like in a video game, they are still very much active and engaged. Take for example, Eire’s Cuba clouds: “They pursue me, these clouds. I’ve seen them everywhere” (Eire 149). He sees what he wants to see and if we think of those clouds or whatever creates them as a coder and Eire and a player, one could argue that there is a recursive relationship occurring between one thing or another at all times. It does not have to be controlled by an entity that we understand. It can just exist as the world consists of multiple configurations a space at all times. Once we are aware of space, we create it simply by thinking and navigating through any landscape whereby our minds search for relationships between objects and images. As we read, we create the space of the memoir; as we write, we create space of whatever we are writing; as we imagine Cuba or life as an exile, we create a spatial construction around those items and advance how and why these things exist. However, one advances or, more precisely, configures images and objects within space systematically leads us to another “configuration of space within” the book or the space or whatever it is we are trying to navigate” (Wood 93). Eire’s entire life is a propagation of space:

Always starting all over again. Ignoring the neighbor who is lusting after our stuff. Forgetting the taste of our own urine. Buying lottery tickets. Licking envelopes absentmindedly. Marrying the wrong women. Fumbling miserably with the right woman. Tossing away our inheritances for the sake of love of faith. Hating those lizards, crushing their heads. Blowing them up with firecrackers. (118)

Each item here is a longer memory that we hear more about at some point in the text. One of the most important may be the lizards, since they are a representation of something that he both loves and hates. First, they are overly abundant throughout Cuba, especially Havana. Eire and his childhood friends see them everywhere. They are a reassuring friend, but

also a formidable enemy. Wherever he goes, they are watching him with their little beady eyes. Some of the hatred that Eire feels for them is really just a form of jealousy. The day after the revolution, Eire sees the lizards and thinks, “The lizards remained oblivious to the news that day. They knew exactly what they were and always would be. Nothing had changed for them” (5). For a second, Eire may have wished that he were a lizard, that is, until he remembers that the favorite pastime for Havana boys is to kill them in any possible way. The paradox is that the island of Cuba is shaped like a lizard and as Eire thinks about how much he hates lizards, it becomes quite clear that his hatred for them might be displaced.

When Eire reminisces about the clouds that he so loves, he states, “Feel free to open my chest too. I bet you’ll find a scar on my heart that looks like a Cuban cloud (148-49). Of course, to him, all Cuban clouds look like Cuba, just like the lizards. Towards the end of the text, and the placement is important: “all of the stains on my soul are lizard shaped” (370). There is a double meaning; the scars of his heart and the stains of his soul are all shaped like Cuba. His heart, a part he literally cannot live without has been branded by Cuba. His intense and lasting pain has changed the composition of his heart permanently. This happened early in life, but the stains on his soul have been built up over time. They are not simply emblematic of all the lizards he killed as a child; the stains epitomize a lifetime of the way he has been affected by his own Cuban-ness. The negative, the positive, everything about him revolves around this island that he feels has literally scarred and stained the deepest parts of his being. At one point, Eire remembers the lizards and wonders, “But wait, where are the lizards? Can Fidel and Che make them disappear too? So long as everything else evaporates into memories, why not them, too?” (279). And since Eire may never see Cuban lizards ever again, especially through the eyes of a child, they really have disappeared. There is no way to know what they are like now, if they still exist and how many there may be.

Wood goes on to discuss “represented space,” which is the location of actions that occur within the text (Wood 88). When Eire mentions a specific location, for example, the Malecón in Havana or his temporary house in Bloomington, Illinois, this is represented space. There are some spatial constraints related to this version of space, but it can expand and shift as needed, via our input and the boundaries we envisioned reconfigure as needed (Wood 88-89). This means that the space that is visible to us, conceived within our minds, but presented by Eire as the creator of the text, changes based on the input from readers as it shifts to become what the reader wants it to be. Eire’s Cuba clouds and the way he sees them in practically every location he has ever visited molds him to represented space and he offers this anecdote: “It’s too grand a practical joke on the part of God,

or nature, if you prefer” (149). Here is inviting his reader to make a choice: God or nature.

The space of his memories are open to interpretation and can assume numerous implications. He asks for recursive feedback without even realizing that he is doing so and then the reader, based on his or her own beliefs, imagines a joke of God or a joke of nature. Together, with various concepts in mind, it is necessary as Tomasello says to create space together. As Eire asks his readers to navigate his text, he has a goal in mind: he has certain knowledge that he wants to convey and a precise directive he wants to employ to compel his readers. Therefore, his stories, his memories must follow some sort of order to make sense. He has to select carefully which snippets of his memories he wants to put forth, when, and why.

Conclusion

Through *Waiting for Snow in Havana*, Eire reminds us that these are just his memories; they are not facts and he may even be delusional from time to time: “all I know is that it (Cuba) happened to be my birthplace and my people, and that my own memories are clouded by passion” (51). Even with these disclaimers, Eire is a representative of Cuban American exiles. Being “an agent means being a locus of casual efficacy. Agency implies the capacity to change things in ways that in some respects run counter to how things would have spontaneously proceeded without such intervention” (Deacon 480). Not only has his work created a possible spatial dialogue system, but he inspires his reader to conceptualize the way in which those who are displaced view the world. He reminds us that at any moment, we can be back in paradise: “I smelt the saltwater, even tasted it,” he says, “and felt the sting in my eyes. I felt the sun on my skin and the warm breeze. I felt the wind whip through my hair, just as it had that *Nochebuena* when we made our way home past the seawall of the Malecón” (204) and in the next moment, “any day can turn into Judgement Day, anywhere, when you least expect it, Don’t look for it up in the clouds. Look way down deep and all around, at the hells you’ve helped create in and around yourself” (181). These are the lizard stains; the ways in which we tarnish ourselves, the ways in which we realize the whip cracking about our heads is none other than controlled by our own hand.

How space is created and the relationship between coder/writer and gamer/reader depends on feedback and a common ground where both parties work together to create space. As space changes, writer and reader “conquer space” (Wood 91). The sense of conquering, mastering space should bring forth some sort of peace. Eire believes it does, which is why he reminds himself that no matter what happens in life, it is the realization that control is an illusion, but there has to be some sense of order related to it. He is no longer arbitrarily traversing the landscape of his memories. His “Lifetime of memories” are not gone (Eire 276). Since Eire knows that his memories may

be fractured, delusional and are oft only his version of the truth, they almost function as dreams: “The world is weirder than we can imagine, even in our dreams” (48). Still, he realizes the power of dreams to create space. He has a relationship with his father in his dreams and he even communicated with Jesus: “Occasionally, something surfaces in dreams,” he says. “Things I have every right to be scared of. But sometimes good things surface too. Things that heal” (Eire 107). Eire is able to mentally heal through his dreams of his deceased father, a man who stayed in Cuba instead of coming to the United States with Eire’s mother to care for the children.

Understandably, Eire carries much resentment towards his father, but the dreams that occur in repetition fill in for the memories he does not have. The significance of dreams weighs heavy on Eire’s mind but they do not make up for the missing memories. As Deacon points out, in dreams, “all action is virtual and this need never be finally differentiated; but when awake and enjoined to behave by real-world circumstances, action depends on a winner-take-all logic to produce a single integrated action” (478). His dreams allow him to provide feedback for himself, to present himself with two simultaneous views, through which he can locate his own common ground, content with himself, and create his own space around the parts of his life that would otherwise be lacking in imagery, objects and the necessary repetition to function recursively at all.

Eire’s dreams heal the fracturing of his identity and create a network of space. The next chapter deals with how this network exists, interacts with itself and produces a space where the interconnected reality of spaces, like the dreamspace are focal to spatial creation and understanding. Through a more networked approach to space and identity, we can sharpen “our perception of passing time (Moretti 118) and understand how deeply and intrinsically interrelated the processes of space truly are.

Every chapter has been leading towards a collective interspatiality and intersubjectivity as the method by which spatial analysis best functions through literature. In chapter one, we see how space is shaped by the ways in which it is represented. Chapter two conveys the geographical side of space and uses place marks that are known and learned to make space more relatable. Chapter three examines what happens when exiles cannot relax into their spatial surroundings due to uncomfortable or unsafe perceptions of space as they move through it hoping to find some sort of place to which they belong. Chapter four flushes out how exiles move through a hospitable space as a recursive process by which repetition creates a familiar sense of location and ultimately spatial production.

All of these chapters pave the way for the reticulated space explored in chapter five. This chapter explicitly discusses the collective nature of space and posits that Cuban exile space in all forms presented in this dissertation is a reticulated network that comes together to form identity, culture and

collective spatial consciousness between this distinct group who suffer from specific intersubjective conditions as a result of their struggle to orient themselves into new spaces and locations.

I cannot close my eyes and feel your soft skin; listen to your laughter;
smell the sweetness of your bath. I write because I cannot remember at
all.

Carolina Hospital

Chapter Five: Exiled Networks: Reticulated Space in Anna Menéndez's *In
Cuba I was a German Shepherd*

In all of the chapters of this dissertation, without explicitly stating it, I examine space in a manner that is assumed to be reticulated. Even though space performs in this manner, it is not conceptualized in this context, so for purpose of this chapter, I will explore how space functions as a reticulated network that creates identity and collective consciousness. According to Joël Bonnemaïson, every society has a “preliminary place” that they associate with. From this place, “space is shaped, and through it a web of values and meanings is organized” (Bonnemaïson 2). The network that is comprised of a multitude of values and meanings is a reticulated spatial network. To paint a clear picture of how this type of space works, Bonnemaïson uses island nations, specifically Melanesia, as a reference point. He claims that island nations where people are connected by a core societal knowledge yet separated by place (and space) encompass this dynamic and create a “web of multiple relationships (8). He goes on to say that, “Reticulated space takes shape as a network where each place and therefore each group is the equal complement to the place or groups before or after it on the road” (8). When one thinks of exile and distinct, sharp separation from the homeland, the complement may not be clear, but if we take a step back and see multiple societies as networks that communicate with each other in spite of and despite of each other, this connection may start to become more clear.

The premise is that “within reticulated space, the focal place is not a central place but a founding place” (Bonnemaïson 9). This is how reticulated space makes sense for those in exile. The idea here deviates from Bonnemaïson’s original concept and the linear connection does not actually have to exist. Instead, the idea and the thought processes focus around the founding place that creates the network. He continues: “The founding place brings forth a road-like space where messages, political relations and rituals of alliance jump along from one link to the next” (9). Regardless of whether or not the network is active in a positive sense, the people involved still feel connected and wherever those who are in in a mental and emotion dialogue with the founding place may find themselves physically living, they are creating a space for themselves based on the founding place. Because of this, the network grows and interacts in space with other similar networks. Therefore, what manifests is a larger system that grows into a network where everything is essentially connected.

The Reticulated Exile

Anna Menéndez's text of short stories titled *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd* (2001) is an accurate example of reticulated space, because of what it becomes if envisioned holistically (which may be unintentional) is a network of spatial visualization whereby the reader, and the author herself, create a space of that depicts some of the pains of exile. Menéndez portrays windows into the emotions and daily lives of her characters and, together, there is a collective sense of what it meant to live in exile. She employs stories of men and women of different ages, usually focusing on the dynamics between people afflicted with the same pain. She shows us how different people reacts to their lives in exile and how these responses affect others through a progression of time as a network. She depicts a space to which we can relate. Suddenly, her characters are not the only ones who become part of the reticulation. We see that we too are part of the collective consciousness that facilitates such networks. However, space is still based on our own variations in life. Space is a subjective experience that "varies according to one's social class, type of employment or cultural identity" (Bonnemaison 48). How it surrounds and shapes us is based on specific notions and meaning, but the collective nature of space as an arching network is central to its existence.

Reticulated space has to do with cultural geography and the space of human beings, Bonnemaison states "Cultural geography positions human beings at the center of geographical knowledge – human beings with their beliefs, their passions, and their life experiences" (1). Therefore, these networks, which have everything to do with location are all about the human experience. Cultural geography exists because there is an initial place and this place is "born from the creative osmosis between a specific natural environment and the small number of great founding myths that explain it" (Bonnemaison 2). Everything that we think we know about ourselves comes from our own attempts to define ourselves and create a space that we can live within. Therefore, the question "who am I?" is always at the forefront of humanity and we disseminate a cycle of discovering to continue answering this question. When one goes into exile, the question becomes even more volatile and soon there is a group of people grappling with questions of identity, reinventing themselves and creating a whole new, updated network that encompasses past, present and assumed future aspects of space.

According to Stuart Hall, the "concept of identity does *not* signal that stable core of the self, unfolding from beginning to end through all the vicissitudes of history without change" (3). We can take this to mean that shifts in place and space are to be expected and are a piece of what generates identity. Hall says, "Identities are never unified and, in late modern times increasingly fragmented and fractured" (4). Most modern people would agree, but what Hall overlooks is how reticulation may actually function as

something that has the power to take these identities that are nonlinear and give them a seemingly coherent structure to reduce what causes the fragments and fractures. This is not to say that the fragments and fractures are gone; it is more so that they can remain, but have a general thread that connects them. By looking at identity as reticulated, those gaps can begin to be repaired or at the very least become more unified. Hall comes to this conclusion himself: “Actual identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves” (4). All these aspects come together, systematically forming an invisible network that we play off of and look to for signs of ourselves.

The questions of “what we might become” is prevalent in exile writing. As an exile acclimates to their new surroundings, they are in a sense, becoming. How this is defined is very unclear and it may be one of the aspects of life that we cannot see clearly until the end. The exiles in other chapters, and particularly Carlos Eire, clearly portray the transformation from one phase of life to the next. We see him as a displaced child and then through his two memoirs, we see the what he is becoming and then finally what he has become.

In line with this theme, Menéndez’s short stories illustrate how those in exile transform over time. Her characters are in different stages of this progression and the very clear relationship between all of them is clear. Even though they are at different points in their respective storylines, they are all connected by Cuba and being in exile, along with other more nuanced assemblies as well. They are now living in a world alongside people who they believe to be very different than they are. Yet, reflecting back on Hall, how someone represents themselves has everything to do with what they are surrounded by, therefore, in effect, those in exile, no matter how they are feeling are becoming something new all the time. Hall states: “Identities are constructed within, not outside discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within in specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies” (Hall 4). This is true, but identity melds and grows and shifts and transforms. The discourse within which it is created is the one that surrounds us: it is the new location, the new country, the new language, the new ways of living life. Thus, while there may be a historical glue between Cuban exiles, what they become is something different than what they were. Hall sees that specific attributes, strategies, memories, practices and constructs go into making identity. Therefore, what he is saying is that we are comprised of a network and all these factors must be considered when determining who we are.

This network of reticulated space could be pointed out in any number of texts, but for this chapter, I will focus on two particular short stories in Menéndez's work. The first story of which her book is named after is called "In Cuba I was a German Shepherd" and the second story is "Hurricane Stories." Both have characters who are trying to place themselves in space and time, accept their lives not living on Cuban soil and adjust and relate to the dynamics that surround them. This includes other Cubans, non-Cubans and the scenery that they now must call home.

Much of the stories are spent reflecting on what is missing and what others are not able to understand. Although, often exclusionary, identities may serve as partitions between networks and cultures. Hall states, "Identities can function as points of identification and attachment only *because* of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render 'outside, abjected'" (Hall 4). Therefore, what is not within a network defines and creates space just as much as what is inside. We want to know what we are, but we want to also know what we are not and again, the age-old question of 'who am I?' perpetrates every facet of our entire existence.

Changing Dimensions: Shepherd to Mutt

In "In Cuba I was a German Shepherd," we meet a group of older Cuban men who play dominoes in a local park. Menéndez, who acts as an omniscient narrator, says, "the men came each morning to sit under the shifting shade of a banyan tree, and sometimes the way the wind moved through the leaves reminded them of home" (Menéndez 3). The obvious meaning is that these men find reminders of home to be endearing and they long for said reminders. Yet what reminds them of home and affects them positively alludes to the notion that they are most often not reminded of home and thus reminded of what is not there. Thus, they are basing their identities on what is missing and focusing on what is not there. What is not there normally, in this case the wind moving through the trees, reminds them of what they are missing regardless of whether or not it is there. If there is no wind, they know they are not in Cuba, but on the flipside, when there is wind, they are again reminded that they are not in Cuba. Perhaps this wind actually carries with it negative connotations, since its mere existence leaves them in an abject state where they feel as if they can never fully belong.

Instead of focusing intently on the differences, Hall himself has a take on identity that resonates with the condition of exile and the idea of reticulated space. He uses identity to:

refer to the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular

discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects. (5-6)

Two major aspects come to play here and this is consistent with exile and the notion of grappling to make sense of multiple sides. This is where much of the nostalgia comes in as well. When one cannot make clear view of where this meeting point is, they do not know which discourse to listen to and they find themselves subjects of many convoluted constructs. Here is the construction of a displaced identity, but also, the suggestion that a network can repair some of the damages.

Nostalgia and its role for exiles have been discussed many times in previous chapters, but in different contexts. All human beings look back at places and events with fondness. Most would reminisce with the homeland and think very positive thoughts; however, for Cuban exiles, those thoughts and memories are marred with sad endings. Menéndez highlights this when the characters in her narrative tell each other stories about how things used to be in Cuba. The narrator of the story says of Cuban stories:

They were stories of old overs, beautiful and round-hipped. Of skies that stretched on clear and blue to the Cuban hills. Of green landscapes that clung to the red clay of Güines, roots dug in like fingernails in a good-bye. In Cuba, the stories always began, life was good and pure. But something always happened to them in the end, something withering, malignant. (Menéndez 7)

The main character in this particular story, Máximo, is confused by the arrangement of these stories. He is bothered by the harsh endings and he sees how they have, in a way, followed him to Miami. If being around beautiful scenery and comforting visualizations sets the tone for how one exists as a social subject, imagines subjectivities and then also is constructed as a subject, one would think that there would be a positive affluence attached to something thing that is generally pleasing. The inference here is that even though Cuba is beautiful and enjoyable on the surface, at first, it is not what it seems. Therefore, here, the United States is not qualified with a negative ending. It is in Cuba where the stories do not end as one would hope. The new home, although not necessarily similar to the homeland, does not carry with it the same negative connotations. This statement is of paramount importance to exile acclimation and identity.

Where is the meeting point that Hall talks about? Is that meeting point an understanding that the past informs the future and that space and identity function on a similar loop informing each other? These are questions that do not have clear answers. The network of space, that is evident in every chapter, is how we exist as humans and are all connected in one way or

another. For the characters in Menéndez's text, the point where they finally accept being Cuban American might be the point where they realize that the negative end to all their Cuban stories remains in Cuba.

The men play dominoes, but of course, it is much more than just a game. It is a ritual that they perform that plays into their identities, it is a reminder of the old days in Cuba, but it also functions as a reminder that the game of dominoes is changeable and the destiny of games is not impervious to fate. If by chance, the pieces on the board are not conducive to a vital game, there is an end in sight. The men play one of these unkind games: "The game started badly. It happened sometimes- the distribution of the pieces went all wrong and out of desperation one of the men made mistakes and soon it was all they could do to not knock all the pieces over and start fresh" (Menéndez 24). Here we have many analogies. The exiles in this story would like to reset much more than just their game. There is a give and take between how easy it would be to knock all the pieces off the board and simply start again and how painstakingly it is to carry on and see it through to the end. They think to themselves: if only other things were that easy, if only one could start again with a whole country, with whole government. Similarly, the men can foresee the downfall just by viewing the pieces; they can visualize the pieces on the board and they know how it will likely end, they know this is just a game and it is temporary, but the situation has a strong resemblance to the condition in Cuba. They can see it is not going well, but there is absolutely nothing they can do; they are helpless. The game must play out. It must progress through time and space until the end.

Everyone is aware that games and lives do not always go as planned. As with most games, the hopes were high. Anything was possible before the pieces touched the board, but in a matter of seconds, they could see fate unfolding before their own eyes. Then, out of desperation, one starts to make poor decisions. This is analogous for how and why some of the characters may find themselves in Florida to begin with. Most Cubans left Cuba bearing in mind that they would be able to return shortly. They did not anticipate, though it was not their fault, that they would not return during the rest of their lives. Therefore, this game, this bird's eye view of seeing when the pieces are in the wrong position and knowing there is an end in sight is a representation of what is lacking in the shaping and building of their lives. This is another facet of the network the builds onto reticulated space.

The park where the men play is well known because of their presence and in one of the scenes, a tourist group comes to watch them play. The head of the tourist group calls out over a megaphone: "You see, in Cuba, it was very common to retire to a game of dominos after a good meal. It was a way to bond and build community. Folks, you here are seeing a slice of the past. A simpler time of good friendships and unhurried days" (Menéndez 25). Instead of the more widely agreed upon, "space is produced by society," Bonnemaison

believes that “space must be produced by a society, yet society creates itself within a cultural space” (2). This can take us down two distinct paths when it comes to Cuban American exiles. First, exiles exist within a space that has been already created for them by society, a concept that has been heavily explored in other chapters here. The second possibility, which has also been mentioned in chapter two, is that exiles are their own society that they create themselves in the cultural space of their new home. What fits best is that exiles lay somewhere between these two concepts because reticulation exist within multiple contexts.

We see the many dimensions of the network of space here as the characters in this section of Menéndez’s text tell each other stories while playing dominoes. Every story is an allegory for Cuba that incorporates some aspect of the new location they call home. One of their tales recounted by a character named Carlos is about Juanito, a Cuban dog. The story starts with Juanito getting off the boat from Cuba. He is scared and out of place yet doing his best to get his bearings in a new location. As Juanito branches out into his new home, he meets a white poodle. For him, it is love at first sight and he asks her on a date, but the poodle refuses and tells him he is nothing more than a mutt: “Pardon me, your highness,’ Juanito the mangy dog says. ‘Here in America I may be a short, insignificant mutt, but in Cuba I was a German shepherd’” (Menéndez 28). This may signify two separate positions. The first, could be complete displacement and the second could be a mockery of how exiles may pretend to have had a different life back in Cuba. In one location, there is a network of data, or what we call reticulated space where a sense of how a person exists in the universe unfolds to create how they see themselves. Therefore, one may take this same exact person, same brain, same emotions, same notions of identity, same background, same precepts of knowledge, and move them to a different location, and suddenly, the interrelated network of space is completely dislocated. Does this indicate a counterbalance between reality and what one imagines or does it denote a true picture? Obviously, it depends on the individual. If the subject is someone like Carlos Eire, the intelligent son of a wealthy judge, then there may be truth to the notion that his life in Cuba was far superior to his life in foster homes all over some of the roughest areas of the United States. On the other hand, many of the Cuban exiles who found themselves in the United States were not in the same position as Eire. For some, their life in Cuba may have been quite unpleasant and it is the pain of exile and the intensity of nostalgia that alters their memories.

The act of moving to a different landscape, where one is physically and mentally detached from the signifiers of culture and identity shifts Bonnemaison’s meaning of nature and culture and refers to mental and natural organization of space (1). He goes on to call this connection a “matrix.” He does not call it reticulated space at this point, but concedes that

landscape is given meaning by our own attachments. Bonnemaïson questions if there is a “cross-breeding between nature and culture? Is there a type of osmosis between the nature of the world and the spirit of a civilization, a sort of transformation that spatial organization and the shaping of the landscape translates visually and therefore geographically?” (1-2). The connection between the cultural and natural features applies to exile and to any displaced person; the new place means very little because there are no cultural connections. As one traverses a new location, there is initially no mental/cultural relationship and it takes time for this reticulation/matrix to take form.

How one used to exist in the world has shifted and now an entirely new variation of space exists. This variation is based on the new network of spatial attributes that are already in place, but not recognized by a newcomer to the culture, society and landscape. Going back to the new place, or landscape where Juanito the dog now exists, he finds himself struggling to fit into the predefined concepts of reticulated space until he can figure out a way to bridge this gap. It does not happen quickly or easily. The concepts of the society he now resides indicate what he is and how he will interact with the world around him and more importantly how the world around him will recognize and interact with him (as seen in chapter 2). Unfortunately, for Juanito the dog, a representation of Cuban exiles, the recognition and interaction is nothing like it was a mere eighty miles over the ocean. This is an excellent analogy for how place has an insurmountable effect on identity and the creation and distribution of space.

As the analogies for Cuba replay throughout the day in the park, Máximo thinks of his now deceased wife Rosa and the relation between space and time is so clear and he feels the loss associated with the progression of time and the reconfigurations of space that transpires when the network that compromises one’s sense of self moves through time. He reflects on holding his daughters after they were born, seeing them grow and now grappling with then being adults and no longer present: “their ribbonly youth aflutter in the past” (Menéndez 29). He questions the passage of time and wonders “what he had salvaged from the years? Already he was forgetting Rosa’s face, the precise shade of her eyes” (Menéndez 29). All of the loss that Máximo feels is real and very relatable to anyone reading this narrative. The space that once was, for Máximo it could be having a house full of children and having an active relationship with Rosa, is now very different.

The network created by these attributes still informs Máximo’s daily life and his consciousness. This is just another parallel to the questions of confusion and pain and loss he feels about Cuba. His children have grown and moved on and of course it is difficult for him and he wonders what is left of that time in his life. Similarly, he has watched his island homeland shift and change and grow and digress. There is nothing he can do except find

some method to accept that which he cannot change, just like a bad game of dominoes.

As Máximo thinks of Rosa and mentions that he is forgetting her features, he is again reminded of his homeland. Time passes and he also forgets Cuba's features and becomes separated even more deeply from his homeland. Does he remember all the small intricacies that make his country Cuba? He most likely does, but over time, this may change Cuba's value and importance in his life. The same things go for Rosa. He is not only forgetting her precise features, and her importance may be shifting into another dimension that he does not understand or feel comfortable with. Again, these parallels exist for a reason and it is up to the characters, Menéndez and we, as the readers, try to interpret these connections and see the network (or matrix) that exists here between space, time, identity and location.

Reticulated Displacement in "Hurricane Stories"

The facets of identity mentioned in previous sections of this chapter transcend age. It is interesting to peer into the ways by which dissimilar exiles deal with the condition of exile under different contexts. The next narrative of Menéndez's text that fits in with the themes discussed in this chapter is titled "Hurricane Stories." This anecdote is about a man and a woman who appear to be on uncertain terms with each other. The woman is opening up to the man and sharing with him what happened when her family first arrived in the United States. The man is not Cuban and he has never once thought about life in any of the parameters displayed by the female character. She gently introduces him to Cuban space and hopes that it is possible for him to understand what she goes through on a daily basis. She uses a network of information, including tiny gestures and seemingly irrelevant details to appeal to him in multiple ways, but it does not go as she hoped and this dissolution between them, that only she recognizes, marks the end of their courtship.

The narrator, who remains nameless throughout the story, has a deep desire to be remembered by her male companion after they part, another parallel, perhaps an unattainable one, that reminds us, as the reader, that everything that transpires in this text is synonymous for the predicament of exile. She states: "He points out shapes in the clouds and I tell him stories I hope will make him remember me" (Menéndez 33). She wants to be remembered by him in the same way that she remembers Cuba and somehow, her worth is tied in with this idea. It could be that this intense desire, which is a common theme in this particular story, is related to the notion of geosymbolism. According to Bonnemaïson:

A geosymbolism: the symbolic structure of a geographical setting; its signification. Human beings inscribe and illustrate their values in landscape. Geosymbols, which give meaning to the world, are related

to ethics and metaphysics. They represent the spirituality of a place – what we call the spirit of a place. (Bonnemaison 17)

What we see in this story is the main character trying to recreate this spirit. Her stories have deep meanings that are wrapped up in her sense of self. Yet these tenants of meaning are meaningless to the man. She is describing a hurricane that never actually happened. There is a very important aspect of the story that I will address later in this section, but this point is diluted by the intricacies of her stories. To the man, they function like an unconnected network and the lines making the connections are easily missed. The narrator asks her boyfriend if he has ever felt the same way she has, in a cave and shut out, “Safe, even if you’re not” (Menéndez 44). He responds by saying “he’s never thought of it” (44). The reason this may be an issue for the narrator is that this commentary highlights what is, for her, obvious. She lives with the of trauma and pain, which alters her ability and perhaps her desire to relate to others who do not share these sentiments. This disconnect is her rejecting a collective consciousness, but at the same time her attempting to bridge a gap between exile and non-exile.

On the surface, it is a story within a story. The internal story is about a hurricane and the way a family reacts to it and the trace dynamics between them during the storm. On the day of the hurricane, the narrator says: “The day started hot and ended in a tangle of trees” (Menéndez 33). This parallels Máximo’s description of his Cuban stories as well. Every day begins in an advantageous way. It is not until later that the day takes on its true form.

The story is full of nostalgia and the memories evoke a sense of fear and inability to adapt to new surroundings, but also deep desire to acclimate and adjust into a comfortable position. When the hurricane winds started, the narrator, a child at the time, was sitting in a tree. She recalls, “I swayed with it [the tree] and dreamed the live oak was my house and this was the elegant drawing room and there rested the fine china that we left behind the night we left Havana for good” (Menéndez 33). One may wonder why a child would have any memory about a dish set. What this says is that the physicality of the material-based items left behind in Cuba is very relevant, as this now adult woman has been deeply affected by her parents’ experiences.

The female character is removed from her preferred geographical setting, but more important, her parents are this setting. As the child of exiles, she is impacted by the ways in which the adults who care for her are fostering her first sense of reticulated space. Material objects become part of the geographical setting that is/is not Cuba and in the new land. Geographical environments, According to Bonnemaison:

a geographical setting: an ecological and geographical structure –

soils, vegetation, hydrology, climate, human density, communication network. Human beings fully belong to this ecological system because all geographical environments are anthromorphized to a smaller or greater extent. (17)

All the attributes of the homeland are humanized in a manner that makes re-humanizing them in a different location a very real challenge. When one has a strong sense of cultural space and the positive subjective experience, “there is a strong attachment to place, love of country and territory and strong patriotism” (Bonnemaison 48). When these forms of space are in unison with each other, “happiness is the hallmark of a people’s collective history” (Bonnemaison 48). Interestingly, Cuban American exile literature suggests that exiles meet all of the statements above; however, the idea that there is a collective state of happiness is far removed from what we see in any of the texts in this dissertation.

There are collective notions, for example, the people of Miami preparing for the impending storm. The storm brought many people out of their homes in an effort to stock up on supplies for an uncontrollable event they *thought* would affect their lives. This is yet another parallel for what was happening in Cuba at the time of Castro’s takeover and also during the unrest leading up to the departure of many Cuban exiles. Those preparing for the storm are doing so in an attempt to elicit a sense of security in a frightening time. The store is chaos and the narrator’s mother who did not usually let her children have sweets turned down the candy aisle. The narrator says:

I didn’t say anything, afraid I’d wake up and find myself in the vegetable aisle, my mother reaching for another bag of broccoli, our lives going on as before. ‘We have to ready for anything,’ my mother said. She winked at me like this was a secret just for us. (Menéndez 37)

This excerpt shows a disconnect with reality: is her mother actually allowing the children eat chocolate? How can something like a storm trigger such a change in daily routine? The reticulation of space involved so many living and breathing components that the network controlling them can feel like nothing more than a dream. There are so many facets to it that one-minute life is one way and in the blink of an eye it is another way. One day it is broccoli, the next day chocolate. This is like the dreamspace, but while awake, which may actually be akin to a nightmare space, since waking up in the ideal situation may or may not be a possibility.

Menéndez’s short stories are filled with idioms that trigger alternate dimensions. On the surface we have a mother buying chocolate for her children in an attempt to put them at ease at the crux of a big storm. If we

peel a layer back, we have people grappling at a sense of control over a situation where they clearly have none. Of course, because of the tone of Menéndez's text, we know that everything that she describes relates back to the space of exiles, or rather a complicated network of attributes that come together to form a collective space. The narrator's mother reminds her that they have to be ready for anything. Therefore, being ready for anything negates the lack of control that displaced people, specifically exiles, experience every minute of their lives on an ethereal level. As the story continues, the narrator reveals that she forgot what else they bought that day at the store. All she remembers is the chaos and the chocolate that made her feel as if she was in a dream.

In this context, Lawrence Grossberg states: "Identity is always a temporary and unstable effect of relations which define identities by marking difference" (89). This is especially true for exiles, many of which spend their lives focusing on the differences between their new homeland and the old. Even as the narrator of the story goes into detail, almost everything she describes is paired with how it is similar or dissimilar to Cuba, as if Cuba is the holy grail of how everything should and at the same time should not be. The narrator explains the way the rain falls and the wind blows. She wonders if her male companion understands: "Not everyone knows what these things mean. I watch him and think, Was it always this way between us?" (Menéndez 34). When he asks her if she was afraid of the storm, she realizes that their notions of fear are comprised of entirely different networks. What means fear to him and what means fear to her are equivalent to two different worlds.

Through this dialogue, the narrator realizes that the relationship between them is gravely changed. The narrator and her boyfriend continue chatting about small details of stories and the inexplicable shift in time and space: "'Something so small,' he says. 'And the way you think about a person changes. And you don't get it back'" (Menéndez 48). She applies this to him, but, in actuality, it is very much applicable to how she feels about herself. What used to be favorable to her is no longer so. What used to elicit pleasurable responses, no longer does. This is a piece of the passage of time and space, and collective consciousness. The more one has access to, the wider the range one can see in the spatial and temporal sense.

This leads to another question about whether this even matters. Why does it matter if we share the same sense of reality with others? What is the reason for a collective consciousness? She is having trouble relating. Her lover tells her that he spent a summer in Argentina. She thinks to herself, "I imagine him in an old city, cobblestones and wine, the sky gray and tight, and I wonder how many stories he keeps" (Menéndez 36). While listening to his stories, she is wondering what his network of space is like and whether it is as complex as hers. However, there is no way to quantify the worth, value

or mass of the stories. It is all relative and based upon many symbols, ideas, feelings and memories and more that go into spatial networks and collective consciousness. The whole body of information only becomes accessible as we traverse new locations, spaces, geographies and cultures. It exists and we are a part of it in ways that are too magnanimous for us to fully comprehend.

As the male character continues to speak the narrator watches him and thinks, “he is not like someone I know; he is a dream in reverse” (Menéndez 36). She imagines spaces and relates everything back to other times and other dimensions. As Grossberg states, “Identity is a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative” (89). What if the view was no longer narrow and instead openly embraced by a network of spatial information that is available to everyone as a collective consciousness? The traditional focus is “on multiplicity of identities and differences rather than on a singular identity and on the connections or articulations between fragments of differences” (Grossberg 89). Reticulation accents this relationship, moving from the expected ideas about culture and society and turning them into something else. The reticulated network exists like a glowing hexagram above us that connects with and correlates to every thought and memory that we have from a singular and collective consciousness.

With the many themes and motives transpiring in this particular short story, there is one part that is crux of the exile experience. As the narrator recounts preparing the house for the storm with her father, “the wind changed direction” (Menéndez 39). Her family boards up the house and sits inside during the storm and imagines what is happening outside. The narrator “dreamt of a house full of cousins. Seen big sky. Coconuts raining down. Waves that climbed higher and higher, joining seas over Florida, leaving everything flat and beautiful and clean” (Menéndez 42). The romanticized dream is that the geographical setting will change with the storm. Maybe the storm will be more than a storm. The narrator would like the storm to transport her to an alternate universe. Of course, we know this cannot happen, but the hope is still there, and gives us a glimpse into the psyche of this character and the deep desire to exist in a realm that simply no longer exists.

As her family sits in their Miami home watching the weather on television and hearing about the impending storm, she recalls: “We didn’t understand everything he meant to say, but that voice was like a dream. And the house was a little cave, shut out from the street. I thought the world could come apart outside and it wouldn’t matter” (Menéndez 43). They sit inside waiting, believing that the outside world is inhospitable, wild and unsafe. After the storm passes, they venture outside and realize that the sun is shining brightly and their house is the only house boarded up with plywood over all the windows. The narrator says, “My father was the only one who

had gone through all the trouble with the plywood. I couldn't bear to turn back and look at it now" (Menéndez 46). The house of Cuban exiles who are already feeling so out of place sits in the shining sun boarded up like a refuge that is impervious to outside influences. Inside the boarded up house, the characters could have been anywhere. The boards invalidate location and make it irrelevant, even if just for a night.

Conclusion

Bonnemaison affirms:

Some groups dream of a space other than the one where they currently reside. Their cultural space extends beyond its material container. The actual spaces they inhabit represent exile or refuge; from a cultural standpoint they live somewhere else. (49)

Groups, for the context of all the chapters herein, represent Cuban American exiles. During the storm, the family was transported back to their desired location and what the narrator could not bear to look at were what the boards over the windows signified the bold reminder that life in the United States is a solid reality. There is no going back to the homeland and like it or not, the life outside of Cuba is absolutely real.

The story of the storm is from childhood, and now as an adult, the narrator wants to share the experiences of exile with others, but she holds back the emotional complexity of the situation. She wants to tell the male character how things could have been, that her "father was going to be a grand singer and that her "mother was beautiful" (Menéndez 48). But she does not. There is no point recounting what could have happened if she and her family had lived in an alternate universe where they stayed in a Cuba that does not actually exist. Holding on to this idea no longer makes sense. What could have been and what are no longer go together. What could have been is not focal information in the network of reticulated space. The narrator continues:

I want to tell him that how for the first year in Miami, my parents spoke only in gestures, all sound gone out of our lives like air. I wanted to keep talking through the night. I want to wake up with the sand in my hair, all my memories spilling over him like a tide that returns again and again. (Menéndez 48)

She wants to feel united to him by this common thread and she want him to understand that her life is not supposed to be this way. She should have existed in a different universe where her parents were different and most important, she was different as well. Her feelings of longing and sorrow for the fading memories she wants to share with him are "a fragment of space

that gives roots to one's identity and unites those who share the same feeling" (Bonnemaison 116).

There are both strong positive and negative attributes related to the impression that "the feeling of identification is not one of simple and banal appropriation but an affective or even love-based relation" (Bonnemaison 116). The love both exile characters and also Menéndez as the author of these take is so great, so effervescent that it lights up this amazing network of shared space. It sets in motion a collective consciousness where exile identity moves from fragmented to unified. Instead of being defined by differences, there is an invitation to nurture a joining of various identities, feelings and cultural influences. As human beings, we are fortunate that locations are "a tangible reality inscribed in space and time from which no one can free oneself" (Bonnemaison 118). We all must accept this as the rhizomatic connection between those who feel displaced via exile or any other means.

Conclusion

This dissertation takes multiple theoretical modalities and combines them to create a non-linear view of space within narratives as it applies to Cuban American exile writers. Through this lens, I reconsider exile literature and the methods by which literature is analyzed. What we also see is an influx of methods outside of traditional literature that constitutes a greater sense of where this type of scholarship can go if new methods are employed. As these interconnected and multi-disciplinary forms of analyzing space are continually applied to literature of exiles, displaced people and all who are working to better orient themselves to new locations, may be able to further combine disciplines and catapult literary analysis directly into the path of scientific and psychological research. Melding these areas is not necessarily new, but the research and findings, including the understanding of how trauma and displacement alter human beings is evolving.

The notions of interspatiality and intersubjectivity are mentioned briefly at various points among the chapters. Accepting interspatiality allows us to reposition spatial theory to be at the center of literary analysis about displaced people. Now, instead of exile and location, we have another space, the space between these two. In Chapter one, this space takes the form of representational and is used to build the character's ideas of themselves and their surroundings. Chapter two portrays this space as it relates to objects and movement through a cityscape, thus pushing the boundary of the perception of space. Chapter three, showcases how the panoptic visions of one's self alters spatial constructions (assimilation into a new country) for those in exile. Breaking away from normative theoretical approaches, comes chapters four and five. The fourth chapter asks readers to consider the idea that our own engagement with space alters its existence, and thus there are always multiple versions of space existing at any given time. These interspatial arenas shape collective space and lead to chapter five, which argues that space in its entirety is a collective experience whereby everything we know is actually comprised of interspatial notions. The space within space creates a network of spatial knowledge and is where the writers of the included text spend most of their time.

The whole idea of a collective spatial knowledge is a form of intersubjectivity between exiles. This is a simple idea: people share meanings that they construct among themselves and this sharing, which is thought of as a swapping of direct mental energy, means that the space between space is shared by exiles and displaced people who are dealing with similar issues. Specifically, this conjures up nostalgia and the pain and longing associated with displacement, which Cuban American exile writers as a group have formed into a major motif of their writing. This concept is discussed in the introduction and previous chapters. It is this nostalgia that intensely sets the

tone for this particular group and gives a sharp difference that makes interspatiality and intersubjectivity so clear in these texts. In viewing them differently in every chapter, and then taking the time to see the whole process as a reticulated spatial structure, we see that the constructs of space change and shift to a wider more comprehensive view. What we have now is not just five chapters about various spatial theories and specific pieces of literature, but rather a collective view of the space between spaces and the collective spatial view between groups of people.

New concepts regarding human beings and space are already intricately built upon the massive amount of information that already exists, but we still have very much to learn. Of course, much has been written about the trauma of exile and displacement across generations and worlds. The impact of generational trauma has been noted in the writing of exiles and displaced persons for years. While it has been surmised that the lasting effects of these harsh realities may physiologically effect human development over time, it was not until recently that the changes to one's DNA as a result of trauma were known. Studies have shown "an association of pre-conception parental trauma with epigenetic alterations that is evident in both exposed parent and offspring, providing potential insight into how severe psychophysiological trauma can have intergenerational effects" (Yehuda n.p.). This means that the children of trauma sufferers may experience negative impacts of traumas even though they are not first-hand survivors of these incidents. Thus, the issues related to exiles may go beyond those who initially suffered these displacement-related conditions.

Because this dissertation focuses on interdisciplinary research and concepts, the idea of mixing scientific models of data with tangible cultural and identity-centric evidence (like dichotomies portrayed in literature) is the next logical step. Once scientific researchers are able to produce more quantifiable results relating to the genetic changes of trauma, these results should be surveyed in the cultural context within the literature of those who showcase the effects of trauma. Studies that have been initially linked to children of holocaust survivors will be pertinent to trauma sufferers across space and time. What may provide to be especially insightful is the manner in which the knowledge that one's DNA is changed affects spatial construction over time. Moving forward as a world community, it may be time for more compassionate understanding of how important the melding of cross-discipline scholarship may be to understanding the space around us. Exiles are a small piece of this large puzzle that could demonstrate remarkable awareness of the larger picture depicting how and why exiles, particularly those discussed herein, react to instances that relate to trauma.

It used to be more common for people to operate in a singular-type of existence as the complication with exile was that "most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two,

and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions” (Said 186). This awareness relates back to intersubjectivity. We must take the time to see what happens to literature, in its creation and our understanding of it, when this double awareness is so common. What is interesting is how the modes of self-identification on a multitude of levels are beginning to incorporate and embrace the idea of simultaneous dimensions. In fact, there is a call to action (in works by Moretti and Fraser, for example) that asks us, as scholars, to work between these dimensions all the time, as a way to truly understand and analyze identity and culture. Therefore, perhaps the exile is in an advantageous position, being one who is at the core of emblematic representation of the full understanding of interdisciplinary studies and the voice of true plurality in praxis. If our reality is becoming so mixed with various influences, it would make sense that those who are already skilled at navigating multiple spatial fields may actually be better acclimated to understanding the adjusting to changes in scholarship. Perhaps this is why there are noted differences between the nostalgia and spatial constructs of exile literature and non-exile literature composed by those who are not in situations where they so strongly grapple with these issues.

Exile has been viewed in a context that is shaded with negative undertones. Even the most respected scholars who speak about exile reaffirm these thoughts with commentary, such as “exiles look at non exiles with resentment” (Said 180) or “an exile is always out of place” (Said 180). It could be time to make a conscious effort to diminish parts of the negative connotations that are related with exile. Perhaps one can suffer due to trauma and not experience cross-cultural acclimation in such a problematic light.

Briefly going back to Lefebvre may offer some elucidation on this topic. If the layers of exile can serve as unified space(interspatiality) whereby lived, conceived and perceived space should be “interconnected so that the ‘subject’, the individual member of a given social group, may move from one to the other without confusion” (Lefebvre 40). With the focus of identity shifting towards a collective consciousness and a network of spatial indicators that inform people’s perceptions of themselves, we may see an influx in acclimation that we would have once imagined as painful and confusing.

We should consider that our own subjectivity may have roots in one space, but grow and flourish in others or that our sense of ourselves is actually a “product of the intertwining of trajectories with great historical and geographical reach” (Massey 178). Thus, human beings can span time and space without so much identity-based uncertainty. This is not unlike what Fraser proposes in *Towards and Urban Cultural Studies*, where he invites scholars to release many of the preconceived notions that exist regarding “humanities-centered insights” and “begin a new conversation” that looks to the “existing similarities and potential, interdisciplinary points

of convergence,” which are not devised for the point of providing “insights that might change each discipline on its own terms,” but rather combine topics and ideologies to forge a new discourse “whose sum is greater than its parts” (3). What can be taken from the idea that the sum is greater than its parts is that to many, this approach may seem fruitless as it does not incorporate the standard tenants of literary analysis. Yet, upon closer and more open-minded inspections, these alternative, breaking away from the first tier of theory standpoints will, inevitably, lead to an understanding of culture as a whole that is more than we (as of yet) have been able to conceptualize. What I push for herein is an understanding of spatial theory and literature as a combined front. Where, why and how exile writers react as they do to displacement makes more sense. Let us consider it in the simple terms, for example, what if understanding location really is recursive as I propose in chapter four. What if in order to adjust to exile an understand the implications of exile orientation in space, all one has to do is see the spatial relationship as recursive? What could happen if we analyzed a whole group of texts under the guise of recursive space? What could we see then? My point here is that these lesser explored notions of theory need to be viewed in larger, more comprehensive contexts so that the lasting implications of their usefulness can be widely known. This is what scholars like Fraser, Moretti and now myself are asking for: there needs to be a general reconsideration and restricting of how space and literature inform each other across disciplines. What may, at first, appear to be, for example, a single chapter on recursive or reticulated space is actually a way to collectively survey literature in a non-linear manner that deviates completely from what we commonly accept as useful theory. The indication that scholars can see these processes collectively, and with regard for spatial relevance is what will open the door for expanded theory and a new form of literary analysis.

According to Tomasello, modern humans became cultural beings by “identifying with their specific cultural groups and creating with groupmates various kinds of cultural conventions, norms, and institutions built not on personal but on cultural common ground. They thus became thoroughly group-minded individuals” (80). It would seem that in some of the attempts to distinguish one from another, this group or collective approach became lost along the way, perhaps in the new world formation that functions at a capacity that we may not have realized was possible (up until recently), we can regress in a sense and morph back into a group that is focused on common grounds and more specifically spaces between spaces and knowledge between groups that use markers for spatial codification.

While it is still too early to know for sure, understanding how trauma and subsequently displacement change our behaviors, emotions and responses to various stimulus may change how we see conditions of displacement as a whole and open up the realm of melding multiple theories.

What is now mostly thought of as non-traditional scholarship is soon going to have firm roots in solid scientific data about human reactions that will definitely be of paramount importance to identity, culture and exile. In the beginning stages of melding disciplines, it has never been more important to remain open to possible changes in discourse that may bolster our knowledge of culture and identity and shine new light on the condition of exile.

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