

Heritage Modern: Cityscape of the Late Socialist Political Economy in Trinidad, Cuba

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Anthropology

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

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Spring 2011

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## Abstract

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The overall theme of this dissertation is to understand, through the heritage cityscape of Trinidad, aspects of the processes of the reconfiguration of political economy in today's Cuba. In late socialist Cuba, tourism is a key sector sustaining the revolution, and heritage cityscape constitutes one of the main tourist attractions. In this regard, the city of Trinidad provides a vantage point to analyze heritage practices and the tourism economy. I argue that the heritage cityscape of Trinidad manifests a tension between neoliberal and socialist rationalities, as the preservation office is converted into a cultural agency that depends on its own entrepreneurship.

In 1988, the historic urban center of Trinidad and the material remains of the sugar industry in the surrounding Sugar Mill Valley were declared a World Cultural Heritage site. The local agency in charge of its preservation is the Office of Conservation, the main site of this project. These local agencies and preservation professionals around the world produce and are produced by the global regime of heritage exemplified by UNESCO's World Heritage program. Although economic management is not the explicit end of heritage practices, to the extent that these agents are held morally accountable for the material conditions of the heritage sites, and that their insufficient performance is construed as unsuccessful entrepreneurship, the global regime of heritage operates by a neoliberal rationality. Maintaining a good cityscape signals good governance, and consequently success as a subject of the regime.

In Trinidad, where tourism is the single most important industry, the city's future depends exclusively on heritage commodification; maintaining and restoring the past urban form. I call this looking forward through looking backward "heritage modern." While the actual heritage cityscape is not materialized in the way that the Office imagines it to be the "good cityscape," signaling the precarious state of the Office as the subject in the global regime, the Office maintains a firm grip on the discursive landscape over Trinidad's heritage. Thus within the tension between neoliberal and socialist rationalities, the Office claims to be the appropriate guardian of the local specificity of heritage within the global regime.

Para mis queridos amigos de Cuba.

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## Acknowledgements

In this adventure in studying anthropology thus far, I have accumulated many debts, not just financially, but intellectually and in friendship. At UC Berkeley, Professor Nelson Graburn has been an exceptional teacher and mentor, and showed consistent interest in my work, even when I was most skeptical of it. Being a student of Professor Graburn's has also meant infinite encounters with wonderful scholars and colleagues around the world. Professor James Holston took me in even at a later stage in my graduate career, and always gave a positive outlook on matters. I owe Professor Ananya Roy for her constructive comments and criticism that often gave shape to my inarticulate thoughts. In the late Professor Allan Pred's seminar, I had the fortune to discover Benjamin and my passion for the urban. Outside of the Berkeley campus, Professor Joe Scarpaci introduced me to Trinidad, Cuba, and has continuously offered me encouragement and support. Professor Takako Kudo saved me from giving up Cuba as my fieldwork site. With similar interest in Cuba though with far more sophistication, Matthew J. Hill has generously shared his thoughts and works with me. I owe special thanks to the staff at the Department of Anthropology, at UC Berkeley, who are always cheerful, helpful, and ready to guide us through the maze of the university.

I have been privileged to have met friends with whom I can share academic interests and much, much more. M. Mather George and Jeff Piatt have been my support group in and out of the department. Naomi Leite has been my virtual writing partner, and our daily email exchange kept me sane and going forward. I coerced Cathy Covey to co-chair with me the Tourism Studies Working Group 2009-2010, and I could not have made a better decision. Charlie Carroll and Rachel Giraud kept inspiring me by their integrity and enthusiasm. Lina Tegtmeier reminded me to be a human before anything else, while being a dedicated reader of my writing. Laura Hubbard taught me how to teach, which I have come to cherish dearly. I met Yoko Ikari in an awkward twist of events, yet we turned out to have much more in common than pursuing anthropology. John Ertl has time and again responded with efficiency to my plea for assistance.

Two important groups shaped my graduate career in many ways. The Tourism Studies Working Group at UC Berkeley has been a hub of vibrant activities drawing people from all over the world. I thank especially Stephanie Malia Hom, Naomi Leite, and Charlie Carroll for starting the group with Professor Graburn, and those who nourished this community: Jenny Chio, Alexis Bunten, Theo Chronis, Clare Fischer, Bert Gordon, Alex Saragoza, Eric Crystal, Rongling Ge, Lu Jin, Mahlon Chute, Jennifer Devine, David Picard, Lina Tegtmeier, Mark Dewitt, Scott McLeod, among many more. The University of California-wide UC-CUBA offered remarkable opportunities for in-depth and interdisciplinary academic exchange over Cuba, and I owe my special gratitude to Professor Raul Fernandez, Tom McEnaney, and Ayesha Nibbe.

In Cuba, I am grateful to the Fundación Fernando Ortíz for providing me with an institutional home. Vicky and Annia, whom I got to know thanks to Mather, made me feel at home and with family in Havana. Mercedes, Coki, and Ramsés opened doors, offered me insights, and above all, nurtured genuine friendship with me. Carlos taught

me photography with tremendous dedication. Yansert, Víctor, and Annielys always made me laugh while telling me important things. Lisbeth and Edelys made sure that I had what I needed. Lisette with incredible generosity shared her knowledge and experience with me. Víctor, Teresita, and Alicia offered me their wealth of knowledge and passion for Trinidad. Loly and Estela provided me with more than care and comfort. The people on América Street made sure I knew how to enjoy the beach. Greeting Aragón started my day in Trinidad. I spent so many extraordinary moments with the members of Septeto Montimar. To all these Cubans, I dedicate this dissertation.

Lastly, I owe my thanks to my family for letting me take on this adventure. And I am thankful to Joel, who kept calling this dissertation “a paper” throughout the process, which fortuitously lifted, at times, the unnecessary weight I had imbued upon it.

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### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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**Media Studies 101**, GSI: An advanced theory course in Media Studies. Was responsible for 2 sections of 25 students each. Instructor: Marina Levina. Spring 2010

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## PUBLICATIONS

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2005 **Tourism Development in Socialist Cuba: Old Havana and its residents.** Tinker Summer Research Report, Center for Latin American Studies, University of California, Berkeley,  
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# *Chapter One*

## Introduction: The Landscape of fieldwork

I grew up in Tokyo, one of the so-called global cities. Though I did not live in the middle of skyscrapers, I always knew where the center was, traveling from outskirts for school, to shop, to go to the cinema or restaurants, to meet with friends. Granted, Tokyo is a policentric city, where it would be difficult to pinpoint a single center. Yet the skylines of Shinjuku, Akasaka, Ginza, and other “centers” of Tokyo formed for me iconic images of a “city.” I often ventured into the city alone to wander around, and later found the German saying “the city air makes one free” to make very good sense. Among strangers in Georg Simmel’s sense (Simmel 1950), and the civic indifference of Erving Goffman (Giddens 1991:46-47) that provided comfortable anonymity, and buried in the towering cityscape, I felt home. For me, the city was a place where I went to satisfy my consumer desire, my cultural curiosity, my interpersonal contacts, and my bureaucratic necessities. For all the comfort it afforded, it still was a place to visit, and to be excited about. The familiarity of Tokyo that I experienced was, however, partly supported by the assumed homogeneity that modern Japan had always ideologically embraced. The economic and ethnic differences were growing visible in the 1990s, but my “mainstream” identity (ethnic Japanese, middle-class) had let me take light of these changes.

When I was 15, I went to Australia as an exchange student. I lived in a very white, semi-rural town, where people did not hide their curiosity and stared at me as the “Other.” This was an experience of a tectonic shift for me. The ground on which I had been standing as a mainstream member was suddenly revealed to me as historically and geographically contingent. All of a sudden, I was thrown into a role beyond the stranger, as the Other. There, in the small town where I went to school in Australia, the urbanity did not provide me with anonymity. I could have dismissed the small town as a provincial place, and not a city. But so was Tokyo, as far as I had known. I knew the visibly different (non-East Asians, gays, the homeless) were gazed at in Tokyo, while the invisible difference (of long-time ethnic minorities of Japan, such as Koreans and Chinese) was suppressed.

With the memory of being the Other fresh, I went to Washington, D.C., on a college exchange program. On the day of arrival, as I was walking to find some necessities for the dormitory, a car stopped by and asked me for a direction. Do I look like somebody from here? I was perplexed for a while, and then I found the incident deeply liberating. Anybody could be from here. Or, where you are from didn’t matter. While Tokyo was an undoubtedly a global city by some standards, Washington, D.C., was a cosmopolis. I cherished the assumption of difference, and I was disturbed by what the extent of that assumption suggested. It was Washington, D.C. of the early 1990s, too, where I experienced the spatial segregation of differences. I discovered that there were neighborhoods that I didn’t “belong to” and therefore I should not step into. The depth of differences surpassed my imagination of urbanity as a Tokyoite. Aristotle

found the virtue of a city in diversity: “the city is made up of not only a number of human beings, but also of human beings differing in kind: a city does not rise from persons who are similar” (1984:56). Nevertheless, there is more to differences than can be simply celebrated in a hands-off manner, à la Jane Jacobs’s discussion (1961). What is the urbanity to which I have been so attached, then?

While writing this dissertation, popular protests and uprisings are shaking the cities of the Middle East, where some regimes have unleashed brutal state violence on their people. In Japan, a massive earthquake and tsunamis wiped out a northeastern region, sending tens of thousands into life in shelters, and crippled nuclear reactors continue to threaten to turn an extensive territory a no-live zone for an unspecified time. The city, as a *polis*, a “political space,” harbors “transformative capacities,” and as an *urbs*, a “space of urban sociability,” proves poignantly ephemeral (Agier 2002). Spatiality and social processes that make up a city are dynamic, contingent, and contested. To understand something urban, then, consists of capturing and making sense of a moment of spatial processes, a geographically grounded, historically contingent reality that takes place in the multitude of human beings.

In terms of urbanity, Trinidad, Cuba, is not akin to the city where I grew up. If there is an axis diagram of cities, the values of which could be population, density, area, numbers of educational institutions/ businesses/ bureaucratic offices/ civil society groups/ media outlets, area of public space, access to infrastructure, ethnic/ linguistic/ religious/ political diversity...one could go on, but Tokyo and Trinidad would occupy very different points. Trinidad feels to me more like a town than a city for it does not have skyscrapers, nor does it provide anonymity on the street. The buildings in Trinidad are mostly single-story, with occasional two-stories and a few towers of mansions and churches. The spread of the city center is so compact that one generally goes about their business on their foot or on a bicycle. It is impossible, however, as I experienced in my fieldwork, to walk across town without running into familiar faces, exchanging news, and perhaps getting invited for a cup of coffee. Thus Trinidad’s sociality is radically different from what I had known in Tokyo. Indeed, the city-ness of Trinidad may not even bear points of comparison with that of global cities. Is studying Trinidad as a case of urban processes too minute, too specific, that it becomes moot? Heterogeneity within the city may qualify a city, but the heterogeneity *of* the cities is so extreme that the “city” as a coherent subject perhaps dissipates and disappears. And yet, attempts to characterize the city universally carry some weight when they focus on the humanity of the urban as Lewis Mumford did in *The Culture of Cities* (1938:481):

Before a man can become fully humanized, the social man must break up into a thousand parts: so that each grain of aptitude, each streak of intelligence, each fiber of special interest, may take a deeper color by mingling with other grains, streaks, and fibers of the same nature. The undifferentiated common bond of primary association is weakened by these specialized associations; but the cable of civilization itself becomes stronger through such multiform twisting into a more complex and many-colored strand.

And this unfolds in the space of a city,

As indirect forms of association, with the aid of signs and symbols and specialized organizations, supplement direct face-to-face intercourse, the personalities of the citizens themselves become many-faceted: they reflect their specialized interests, their more intensively trained aptitudes, their finer discriminations and selections: the personality no longer presents a more or less unbroken traditional face to reality as a whole. Here lies the possibility of personal disintegration; and here lies the need for re-integration through wider participation in a concrete and visible collective whole. (Mumford 1938:481)

I set out to study the cityscape of Trinidad, Cuba. The cityscape can offer a point of entry to inquire into the city-ness of Trinidad, which inevitably inscribes ever-disintegrating and uniting personalities of people there, including mine.

The overall theme of the dissertation is to understand through the heritage cityscape of Trinidad, the processes of the reconfiguration of political economy in today's Cuba. To inquire into this large-scale problematic, I focus on the city of Trinidad, for it provides a vantage point to analyze heritage practices and tourism economy. I argue that the heritage cityscape of Trinidad manifests a tension between neoliberal and socialist rationalities, as the preservation office is converted into a cultural agency that depends on its own entrepreneurship.

This chapter briefly introduces the concept of heritage modern, followed by the conceptualization of heritage and cityscape. I then describe the conditions of late socialism in Cuba, and the background understanding of Trinidad, Cuba in its geography, history, and the current tourism industry. Then to situate myself in the field, I illustrate the landscape of my fieldwork. Finally, I close the chapter by laying out the organization of the dissertation.

#### *Heritage modern: A brief introduction*

Through my ethnographic inquiry into the heritage cityscape of Trinidad, I have become aware of the significance of preservation in a locally and historically specific context. In the conclusion, I will delve more into its conceptualization, but here I will introduce it briefly. By heritage modern I mean the mode of modernity in which people singularly valorize and attempt to maintain and restore intact the past form in search of a better future. As a concept, it may have a limited scope of application, deriving from a specific set of conditions found in Trinidad, Cuba. Yet the interest in heritage has been with us for a long time and appears in varied developments, the UNESCO World Heritage being just one recent instance. David C. Harvey (2001), in an attempt to rework the temporality of the concept of heritage that champions the seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth century as the time of its birth, claims that in medieval period there were practices that suggest notions of heritage (see also Hewison 1987, Lowenthal 1996, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995, 1998). Understanding heritage modern adds to this extensive tradition and wide variations of our engagement with the past. It also illuminates an aspect of urban forms and processes that take place in a global context

which is increasingly concerned with historic forms. This drive to progress by way of preserving the past involves looking back and forth, and has manifested in inner-city regeneration, in post-industrial urban renewal, in New Urbanism, in Disneyland, and so forth. Trinidad's heritage modern is distinct in its local and historical specifics, but is also a variant of this looking back and forth.

Heritage modern is also about people on the ground. This dissertation is an ethnography, and thus inevitably deals with the messiness of reality. "Heritage modern," as simple as it may sound, is my attempt to capture my experience in the field; by fashioning a term to pin down my initially confused and entangled "research data," I am trying to put some version of reality into perspective. In that sense, I, too, am very much part of heritage modern.

### *Conceptualization of heritage*

In *The Heritage Industry*, Robert Hewison reprimanded heritage as commodification and vulgarization of history. Rather than objectively recounting the past as history does, we have become obsessed with heritage and "risk losing all capacity for creative change" (1987:10). For Hewison, heritage puts us looking in the wrong direction, at the expense of the present. Thus the rise of the heritage industry signifies the decline of the country, unable to invest in the future. David Lowenthal (1998) agrees with Hewison that heritage is backward looking, but claims that it deserves its own place separate from history. If history champions neutrality and scientific approach to the past, heritage pivots around identity and community building: "History explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes" (1998:xv). Nevertheless, Lowenthal echoes Hewison's concern over the unhealthy obsession with the past that results in indiscriminate accumulation of material. Calling it "heritage glut," Lowenthal warns us against the religious zeal of the heritage crusade. In a way, the urge to save *everything* signals ever deferring judgment to the future, and not taking responsibility in the present.

Because identity and community lie at the core of heritage, the scale of the community to which heritage belongs becomes important. Nelson Graburn (2001) mapped out the different scales of community of inheritance, the right to heritage, in kinship terms from family to cultural and ethnic groups to the entire world. What used to be an elite private practice has become popular and public in the age of the heritage industry. As more heritage material is considered to belong to larger communities, it inevitably entails discrepant understandings of the past and ownership. Thus J.E. Tunbridge and Gregory Ashworth (1996) called for management of heritage based on the assumption that it is inherently "dissonant." Management necessarily shadows heritage, since heritage requires display (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998) unlike history. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett defines heritage as "a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past" (1998:7), hence heritage is more concerned with the present, whereas history attempts to understand the past in its temporal context. Therefore, nation-states within varied scales of community are prominent agents of heritage to invoke national unity and identity in the present. Heritage delineates the community to which it belongs, distinguishing that particular community from the rest.

This particularity and the uniqueness of heritage through which the heritage is validated become problematic when different scales of communities are invoked. The UNESCO World Heritage claims the heritage sites have a universal value and belong to all humanity while respecting the national sovereignty of individual states. Accordingly, the World Heritage Convention, Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage adopted in 1972 carries this tension. On the one hand, Article 4 clearly identifies the state as the primary agent: “Each State Party to this Convention recognizes that *the duty* of ensuring the identification, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of future generations of the cultural and natural heritage referred to in Articles 1 and 2 and situated on its territory, *belongs primarily to that State*” (italics added). On the other, Article 6 assumes heritage as world property that the state only happens to find within its territory: “Whilst fully respecting the sovereignty of the States...the States Parties to this Convention recognize that *such heritage constitutes a world heritage* for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to co-operate” (italics added). As a result, while the state remains as the primary actor, the international community lifts up individual heritage sites from the local community to be enshrined in the global one. That is, “[f]or a sovereign state, recognizing the universal value of a site situated in its territory is to admit that the international community has a right to supervise its management. This means accepting a certain form of dispossession, even if it is only symbolic” (Musitelli 2002:328). Furthermore, the diversity of the World Heritage List is fundamental to its universality, yet the “outstanding universal value” that merits inscription in the List escapes exact definition, and the List, though ever a work-in-progress, is liable to be skewed (Musitelli 2002). The List, then, becomes a European-centered inventory of human accomplishment, the creation of which is an end in itself—claiming UNESCO’s authority. To be sure, as Jean Musitelli (2002) points out, this authority is a moral kind, but UNESCO maintains its centrality in the “universe” of heritage and exercises its influence by approving and de-listing sites.<sup>1</sup> In effect, building on the foundation of institutionalized heritage practices locally and nationally, such as the National Trust in the United Kingdom, UNESCO sets up a global regime of heritage.

Still, having heritage sites inscribed in the List is recognized as worthy for nation states, not only to bolster national identity globally, or to protect the conditions in which the tangible and intangible heritage survives, but also for the tourism potential the inscription entails. It is not insignificant that the Internet tourism portal, TripAdvisor has a place on the UNESCO World Heritage website.<sup>2</sup> While the critique of commodification is necessary in some cases and to a certain extent, we must be cautious not to divide heritage into binary spheres of the commodified and the pure. Thus keeping in mind Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s (1998) point that display is what makes an object heritage, I want to highlight the fact that heritage assumes intrinsic, indisputable,

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<sup>1</sup> There have been two heritage sites de-listed from the List: Oman’s Arabian Oryx Sanctuary (2007), and Germany’s Dresden Elbe Valley (2009).

<sup>2</sup> “TripAdvisor is working in partnership with UNESCO World Heritage Centre to help protect and preserve the world’s greatest landmarks.” World Heritage List website, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>, accessed April 20, 2011.

and universal value. In this sense, Lowenthal (1998) is probably right in characterizing devotion to heritage a cult, a religious fervor. Morality of UNESCO and other institutions dedicated to conservation, too, derives from the sacredness of heritage, as its authoritative protector. Heritage, especially placed in the global context, turns to be an engine that impels preservation and tourism practices, and is therefore not necessarily backward looking in its entirety.

### *Conceptualization of cityscape*

I understand cityscape to mean urban landscape, an assortment of built material that makes up a three-dimensional, more or less comprehensive yet evolving physical environment. It is more or less comprehensive because it encompasses images and ideas of the place that make it distinct. There is no clear boundary however, so it is *not* an environment that is closed or fixed. Cityscape is constantly reshaped. Thus one may recognize the cityscape of New York City, yet not everybody agrees on where it starts and ends. As such, I am partial to Sharon Zukin's definition where landscape "refers to an ensemble of material and social practices and their symbolic representation" (1991:16). She further describes:

The concept *landscape* has recently emerged from a long period of reification to become a potent tool of cultural analysis. It connotes a contentious, compromised product of society. (Zukin 1991:16)

Looking at cityscapes, then, is not simply analyzing the visual effects, but examining the social relations and practices that continuously form the urban environment. Actors that contribute to cityscape-making are institutions such as the urban planning offices, the developers, the cultural industry, as well as residents, laborers, tourists, etc., and the viewpoints of all these positionalities matter to varying extents. So the landscape

also embodies a point of view. As the opposition with vernacular implies, powerful institutions have a preeminent capacity to impose their view on the landscape—weakening, reshaping, and displacing the view from the vernacular. (Zukin 1991:16)<sup>3</sup>

Here the points of view are imbued with differential power, where there seems to be one overriding viewpoint. I argue that these contested viewpoints are not so easily rendered into opposing positions, as we will see in the cityscape of Trinidad. Apart from seeing, our bodies engage with the built environment in many other ways. Henri Lefebvre asks:

How does one (where 'one' designates any 'subject') perceive a picture, a landscape or a monument? Perception naturally depends on the 'subject': a

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<sup>3</sup> Zukin leaves the vernacular open in this discussion. While she posits the vernacular against powerful institutional shaping of landscape in the context of market economy, the case of Trinidad reveals layers of institutions with differential influence whereby the historical "vernacular" can be deployed by local intellectuals to assert locally-embedded expertise against institutions at larger scales (see chapter two).

peasant does not perceive 'his' landscape in the same way as a town-dweller strolling through it. (Lefebvre 1991:113-114)

Subject positions are relevant in experiencing the landscape. In the same vein, Michel de Certeau argued that it was the subject that “enunciated” the cityscape by walking (1984:99). Following these theorists, I want to emphasize the three-dimensional experiences of the urban form rather than its two-dimensional imaging. Cityscape, then, is not just about the perceived image from a certain positionality, but a complex process comprised of a multitude of experiences that revolves around ideas of a place; in this dissertation, that of Trinidad, Cuba.

### *Cuba: Late socialism*

In his study of the Soviet Union, Alexei Yurchak called the period between the mid-1950s and the mid-1980s “late socialism” to characterize “the performative shift of authoritative discourse and the subsequent normalization of that discourse” (2006:31). For Cuba, the term late socialism is applied to the post-Soviet period to describe the state of prolonged in-between-ness that some earlier identified as transition (in some cases, in anticipation) (Halebsky, et al. 1992, Gunn 1993, March-Poquet 2000, Otero and O’Bryan 2003, McCoy 2003, Pérez-Stable 2007). When the Soviet Union and the communism of Eastern Europe began to crumble, Cuba lost its economic support, and plunged into an unprecedented material scarcity that forced the Castro regime to declare the Special Period in Time of Peace officially in 1990, though the condition had already set in. The discussion around transition did not have an agreed answer on “transition from what to what?”; from socialism to capitalism, from Castro to post-Castro regime, from planned economy to market economy, and so forth. Some called the ever-anticipated transition “non-transition” (Hoffmann 2001, López 2004). Refusing the implication of the word “transition” that there is a single trajectory, Katherine Verdery (1996:15), referring to the post-socialist Eastern Europe and the former USSR, chooses to use “transformation” instead.

Unlike the post-socialist Europe, Cuba is yet to have the privilege of hindsight, and the post-Soviet in-between state seems to linger. Official rhetoric of unchanging socialism notwithstanding, late socialism is set apart from the earlier high socialism when it “ceased to be a holistic project and instead became increasingly identified with little more than basic social rights, such as education and health” (Hernández-Reguant 2009:8). The island is suspended politically between centralized state control and destatization, as Damián Fernández (2000) observes; and perhaps between Soviet-style Marxism-Leninism and nationalism, as Marifeli Pérez-Stable (1999) talks about the shift in ideological emphasis seen in the 1992 constitution. Economically, Cuba is in “a sort of never-never land between communism and capitalism” (Chávez 2005:1), aptly referring to the mixed-economy situation, rather than teetering between the two extremes. Late socialism, then, is “a confluence of socialist bureaucracy with a social, economic, and cultural turn towards capitalist modes of consumption and production” (Weinreb 2009:3) that is full of “collision, blending, hybridization, and...*paradoxes*”

(Weinreb 2009:29). This in-between state has generated novel situations characteristic of late socialism, particularly a new hierarchy of values as the double economy deepens.

Cuba's double economy consists of hard currency (US dollars, and since November 2004, Cuban Convertible Peso, CUC, often referred to as *divisa*), and local currency (Cuban Pesos, CUP, or *moneda nacional*, MN)<sup>4</sup>, which is further complicated with two exchange rates between the currencies.<sup>5</sup>

The "official" official rate, mainly for international trade, is fixed at par: US\$1.00 = Cuban Peso 1.00. The quasi-official or "extra official" rate, which is the relevant rate for Cuban citizens, varied around US\$1 = CUP 20-22 during the period 1998-2001. (Ritter and Rowe 2002:101)<sup>6</sup>

The 1993 "dollarization," or the legalization of possession of the US dollar by Cuban citizens, has intensified the double economy in the life of ordinary Cubans, and contributed to rapid stratification of society.<sup>7</sup> Prior to 1993, hard currency had been circulating illegally, and the Cuban government made the decision to allow for more efficient "capturing" of dollars by the state. Since dollarization, the sphere of hard currency (previously officially inaccessible to Cuban citizens) has expanded, as more goods are available only in CUC, devaluing the purchasing power of the peso. If accessibility to goods depends on access to hard currency,<sup>8</sup> then a new division of society has developed along this line, jumbling the value of labor anchored to the peso economy and pushing "the country away from the egalitarian social practices that had been followed for three decades. The population was split between those working in the tourist industry or for foreign investors, or receiving dollars from relatives and friends living overseas, and those whose livelihood depended on wages or pensions paid with national currency" (Azicri 2000:71). Furthermore, the tourism industry quickly grew as the main national hard currency earner, and the presence of tourists "contributed to an officially sanctioned two-tier economy. Cubans referred to the disparity between the high life of tourists and their own austere, declining standard of living as economic apartheid" (Eckstein 1994:105).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For the history of currencies in circulation in Cuba, see Ritter and Rowe (2002).

<sup>5</sup> Following the Cuban colloquial use, I call interchangeably the hard currency "dollar," or "CUC," and the local currency "peso," "Cuban peso," "CUP," or "moneda nacional." The recent Sixth Communist Party Congress (in April 2011) has proposed to end the dual currency system.

<sup>6</sup> As of November 2004, the US dollar is no longer in circulation, and needs to be exchanged for CUC with a 10 % commission. In 2007, the exchange rate between CUC and CUP at CADECA (Casa de Cambio, S.A.) was CUC 1.00 = CUP 24.00.

<sup>7</sup> As Alejandro de la Fuente (2001) argued, there is a strong racial element that resurfaced in this stratification.

<sup>8</sup> Today, as the array of ration supplies shrinks, some essential items such as bathroom tissue are available only in hard currency.

<sup>9</sup> This division between tourists and Cubans is also referred to "tourism apartheid" (Damián Fernández 2000:95), "tourist apartheid" (Schwartz 1997:210, Cabezas 2006:516), and "Cuban apartheid" (Hagedorn 2001:25), see also chapters four and five.

Significantly, within the Cuban population, the value of labor has been reorganized (Hernández-Reguant 2004), as the relative value of peso wages of the state employment declined in relation to the value of the dollar.<sup>10</sup> To illustrate,

A heart surgeon paid in pesos would have a lower salary and live a more difficult life than a tourism worker, including not only hotel and restaurant managers but lower ranking employees, taxi drivers, etc...Doctors, teachers, engineers, and other professionals have become bellboys and chambermaids earning dollar tips instead of working in their professions and receiving salaries in pesos. (Azicri 2000:74)

Another author tells about the migration of labor from one sphere of economy to another.

This situation gives people a powerful incentive to leave the state peso economy and switch to the dollar economy; for example, teachers becoming sellers of artisanal products, chemists becoming self-employed shoemakers, professors becoming hotel receptionists or security guards, engineers driving taxis. (Ritter and Rowe 2002:109-110)

And here is a report that survival in late socialist Cuba means gaining access to hard currency, which may or may not be facilitated by state employment.

Very few people in Cuba actually live on a state salary. If they work a government job, they supplement their income in a variety of ways. A university secretary may do manicures out of her house. Even those with state jobs sometimes have access to dollars either because part of their salary is in dollars or because workers can steal from the state and resell the goods. Workers at cigar factories, for instance, may siphon off some of the goods to sell to tourists on the street at significantly lower prices than what is charged in the stores. (Gordy 2006:396-397)

To many youths, the discrepancy between the new economic hierarchy of work and the old social prestige of professions is a discouragement in pursuing higher education.

Why should I study hard at the university to be an engineer, one woman told me her college-age son keeps asking, when I am going to have to work as a bartender or a tour guide anyway? (Mead 2003:291)

This is part of the processes of informalization, destatization, and privatization which Damián Fernández (2000) sees in the Special Period Cuba. While the state control of the economy shrinks, less state employment is available, less items are rationed, and more means of survival are sought in the informal economy and in self-employment

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<sup>10</sup> I discuss this issue through my ethnographic material in chapters two and four.

(official or underground), as socialist subjects are increasingly recast as consumers (Weinreb 2009) as well as entrepreneurs (Hernández-Reguant 2004, Foley 2005).<sup>11</sup>

While Cuba stands for a unique exception and an alternative in the current globalization process for some (Carmona Báez 2004, Vasquez 2002, Jatar-Hausmann 1998/9, 1999), it does not stand apart from the global economy, and the state is certainly incorporating the logic of market economy albeit with utmost care and control. Slogans that carry state propaganda on Cuban streets, such as “Sales + Economy + Efficiency = Revolution” (Gordy 2006) manifests redefinition of the revolution in economic terms by the state. Sean Brotherton (2008) argues that the government is opening pockets of transnational capital within the socialist system, and that the market capitalist governmentality sustains *and* changes from within that system. Thus although contradictory on the level of rhetoric and of the political doctrine and economic policies, the neoliberal market-orientation forms part of the Cuban reality today. What does it mean, then, to enlist efficiency as a principle of revolutionary allegiance? How much can state socialism sustain “pockets” of market economy as exceptional space? For one thing, as Katherine Gordy (2006) points out, the state maintains the monopoly on the definition of socialism, the fine print of which has changed many times since 1959 in Cuba. This round, however, is specific in that it seems to subject itself to the neoliberal rationality of the *global* economy though its extent and consequences are yet to be measured in due course. It is important to note, following Wendy Brown (2005, 2006), that neoliberalism as a rationality permeates every sphere of society, that is, market rationality based on profitability and cost/benefit calculation is applied to non-economic dimensions, such as the government, education, and healthcare. Furthermore, neoliberal governmentality produces certain kinds of citizen-subjects, who are interpellated as entrepreneurial actors, and “whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for “self-care”—the ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions” (Brown 2005:42). The Cuban government’s recent moves to lay off state employees, expand self-employment, reduce and eventually scrap rationing, invite international capital, and decrease education budget suggest remaking of the socialist subject. Significantly, neoliberal governance calls for an instrumental but powerful state that is legitimized not through democratic accountability but through entrepreneurial management. The legitimacy of the Cuban state is still largely based on the welfare of the population and their anti-neoliberal positioning in the global politics, but the rhetoric of efficiency and economic management is on the rise as are some practices in the line of neoliberalism. As the Western states plough through with neoliberal rationality using liberal democratic talk as “window dressing” (Brown 2005:50), how much socialist talk has become performative in Cuba (Yurchak 2005) is still difficult to assess at this point. There is, at least, slippage between the official talk and the reality of Cubans which no longer goes unnoticed.

With the security net of high socialism eroding, the everyday making-do becoming increasingly difficult, and the uncertainty of the future ever ominous, life in

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<sup>11</sup> Following the 1993 Decree Law 141 that authorized 135 self-employment categories, a series of legislation in 2010 amplified them to 178 categories.

late socialism “no es fácil” [is not easy], as Cubans always say. Lydia Chávez has labeled the situation “national exhaustion” (2005:12).

Castro’s irrational clampdowns and the race for dollars has produced a collective exhaustion. It is tiring dodging the tax collector, police, or neighborhood spies to earn the dollars needed to live. It is wearing to obey the rules of who can buy a car or travel abroad. And Cubans say it is discouraging to earn pesos that mean less than the dollars of a government for so long portrayed as the enemy. (Chávez 2002:12)

Yet Cubans do not simply let the government or the current situation manipulate their lives. They are resilient and “challenge the idea of passive third world subjects who either are taken advantage of by foreigners or have abandoned all their pride and principles to scrape by in difficult circumstances” (Gordy 2006:397-398). Despite images of Cubans as victims of dictatorship, as simple beings of the threadbare socialist economy, or of an entire people being exhausted, I want to emphasize the Cuban manner of laughing about everything, finding humor and irony in all corners of their life. An ethnographic anecdote from my fieldwork will demonstrate this.

*One day in June, I had a series of mishaps, one of those bad days. I began the day by going to the Internet cafe, which was closed without notice. I was anxious to take care of a few pressing matters through email, and there was nothing I could do. I then went to the next thing on my agenda, the Municipal History Museum, only to find out the person in charge of the archive that I needed to meet was not there. After half an hour of waiting, I gave up and went home. My guitar instructor and friend whom I had a scheduled lesson that day did not show up. One of my hostesses, Carmen had also been running around trying to get some paperwork done since the day before. A retired chemistry teacher, Carmen is rather a serious person who likes to complain about the decline of the quality of life in Cuba. We ran into each other at home, commiserated, and laughed at all the effort we had put into for nothing. In the afternoon, I went again around town to look for access to the Internet. After exhausting my options, and being exhausted from walking in the sun, I decided that it wasn’t in the cards for me that day. When I was going into the house, a neighbor told me to tell Carmen that a horse had just urinated in front of the house and she should pour some water there. Upon hearing the incident, Carmen said “this country...we’re linked to bad smell,” laughed and left it at that. On top of all this, we had no power that morning. I complained about what my day had been to Bárbara, Carmen’s sister, and she simply smiled and told me “relax, and enjoy the day.”*

The lightness of their sensibility and humor is undoubtedly a coping mechanism, and I do not mean to overlook the brutal aspect of the revolutionary regime. Nevertheless, I believe there is a profound impulse to laugh in Cubans, if profundity and laughing are not contradictory terms. Thus Cubans may be fatigued to the extent of “national exhaustion,” but that by no means suggests sullenness that pervades society. The

chapters that follow may chronicle some somber issues and frustrations, but I want to maintain the Cuban humor as an undertone, if only as a reminder to myself.

### *Trinidad, Cuba*

The main site of my fieldwork is the city of Trinidad in the south-center of the island of Cuba. It is approximately 4 to 5 hours by bus from Havana via Cienfuegos. While half of the route from Havana is a highway, the other half towards Trinidad is considered a secondary road, meaning that part of the ride is not necessarily smooth. The province in which Trinidad finds itself is Sancti Spíritus, sandwiched amongst provinces of Cienfuegos (to the southwest), Villa Clara (to the northwest), and Ciego de Ávila (to the east). The provincial capital is the city of Sancti Spíritus, which lies 42 miles (67km), about 1.5 hours by car to the northeast of Trinidad.

The city of Trinidad is located between the Caribbean Sea to the south, home to the Ancón Beach, and the Escambray Mountains to the north that accommodates Topes de Collantes, a breezy hillside resort, thus giving ample options for tourists who visit Trinidad. The municipality of Trinidad occupies 447.392 sq.mi. (1158.74 sq. km.) with a population of 74,892 (as of 2009), including urban and rural areas.<sup>12</sup> The historic center of Trinidad is 0.143 sq. mi. (0.37 sq. km.) (García Santana 2004:xiii), with 1,207 buildings (García Santana et.al. 1996:7) and 6,492 residents (as of 2002).<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 1.1** Map of Cuba. Modified from CIA The World Factbook.

Historically, archaeological findings show that there were indigenous communities dating back to the Middle Stone Age in the area. In 1514, Diego Velázquez de Cuellar founded Trinidad, which is counted among the first seven Spanish

<sup>12</sup> Anuario Estadístico Separata 2009 Sancti Spíritus (Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Oficina del Conservador de la Ciudad de Trinidad y el Valle de los Ingenios 2002.

settlements (*villas*) established in Cuba between 1511 and 1524, along with Baracoa, Bayamo, Sancti Spíritus, Puerto Principe (Camagüey), Santiago de Cuba, and Havana.<sup>14</sup> In the early colonial days, Trinidad made impression in history by having accommodated Hernán Cortés for about ten days before his departure for Mexico. Soon afterwards, however, Havana emerged as the center of navigation on the island, and Trinidad became a backwater settlement with little population. Historians gather that with the geographical isolation and the access to the Caribbean (the port of Casilda and rivers from the sea into Trinidad), Trinidad developed contraband commerce with other Caribbean islands and Spain of its products such as casabe,<sup>15</sup> tobacco, and leather by the end of the sixteenth century. The population of Trinidad grew quickly in the seventeenth century, with the maritime trade of mainly tobacco and slaves, and people engaging in the lucrative corsair business for the thriving contraband activities. Sugar mills supposedly began their operation around this time especially in the Sugar Mill Valley (Valle de los Ingenios), and it is certain by the end of eighteenth century the industry was expanding. Production culminated in 1846, when Trinidad was marked the fourth economically significant place on the island. The historic center of Trinidad was mostly shaped around this period of economic boom.

The land around Trinidad then became saturated, the sugar price plummeted, and the sugar mills in the area failed to mechanize in the middle of the nineteenth century. Amidst this downturn, foreign capital took over and accelerated agglomeration and centralization of sugar mills in the Trinidad area, especially German and the U.S. The Ten Year War (1868-1878), and the Independent War (1895-1898) only contributed to the oligopoly of the sugar industry.<sup>16</sup> Aside from sugar, there was production of coffee, cattle-raising, and small-scale farming. The population in the main, nevertheless, suffered underemployment in the region, as was the case throughout the country prior to the revolution of 1959. Interest in tourism emerged as early as the late 1910s, but became a concentrated effort in the form of a local organization (Comité de Turismo y Acción Pro-Trinidad, later Asociación Pro-Trinidad, see chapter three) in the 1940s, and the restoration of Palacio Brunet in 1948, which remained an isolated case of historic preservation for two decades. The local leaders were well aware of the touristic value of the building stocks dating back to the seventeenth century that were conserved in their history of geographical isolation and prolonged economic recession. The historic center of Trinidad was designated National Monument in 1944, and in 1988, it received the title of the UNESCO World Heritage site for being “an outstanding example of a colonial city” (UNESCO World Heritage Convention website) along with the remains of the sugar industry structures in the Sugar Mill Valley.

Today, after the demise of the high-socialism backed up by the Soviet-bloc, tourism is the overwhelming industry that permeates life in Trinidad and of Trinitarios. For decades, then, the Spanish colonialism has marked Trinidad as distinct in the narrative and material characteristics, imposing a non-linear representation of Trinidad.

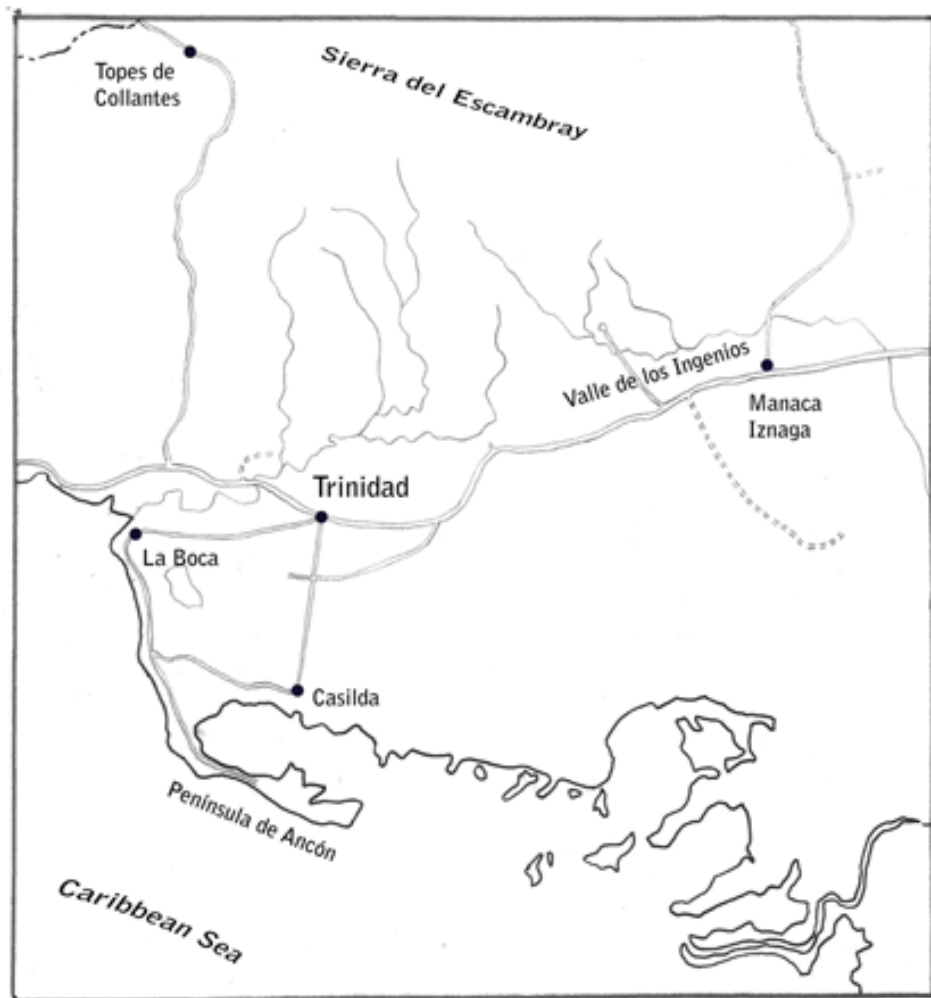
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<sup>14</sup> Some add to this Remedios as the eight founding villages.

<sup>15</sup> Casabe is a cassava (yuca)-based food of indigenous origin.

<sup>16</sup> Later in the 1930s, President Franklin Roosevelt’s Good Neighbor Policy brought these sugar mills back in Cuban hands.

If, roughly speaking, Cuba's history is considered to consist of five periods: pre-Columbian period, Spanish colonialism, the republic and the U.S. imperialism, the 1959 revolution and the Soviet dependence, and the post-Soviet era, then these pasts are not represented linearly or proportionately in today's Trinidad. The narrative of history, or rather, of heritage tends to be articulated according to the fantastic consumption of Trinidad as a tourist destination, and the local understanding of Trinidad's contribution to history, both of which highlight colonialism and the wealth made from the sugar industry.



**Figure 1.2** Map of Trinidad Region.



Indeed, local historiography does not advance beyond 1959, and as I describe throughout the dissertation, the Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley (established in 1997 to manage the historic preservation of the heritage site) strives to delve into, describe, and publish the history of its built environment of the colonial era. Despite some descriptions of Trinidad as a *living city*,<sup>17</sup> there is a strong trope of “suspended time” (*tiempo detenido*) in its portrayal, especially in the tourism literature.<sup>18</sup> As such, the Office’s ideal cityscape underlines the visual consistency of the “historic” period that attempts to exclude elements that do not fit into the overall image. In reality, this “historic period” is an abstract notion of the past put in opposition to the modern present (see especially chapters two and six).

Cuba shifted gears in its economy after the withdrawal of the COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance)<sup>19</sup> support, and began market-oriented reforms in the early 1990s. Soon tourism took over as the major foreign exchange earner, a position the sugar industry held for a long time. Tourism infrastructure was reinforced, many for-profit companies were established in the tourism industry, and campaigns to market Cuba as an attractive destination brought back images of Cuba that the socialist revolution worked hard to erase.

The [*National Geographic*] piece begins familiarly enough: “Midnight in Santiago de Cuba, carnival is in the air. Trumpeters, drummers, costumed revelers by the score.” Below a photo of a young woman dressed in white, her hands flung above her head, the caption reads, “Slow, fast, and then faster, sacred *bata* drum rhythms seize a dancer in Santiago de Cuba seeking communion with the Afro-Cuban divinity Bablú Aye.” Uncannily similar descriptions tempted tourists in the 1920s and 1950s. (Schwartz 1997:209)

Thanks to the state effort to push tourism, the number of visitors to the island grew quickly. In 1989, international visitors counted a little over 0.3 million, by 1994, they reached 0.6 million, and in 2004, over 2 million visited the island.<sup>20</sup> In Trinidad, dominance of tourism—the ratio of local people involved in the tourism economy, the depth of influence the industry has in the local society, and the inevitability of tourism in everyday life—is unparalleled even in the late socialist tourism-driven Cuba. I

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<sup>17</sup> For example, Echenagusía (2002) writes: “Trinidad, falsely frozen, today to the contrary, is a city that grows materially and spiritually for the various and multiple forces of its children, and it opens up more and more to new cultures, new customs, brought from many parts of the world by thousands and thousands of tourists...” (Trinidad, falsamente congelada es hoy, por el contrario, una ciudad que crece material y espiritualmente por el esfuerzo variado y múltiple de sus hijos y se abre cada día más a nuevas culturas, a nuevas costumbres, traídas de muchas partes del mundo por miles y miles de turistas...).

<sup>18</sup> A brochure issued by the Cuban Tourism Office (Oficina de Turismo de Cuba n.d.) reads: “As if suspended in time, Trinidad offers the visitor the extraordinary charm of a vivid museum-city set between the sea and the mountain (Como detenida en el tiempo, Trinidad regala al visitante los extraordinarios encantos de una vivaz ciudad-museo enclavada entre el mar y la montaña).

<sup>19</sup> Alternatively abbreviated as CMEA, an economic bloc amongst East European nations that later included Cuba and Vietnam. Disbanded in 1991.

<sup>20</sup> EIU Country Report, First Quarter 1996, and February 2006.

explore this aspect of Trinidad more fully in chapters four and five especially, but I want to note here this fact in a street-level illustration. For example, in the historic center and the immediate surrounding area, it is almost impossible to walk without passing by a tourist or two, or a group of them at any time of the year. Many residents are involved in the room-renting business, whereby one obtains a business license to rent one or two rooms in their house to overnight international visitors for a pricey monthly tax. A tourist would identify these houses by the sticker they have on the door, or, in Trinidad, they are swarmed by those who seek guests for the night at the bus terminal when they arrive. The city has no school catering to international students, which many cities do for Cuba's renowned medical schools and other professional schools, or language programs. As such, a foreign-looking person is identified exclusively as "tourist," who are expected to spend only a few days, if not hours, in town with not much possibility of other categories (students, expatriates, etc.) being applied. There is little space in the city of Trinidad that does not overlap with the tourist zone, as I discuss in chapter five, and for this very reason, Trinitarios feel that much more intensely the division between them and tourists (chapter four).

#### *Landscape of fieldwork*

Given the touristic nature of my field site, I was predominantly understood as a tourist in the first encounter and repeatedly on the street. That said, the image of the tourist in Cuba is multifaceted, as certain features of the individual are identified, stereotyped, and categorized depending on the occasion. I was mostly an Asian, a *china* (female Chinese), as Spanish-speaking Latin Americans often conflate East Asian nationalities. From the appearance, I was never mistaken for a Cuban, and may either be categorized as a student from Vietnam or China (as there were many on the island), or a tourist. Even though I came from North America (as the United States is called in Cuba), there was no space for me to be a non-Caucasian U.S. immigrant. While anthropology and the academic culture had been working to deconstruct my ethnic identity, in Cuba I was often cast in a rigid category of "Japanese." Cubans often asked me to elaborate on "Japanese films" or "Japanese cuisine," for which I was utterly unprepared.<sup>21</sup> In a way, my selfish pursuit of research agenda overshadowed my interest in possible "cultural exchange," by which some Cubans were sincerely fascinated.

In addition, because I mostly acted alone, I was looked at as a single, thus "available," female. In the context of Trinidad, and Cuba at large, where many single tourists visit to look for sexual liaisons or romantic relationships with Cubans, and Cubans looking for connections with outside, and likely a way out of the island,<sup>22</sup> I was always caught in the gender codes of tourist encounters. Hence when I was alone on the street, and perhaps less conspicuously in more familiar meeting, I had to handle stares, *piropos* (a man's flirtatious remarks to a woman made in passing), overtures, blatant marriage proposals, and occasional physical advances, with which I never came to be

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<sup>21</sup> Cuban TV stations often show Japanese films, repeatedly, especially the classic works of Akira Kurosawa. As watching TV is a popular pastime, the average Cuban probably knows classic Japanese films better than the average Japanese.

<sup>22</sup> Valerio Simoni (2009) delves into these questions in his brilliant doctoral research.

comfortable. Besides the gender binary I was pressed into, I was incessantly reminded of a global socioeconomic hierarchy that definitively separated me from Cubans. While this separation was not something I could personally do away with, I also experienced generous hospitality and sincere friendship once I got to know some of them on more personal terms.

My primary field site, the Office of Conservation in Trinidad was accustomed to having international visitors, many of them students writing theses about the architectural heritage or urban planning, and therefore already had a category to fit me into. The discipline of anthropology, however, perplexed them a little at first. As much as the Office is engaged in archaeological research, archaeology is not included in the discipline of anthropology in Cuba. In the tradition of the ethnology of Fernando Ortíz and Lydia Cabrera, I should have been interested in “non-mainstream” practices, such as Afro-Cuban music and dance. Though I had explained to them initially that I was interested in the practices of heritage preservation, they often showed that they thought I was investigating “intangible heritage” or “architectural history,” rather than themselves—people working at the Office of Conservation. In any case, I was placed as somebody who came to the Office for information, in a position soliciting the authority for data. It was months into my field work, when I was given an opportunity to give a talk, that the professional staff at the Office began to see me as a colleague, in an intellectual sense. I made a presentation about the images of Trinidad, and the audience—many of whom I respect as historians and preservation professionals who are dedicated to Trinidad—showed much interest and began an engaged discussion. To a certain extent, I was able to clarify the themes and approaches in my research, which seems to have struck a chord with them.

To start a research at the Office of Conservation, it was required that I obtain a student or research visa. This was not an easy task in a country trying to maximize its control on information. The Ministry of Culture issued the visa with my temporary Havana address after several trips I made from Trinidad. When I inquired in Trinidad if I needed to change my address since I was not staying Havana, nobody knew the answer. To this day I am not sure what the correct thing to do was, but in a defensive move, I went ahead and requested change of address, which meant several more trips to Havana before I got the visa with a Trinidad address. In a way, I experienced inadvertently (or not) the uncertain nature of Cuban bureaucracy, where the details are hammered out at the discretion of the person in charge of each case, not unlike the immigration papers in the United States, where I am also a resident alien. A tourist coming into Cuba needs a tourist visa, but if you arrive at the airport without it, the Cuban government gladly issues one. So while I was perceived as a tourist on the street, the state had a quite different category applied to the researcher side of me.

The handling of my status faced issues once again after I left the field. The Office of Conservation was celebrating the 20th anniversary of Trinidad’s inscription into the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2008. One of the events they organized in commemoration of the occasion was a photography contest. With the mentorship of the Office’s photographer whom I befriended in the course of my fieldwork, I was beginning to understand some tricks I could use on my camera, and I grew interested in

the contest. As I was right there at the organizing institution, I asked whether I was eligible to enter the contest, which stated that the participants be anonymous but from the area. They were amused by the idea and told me since I was a resident there, there was no problem. I delivered my anonymous work to the Office shortly before I concluded my fieldwork, and waited in the U.S. for the result. I received the first place. The prize was 500 pesos (about \$20, or a month's salary for a state employment), and a full-page publication on the back cover of the Office's magazine, *Tornapunta*. The problem was that the organization that was co-sponsoring the contest with the Office did not know how to dispense the cash award to a non-Cuban though I had left the name of a friend of mine in town as the recipient of the award in the event I won. They must have known that 500 pesos was not much to a foreigner like me. All the same, they jumped through the hoops to retrieve the money that was designated to my name. When I visited them in the following summer, they solemnly delivered the award to me, and laughed about the complications my award had raised. The divide between Cubans and non-Cubans is substantial, and crops up at unexpected moments. Yet Cubans are also patient and seasoned to get around or resolve these obstacles that they meet everyday. By resolving the issue of my status in the photography award, they are also redrawing the boundary between Cubans and non-Cubans.

There are twists and turns in every "field," I am sure, but some I encountered are very Cuban. As a resident alien, I was entitled to have Internet access from home. The Internet is provided exclusively by the state telephone company (ETECSA) in Cuba, and ordinary Cuban citizens are not allowed to have access at home. There are Internet access points throughout the island, charged in CUC, or Intranet access points for Cuban nationals in pesos. Certain professionals, including medical doctors and journalists are allowed home access, though restricted by the state intranet. My student visa allowed me to apply for a dial-up Internet account (the only kind available to private individuals), and I did. The applications by private parties were only accepted at certain ETECSA offices, and the nearest one for me was Sancti Spíritus. When I first solicited the Sancti Spíritus office for an account, they told me that they did not have any available at the time. As I was going to Havana often to check on my visa status, I made trips to the ETECSA office there to inquire about private access. From what I gathered, the telephone lines were reaching its capacity for private Internet access, and they needed infrastructure expansion in order to restart accepting applications for new accounts. Every time I inquired, they told me to wait a little longer. And this was the case until the end of my stay. It may well have been true that ETECSA was working on adding new lines. But it is just as well plausible that the government was cracking down on private access to arbitrarily demonstrate state censorship. Cubans experience these random measures of control especially on the Internet, as they have intermittent access to the web-based programs such as Yahoo, Google, and Facebook. The randomness of state control, effective all for it, adds to the uncertainty and anxiety Cubans undergo, which I will discuss in the conclusion.

Material scarcity is also part of the everyday experience in Cuba, and some of it is felt more severely in the provinces outside of Havana, illustrating the uneven distribution of resources. For example, I was never able to obtain newspaper in

Trinidad, which I used to buy on the street in Havana. The papers in Trinidad were only delivered to the subscribed households, and a very limited number was sold at the kiosk. Those who purchased papers at the kiosk in Trinidad were usually retired elderly, who had time on their hands to wait and chat in line. In Havana, these elderly would resell the papers on the street, to which I had easy access. The one book store in Trinidad rarely restocked, while Havana's book stores, both state and private, new and used, and CUC- and peso-based were flourishing. Periodic blackouts were nothing unusual, and people were more or less prepared.

However, one time during my fieldwork, there was severe water shortage in Trinidad, when there was no water supply for seven consecutive days. It often happened for hours, especially outside of the historic center, but this was extreme even for Trinitarios. There was panic in the air, and people were walking around with buckets looking for water. My hosts fortunately had an underground reserve, but it was running out. Then I saw water gushing out in the street, perhaps from a broken pipe, and people were gathered around with containers to collect it. Word got around quickly in these instances, though there was no official announcement as to what was happening with water supply. It never amounted to violence, or was politicized, however. Once the water came, life went back to normal. When water was available, then laundry detergent was nowhere to be seen in Trinidad. People stopped washing clothes, and asked around if they had seen detergent. Sometimes there would be a crowd outside a store, and one found out that the detergent was on sale, but had already sold out. So it seemed everybody in town was in a constant hunt for detergent, and would give you money in case you find it when you travel to another town. Nobody is privileged in times of shortage, whether or not one has money. There may have been uneven distribution geographically, as one often found things in Havana that did not appear in other cities, but if Trinidad was out of detergent, all suffered the consequences equally. Perhaps that is why material scarcity was never politicized.

The gender dynamics, the categories of foreigners, my relationship to the Office staff, access to infrastructure and information, and episodes of material scarcity form the landscape of my fieldwork. In the end, these are the "imponderabilia of actual life" (Malinowski 1922) that underlies the conditions of my research. I present these conditions here in order to place the "I" in the field, and by extension, in this dissertation.

### *Organization of this dissertation*

This dissertation is comprised of six chapters and a conclusion. This introductory chapter intends to cover the necessary background information of the research. Chapter two deals with the main institution of heritage preservation in Trinidad, the Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley. I will begin with a brief history of the Office and its current structure and functions, and then explain the Office's stunted capacity to fulfill its mandates and the staff's frustration. There are specific late socialist conditions that restrict mostly financially and the political position of Trinidad as a provincial town and the Office as an institution that impedes the efforts of heritage preservation. In the global regime of heritage represented by UNESCO's

World Heritage program, the preservation offices are disciplined by neoliberal rationality. I argue that in the end, the Office emerges as an intellectual endeavor in command of much of the discursive terrain of the heritage, rather than the physical cityscape.

In chapter three, I draw on stories of three palaces to illustrate different modes of modernity in the history of preservation in Trinidad. Palacio Béquer was built at the height of the sugar boom in the region and was acclaimed as a remarkable building comparable to few others on the island at the time. It then vanished in the industrial modernity that cherished the new. Palacio Cantero was attractively restored in the 1970s as the Municipal History Museum and prominently displays the opulent lifestyle of sugar barons of the time. This nostalgic modernity aestheticizes the past and leaves unquestioned Trinidad's relation to Spanish colonialism, sugar industry, and slavery. The crumbling Palacio Iznaga sits in disrepair in the heart of historic center, surrounded by corrugated metal fences and scaffoldings. In the late socialist economy's neoliberal bent, this palace awaits foreign commercial investment, embodying the frustrated state of the Office and heritage preservation in Trinidad.

The next chapter zooms out from the Trinidad cityscape, and seeks to understand the commoditization of Cubanness today, drawing on the spatial imaginaries of Cuba that builds on real and perceived mobility and immobility of subjects. The day-to-day experience of residents of a tourist destination is full of encounters of differences, where the category of "Cuban" gets delineated against that of freely mobile "non-Cuban." A sense of immobility characterizes what it means to be Cuban, yet this immobility also translates into unspoiled uniqueness for tourist consumption. An ethnographic inquiry of Cuban "traditional" musicians in the tourism industry reveals how artistic talent of Cuban musicians gets translated as a mobile global commodity that makes profit and at the same time acts as socialist vanguard.

Chapter five looks at counter-touristic spaces that the locals make in a tourist destination. While the Office of Conservation is in charge of restoring and maintaining Trinidad's historic cityscape, which tourists from all over the world come to appreciate, the Office also plans and hosts cultural events for local residents. In Trinidad, and in Cuba generally, bifurcated spaces are marked for tourists and residents, formally and informally. Yet these events specifically held for local residents indicate that the bifurcation need not mean segregation, and difference may entail generative forces. Using Lefebvre's concept of differential space and MacCannell's argument that touristic consumption presupposes difference, I discuss how the locally specific spatial practices emerge in response to and because of the tourist dominance of public space, and the global fame the World Heritage status earned the town. Within the locally meaningful space-making practice, Trinidad as home becomes valorized and expressed through intimate and creative activities.

Cuban landscape has historically marked distinct aesthetics that were facilitated by political economy of the times. In chapter six, I explore the aesthetic possibilities that materialize in the late socialist economy of Cuba by comparing two buildings in two localities—Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo in Havana, and Hotel Iberostar in Trinidad. Havana's Colegio Universitario is a restoration of the first university in Cuba

by the powerful Office of the City Historian of Havana, and is a strikingly (post)modern building with one facade that integrates a replica of the original bell tower. In contrast, Hotel Iberostar in Trinidad is a joint investment of a Cuban hotel business and a Spanish one. The hotel seamlessly extends the original fragment into a large structure in an aestheticization of the past. The two buildings embody different ways to relate to the past, and manifest aesthetics that differentiates the respective Offices' positionalities in the global regime of heritage. The comparison attempts to understand further the operation of this global regime that stratifies its subjects; whereas Old Havana exemplifies the successful entrepreneur, Trinidad struggles to take care of its heritage cityscape in late socialist Cuba.

In the conclusion, I discuss more comprehensively what I call Trinidad's heritage modern, threading through previous chapters. Modernity, taken as a mode of practice, is understood to be the drive to go forward in the midst of uncertainty. And uncertainty is what best characterizes the post-Soviet Cuban political economy. In such uncertain times particularly felt in a small town like Trinidad, Trinitarios' struggle to build a better future through looking into the past is a remarkable modern experience. Being inscribed in the global regime of heritage is, for Trinidad today, being modern. At the same time, it requires navigating through late socialist political economy, with neoliberal rationality increasingly becoming relevant. Without other industries or the centralized economy to fall back on as in the era of the Soviet bloc, the future of Trinidad resides precisely in preserving the past forms commodified through tourism. Heritage modern is not about modernization through expansion or destruction, but through recreating the past. It is a paradoxical aspiration to move forward by temporal and spatial containment. I explore the implications of heritage modern through Benjamin's figure of the angel of history.

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All individual names that appear in this dissertation are pseudonyms, except for those considered as public figures, such as the Office of Conservation staff holding higher management positions, scholars, and published authors.

## *Chapter Two*

### The Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley

Trinidad is an outstanding example of a colonial city; it has maintained its historic core, featuring the highest percentage of surviving antique buildings and public squares and bringing together architectural, historic and cultural elements of great value. The city is representative of the colonial human settlement and the Valle de Los Ingenios is testimony to the development of the sugar industry.

--Trinidad and the Valley de los Ingenios, UNESCO World Heritage List,  
Long description

The principal actor of heritage preservation in Trinidad and the main site of my fieldwork is the Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley (la Oficina del Conservador de la Ciudad de Trinidad y el Valle de los Ingenios). The Office was established by a national decree in 1997, and at the time of my fieldwork, it employed approximately 320 people. In this chapter, I outline the legal and historical frameworks of the Office, present its current structure and functions to introduce my “site,” and discuss their practices in relation to the cityscape in question and to the global regime of heritage. I explore the physical reality of Trinidad’s built environment and the ways in which it does not correspond to the mandate of the Office. Consequently, I argue that the Office emerges as an intellectual center, in charge of discursive control over this particular heritage, rather than the physical work of preservation.

The Office of Conservation is not only a locally responsible agency, but is a site of practice within the global regime of heritage preservation, represented by the UNESCO World Heritage scheme. As described in chapter one, when local heritage gets inscribed in the global inventory, the preservation agency is responsible for its maintenance and at the same time partially gives up its ownership of the site for it belongs to the humanity as a whole. The regime of heritage is maintained through these agencies on site, and heritage sites’ intrinsic and universal value demands care locally. UNESCO is an international organization and embodies moral authority of the heritage regime, but does not exert control over each site directly. Rather, it stands as the symbol of shared understanding that each country bears responsibility for the heritage sites in their own territory on behalf of the humankind. Inscribed sites are not the only heritage under the purview of the regime. UNESCO extends its grip to heritage sites whose “outstanding universal value” is yet to be recognized: “The fact that a property belonging to the cultural or natural heritage has not been included in either of the two lists mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 4 of Article 11 shall in no way be construed to mean that it does not have an outstanding universal value for purposes other than those

resulting from inclusion in these lists” (World Heritage Convention, Article 12). Each heritage site, then, is disciplined to take care of itself mostly on its own, while the international community watches over its (preservation agency’s) conduct.

Therefore within the UNESCO World Heritage scheme, an agency like the Office of Conservation in Trinidad, especially the preservation professionals who work there are the key figures that produce and are produced by the global regime of heritage. Although economic management is not the explicit end of heritage practices, to the extent that these figures are held accountable for “the consequences of his or her action no matter how severe the constraints on this action” and that their insufficient performance is construed as “failure to navigate impediments to prosperity” (Brown 2005:42), the heritage regime operates by a neoliberal rationality. Maintaining a good cityscape signals good governance, and consequently success as subjects of the regime. For the state, demonstration of well-restored heritage cityscape substantiates its moral and therefore modern status in the international community, even when it delegates to local authorities and holds them liable for the actual management. To study the Office and its staff, then, is to examine the middling administrators (Rabinow 1989) of a modern project, at the concurrence of socialism and capitalism in contemporary Cuba, fully inserted into the “non-economic” global regime of heritage management. Heritage cityscape constitutes one of the main tourist attractions in Cuba, besides the beaches, music, dance, vintage American cars, and socialism. As such, it is also situated in the post-Soviet modern project of Cuba, as a means of survival through tourism for the revolutionary regime.

### *Legal framework*

The Cuban revolutionary regime established its socialist constitution in 1976, replacing the one dating from 1940. Article 38 (in the revision of 1992, the article is numbered 39, with the following clauses almost intact) which establishes the Cuban state’s and citizens’ responsibility to cultural artifacts and policies. Two items are particularly relevant in the following discussion about heritage preservation in Cuba.

h) the State defends the identity of Cuban culture and oversees the conservation of cultural patrimony and artistic and historic richness of the nation. It protects national monuments and places notable for their natural beauty or their known artistic or historic value;<sup>1</sup>

i) the State promotes the participation of citizens by means of country’s mass and social organizations in realization of its educational and cultural policies.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> el Estado defiende la identidad de la cultura cubana y vela por la conservación del patrimonio cultural y la riqueza artística e histórica de la nación. Protege los monumentos nacionales y los lugares notables por su belleza natural o por su reconocido valor artístico o histórico;

<sup>2</sup> el Estado promueve la participación de los ciudadanos a través de las organizaciones de masas y sociales del país en la realización de su política educacional y cultural.

Based on this article, in 1977, the National Assembly passed two relevant laws: Law No. 1 “Protection of cultural patrimony” and Law No. 2 “National and local monuments.” Together, these laws establish a system of inscription and protection of heritage (“cultural patrimony” in Law No.1, and “national and local monuments” in Law No.2) under the oversight of the Ministry of Culture. While the first law envisions heritage as diverse as archaeological sites and scientific feats and states the general scheme of designation and protection of cultural patrimony, the second law is concerned primarily with built environment and artifacts, and elaborates more on the acts of preservation.

Law No. 1. Article 1. The present law has as its object the determination of artifacts that for their special relevance in relation to archaeology, history, literature, education, art, science, and culture in general, comprise Cultural Patrimony of the Nation, and to establish suitable means of their protection.<sup>3</sup>

Law No. 2. Article 1. By National Monument, it is understood all historic urban centers, built environment, sites or objects that for their exceptional characteristics are worth being conserved for their cultural, historic, or social significance for the country that would be declared as such by the National Commission for Monuments.<sup>4</sup>

However, although these laws and their subsidiary regulations prepared the groundwork, it was when a series of decrees in the 1990s that set up offices in charge of specific heritage sites that preservation work began in earnest. The precedence came in 1993 in the form of Decree-Law No. 143 to augment the authority and capacity of the existing City Historian’s Office of Havana (la Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana), originally established before the Revolution, in 1938. The City Historian’s Office of Havana is an exceptional case in that it is directly attached to the Council of State, and is not subordinated to other local organs. Similar offices in Santiago de Cuba (Decree No. 204, 1996), and Camagüey (Decree No. 213, 1997) were established under the Council of Provincial Administration in respective regions. The Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley came into existence in 1997 through the Decree No. 216, shortly after the Decree that founded the City Historian’s Office of Camagüey. Given that Santiago de Cuba and Camagüey were inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1997 and 2008, respectively, the order in which the heritage management offices were set up does not account for the

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<sup>3</sup> Ley No. 1. Artículo 1. La presente ley tiene por objeto la determinación de los bienes que, por su especial relevancia en relación con la arqueología, la historia, la literatura, la educación, el arte, la ciencia y la cultura en general, integran el Patrimonio Cultural de la Nación, y establecer medios idóneos de protección de los mismos.

<sup>4</sup> Ley No. 2. Artículo 1. Se entiende por Monumento Nacional todo centro histórico urbano y toda construcción, sitio u objeto que, por su carácter excepcional, merezca ser conservado por su significación cultural, histórica o social para el país que, como tal, sea declarado por la Comisión Nacional de Monumentos.

UNESCO status. The Office of Trinidad is distinct from other previously mentioned offices for its affiliation to the Council of *Municipal* Administration. While Santiago de Cuba and Camagüey are the capitals of provinces bearing the same names, Trinidad is located in the province of Sancti Spíritus, the capital of which is the city of Sancti Spíritus, some 45 miles northeast of Trinidad. The geographical location and the political (in)significance of Trinidad (though touristically a key player) within the country and within the province affect not only the Office, and the general administrative matters of the city, but also the rivalry between *Spirituanos* (residents of and people from Sancti Spíritus) and *Trinitarios* (residents of and people from Trinidad), as I describe below.

While the City Historian's Office of Havana is the only entity legally equipped to run commercial enterprises (for more on the exceptionality of Havana, see chapter six), all four offices can accept donations, and collect small percentages (1-2%) of the local businesses' revenues for their budget.

### *Historical framework*

The valorization of Cuba's stock of buildings has surfaced since at least the 1930s. The City Historian's Office of Havana was established in 1938, headed by a prolific intellectual, Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring, who mostly focused on research and publication on the history of Havana. At the time, there was a social awareness of the historic value of built environment, as intellectuals and professionals protested against certain demolitions, but it largely manifested as passive defense of historic and artistic values rather than as active restoration works (Scarpaci, et.al. 2002:322-5). Another prominent student of architectural history in Cuba is Francisco Prat Puig, Spanish archaeologist and historian who immigrated to Cuba, who studied Cuban architecture and taught at the University of Santiago de Cuba. In 1947, Prat Puig published *El Pre Barroco en Cuba: Una escuela criolla de arquitectura morisca* [The Pre-Baroque in Cuba: A Creole school of Moorish architecture], in which he explored distinct characteristics of Cuban built material. These earlier accomplishments aside, the late Trinidad native, Leonor del C. Hernández de Zayas (1992) argues that the interest in patrimony came only after the revolution in Cuba. To be fair, it seems that the search for that which is Cuban had begun earlier as a quest for national identity although the use of the word "patrimony" perhaps came later.<sup>5</sup> It seems appropriate, however, to date the beginning of preservation activities in the 1970s and the 1980s as Cuba's revolutionary regime consolidated.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, though only a speculation at this

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<sup>5</sup> Article 58 of the 1940 constitution, the precedent to the article 39 h) of the current constitution, does not employ the term "patrimonio" (patrimony) but "tesoro" (treasure): "El Estado regulará por medio de la Ley la conservación del *tesoro* cultural de la Nación, su riqueza artística e histórica, así como también protegerá especialmente los monumentos nacionales y lugares notables por su belleza natural o por su reconocido valor artístico o histórico" (The State will regulate by means of law the conservation of cultural *treasure* of the Nation, its artistic or historic richness, as well as will protect especially the national monuments and notable places for their natural beauty or their known artistic or historic value). Emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup> This point was suggested by Alicia García Santana in my conversation with her on January 8, 2008.

point, the fiasco of the 1970 ten-million-ton sugar harvest campaign may have turned the nation to find meaningful values in continuation of the past. While the constitution of 1976 clearly stated the importance of patrimony, the early years of the revolution were dedicated more to equitable distribution of housing than to protecting historical and architectural values in buildings (Scarpaci et al., 2002:138-9). In 1986, Marta Arjona's *Patrimonio cultural e identidad* [Cultural patrimony and identity] was published, which advocates preservation and still remains a central reference text for people working in heritage in Cuba.

In Trinidad, it was in the 1970s when three young intellectuals came together to investigate independently the historic built environment with the guidance of Francisco Prat Puig.<sup>7</sup> Without any formal training in architecture, the three non-architects (one historian, one philologist, and one museologist) began recording the details of the houses and other buildings in Trinidad in order to historicize and systematically record the built environment. Alicia García Santana, Teresita Angelbello Isquierdo, and Víctor Echenagusía Peña (whom I will call the “pioneers”) were able to salvage certain narratives surrounding the vernacular technique of Trinidad buildings from their research, which they institutionalized in order to establish restoration methods. The three pioneers exercised different specialized skills: one sketched the architectural details, another worked out the historical architectural and construction terms and techniques, and yet another dictated oral histories and investigated archives regarding buildings and the cityscape. These young independent scholars demarcated the three concentric zones of historic quarters according to the dating of the construction, and systematized the architectural techniques and styles that constituted the particular architectural history of Trinidad.<sup>8</sup> The culmination of their research results came in 1979, in the form of the Museum of Architecture, which then served as the institutional base of later activities. As well as a research center, the Museum of Architecture is an educational project in which samples of Trinidad's architectural tradition are displayed and explained in detail, and both locals and tourists are targeted. After their thorough academic investigation, practical plans to intervene in the state of the cityscape were developed. By the time the Technical Restoration Team was established under the Museum of Architecture, in 1987, in order to specialize in the restoration work, however, the pioneers went on to pursue their own ways. Alicia left Trinidad but continued her study to earn her doctorate, and is today one of the most productive scholars of Cuban architectural history. She maintains contact with Trinidad, and regularly visits as she writes and publishes on the city. Víctor has remained in the institution as museologist, and now is advisor in the Office of Conservation while actively engages in creative works as visual artist when not in the Office. Teresita graduated in philology, served as the director of the Museum of Architecture for many years before becoming an independent scholar whose determination in unraveling Trinidad's history is indefatigable. She often gives lectures on the history of Trinidad,

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<sup>7</sup> This part is primarily drawn from my interviews with Alicia García Santana, Teresita Angelbello Isquierdo, and Víctor Echenagusía Peña over the course of my fieldwork.

<sup>8</sup> There was also a previous zoning of the historic center when Trinidad became a national monument in 1944.

supervises local students, and joins archaeological excavations in the area, especially the Sugar Mill Valley. As I will describe more in detail later, Teresita belongs to the intellectual circle of Trinidad, which I argue is a distinctive characteristic Trinidad has bred through its historical and political trajectory. Teresita hopes to earn her doctorate from her independent research, but laments that nobody in Cuba is willing to supervise her; starting from philology and extending to history, archaeology, and art, her study cannot be confined to a discipline that can authorize a degree. It is a manifestation of locals' deep commitment to their city, and of another local industry—as it were—besides tourism, called intellectual production. The economic return may be negligible for this industry, but it certainly contributes to the town's cultural capital. The research of the three pioneers was later turned into a book, *Trinidad de Cuba. Patrimonio de la Humanidad: Arquitectura doméstica* [Trinidad de Cuba. World Heritage: Domestic architecture], published in 1996 (no longer in print).<sup>9</sup>

The Technical Restoration Team (Equipo Técnico de Restauración), formed in 1987 to administer the restoration plans, was staffed by archaeologists, architects, and other technical experts. The founding director was Alfredo Rankin, one of the first archaeologists who apprenticed in the local group of intellectuals, including a biologist and a historian, who practiced archaeology without formal training.<sup>10</sup> Rankin founded the Archaeology Group (el Grupo de Arqueología) in 1971, which focused on the pre-Columbian history of Trinidad. The group later established the Museum of Archaeology in 1976 for which Rankin served as director for twenty years. Between the pioneers' work, the Museum of Architecture (1979), and the Technical Restoration Team (1987), many restoration works were realized. Each year, the city of Trinidad made a point to inaugurate or present a certain building or two to mark the year at the annual Cultural Week festival (la Semana de la Cultura) (see Table 2.1). First years were dedicated to individual mansions around the Plaza Mayor, the town's main square, which were converted into museums, galleries, and other public-use venues. Beginning early 1980s, however, the focus of restoration shifted to the streetscape, or a more comprehensive image of the town's historic center.

Year	Restored building	Post-Restoration Use
1974	Palacio Brunet (Brunet Palace)	Romantic Museum
1975	Casa Padrón (Padrón House)	Municipal History Archive (today Museum of Archaeology)
1976	Casa Ortiz (Ortíz House)	Museum of Archaeology (today Universal Art Gallery)
1977	Casa Machado (Machado House)	Casa de la Trova (Trova House, a music venue)

<sup>9</sup> Books and publications in Cuba have limited circulation, and even Trinidad's library, archive, and the Office of Conservation suffer poor collection of material highly relevant to Trinidad. I was surprised to find more books accessible at the University of California, Berkeley library than in the city of Trinidad, including the above-mentioned *Trinidad de Cuba*.

<sup>10</sup> In the Cuban system of higher education, there is no degree program for archaeology.

1978	Casa de la Sociedad “La Luz”	Museum of the Battle against the Bandits (today Cuban Cultural Foundation)
(1978)	House at the corner of Rosario and Media Luna streets	Casa de la Cultura (Culture House)
1979	Casa Sánchez-Iznaga (Sánchez-Iznaga House)	Museum of Architecture
1980	Palacio Cantero (Cantero Palace)	Municipal History Museum
1981	Architectural elements in Real del Jigüe street between Boca and San José streets	
1982	Architectural elements in San José street between Real del Jigüe and Amargura streets	
1983	Plaza de Sagarte Casa Real 90 (90 Real del Jigüe street)	Tea shop “El Calgadizo” (today Bar “La Canchánchara”)
1985	Architectural elements in Media Luna street between Alameda and Santa Ana streets	
1986	Architectural elements at the corner of Amargura and Santa Ana streets	
1987	Architectural elements in Callejón de la Rosa street between Amargura and Desengaño streets	
1988	Casa Amargura 30 (30 Amargura street)	
1989	Tres Palmitas Plaza	
1989	Ortíz house store space Former post office	Restaurant “Mesón del Regidor” International post office
1990	La casa Desengaño #424	Bar/restaurant “La Parrillada”
1991	Manaca Iznaga sugar mill house, Guachinango farm house “Ruinas” house in Plaza Segarte	Restaurants Bar “Ruinas”
1992	La casa Real #59 Brunet palace garage Royal prison	Restaurant Souvenir shop Multiple-use tourism complex

**Table 2.1** Restoration work in Trinidad 1974-1992 (source: Hernández de Zayas 1992)

Architect and a charismatic man, Roberto López Bastida, better known locally by his nickname “Macholo,” was involved in the Technical Restoration Team from the beginning. López assumed the director position when a national decree established the Office of Conservation in 1997, upgrading from the Technical Restoration Team, and served until his untimely death in 2003. In a small town like Trinidad, people know each other, and a colorful person like López Bastida seems to have been something of a celebrity. People told me about him, called him *the* conservator of Trinidad, that he made things happen while disregarding the finances, and that he had a vision. He married three times and to illustrate his colorfulness, the last wife was about 20 years his junior. López Bastida worked much on the restoration of urban historic center with a clear long-term vision of what the future of Trinidad was going to be architecturally, which allegedly his successors have not been able to live up to. His words in *Jurabaina*, the Office’s mono-color 6-page bimonthly publication were full of inspirational talk.

Trinidad, when one gets to know it, is not just a spectacular “scene,” or an “ambient,” it’s much more than that, a system that is alive, dynamic, interactive, where the urbanization, the architecture caught in it, the interior spheres, public spaces, and of course, its people, form a whole, creating a light, an atmosphere, an unrepeatable air. (López Bastida 2001)<sup>11</sup>

There was a populist side to López Bastida, as I learned that he had arranged for so-and-so to get a house, for another to study abroad, and that “office-sponsored” events during his time were much flashier than today.<sup>12</sup> Although he was internationally active to get donations from outside Cuba, the finances of the Office were in ruins after López Bastida was gone. He also worked ceaselessly, drank much, without caring for his own health; though his body met an end, the same audacity left the Office to continue without cash or leadership.

In 1988, the historic urban center of Trinidad and the historic structures of the surrounding Sugar Mill Valley together made the second UNESCO World Heritage site in Cuba, following the 1982 inscription of Old Havana and its fortifications. Cuba then plunged into the Special Period in Time of Peace, and severe austerity measures were forced due to withdrawal of the Soviet assistance. Restoration work in Trinidad became geared more towards tourist venues, as happened elsewhere in Cuba at the time as the tourism industry was one of the first to welcome foreign investment in the form of joint venture. López Bastida took office as the Director of the Office of Conservation in 1997, and continued the work that the Technical Restoration Team had begun. He was resourceful, finding international cooperation to finance restoration projects in Trinidad. For example, part of restoration of family houses in the poorer neighborhood of Tres Cruces was funded by the Catalanian government and associated institutions, and a similar project in Santa Ana neighborhood was financed by the housing agency of Cordova city, Spain. López Bastida also worked with the government of Andalusia to produce a 288-page, multi-color and bilingual (Spanish and English) architectural guidebook of Trinidad. If the *Architectural Guide* targeted an international audience (the book, which came out in 2003 after López Bastida passed away, costs 20 CUC), the Office’s periodical, *Jurabaina* was a free community newsletter, covering, as mentioned before, extensive editorials by the director, profiles of ongoing projects, legal matters regarding restoration, local events, and essays concerning Trinidad’s heritage in a simple format. In a demonstration of López Bastida’s persona, the 2003 issue dedicated to him after his death includes affectionate letters and poems written by his colleagues from Spain, Venezuela, and France.

López Bastida, then, exemplifies the successful entrepreneur in the neoliberal regime of heritage. He was able to find resources in the time of difficulty, and the cityscape bore the prosperity achieved. The self-care that was realized outside the state

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<sup>11</sup> Trinidad, cuando se conoce, no es solo un espectacular “escenario”, ni un “ambiente”, es mucho más que eso, un sistema vivo, dinámico, interactuante, donde la urbanización, la arquitectura atrapada en ella, los ámbitos interiores, espacios públicos y por supuesto, su gente, forman un todo, creando una luz, una atmósfera, un aire irrepetible.

<sup>12</sup> This part is based on my interviews with the current office staff and some residents.

scheme, however, was not institutionalized, perhaps inevitably, as the neoliberal regime does not lay out the means to the desired end. Rather, the focus is on the outcome, measured, if not by “the health and growth of the economy” (Brown 2005:42), then by the health of the heritage cityscape.

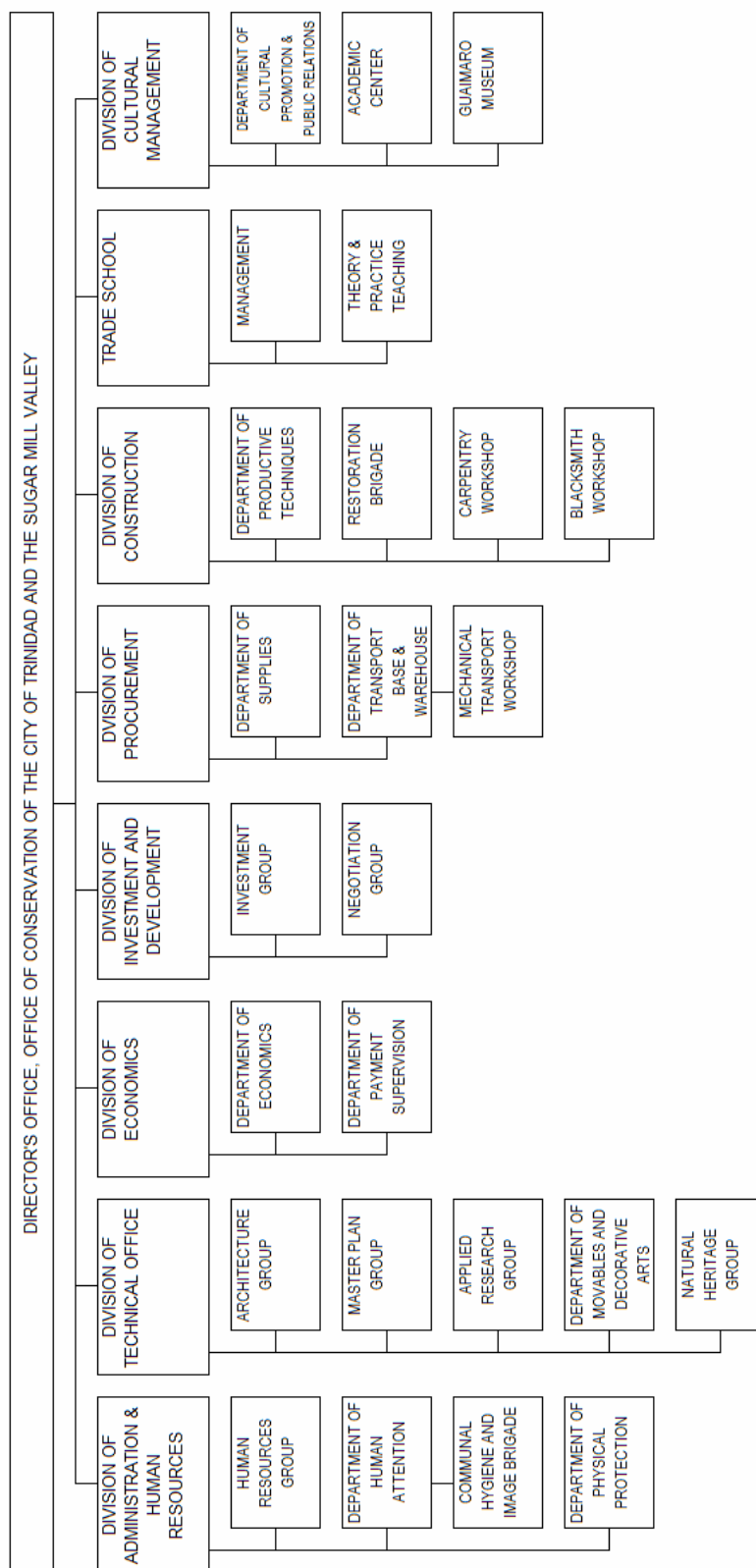
The Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley has since seen changes of directors: Nancy Benítez, architect and the second wife of Roberto López Bastida, and Leidy Hernández, engineer who brushed some political sensitivity and left the Office in 2007. While the two women had worked in the Office as professional staff (and Benítez still does) before assuming the position of the Conservator, the current director, Norberto Carpio, is a Party appointee who had no prior record of heritage restoration work. This Party intervention reveals the in-between-ness of late socialism.

### *Office Structure and Function*

The Office of Conservation consists of 8 divisions: Administrative and Human Resources, Technical Office, Economics, Investment and Development, Procurement, Construction, Trade School, and Cultural Management. Each of these has smaller sub-units (see Figure 2.1). I worked closely with the Technical Office, and within that, particularly with the Applied Research Group, which was in charge mainly of inventory and research on individual structures within the historic center, contents and design of the bi-annual magazine *Tornapunta*, which succeeded *Jurabaina* in 2007, and other publications. The Group’s staff included a historian, two philologists, three designers, and a photographer, at the time I did my fieldwork. Through publication, the Applied Research Group was engaged in public education with regard to Trinidad’s heritage, both tangible and intangible, and thus worked frequently with the Department of Cultural Promotion and Public Relations, under the Division of Cultural Management. The latter department plans and carries out events such as art or craft exhibit, poetry readings, and lectures (see chapter five for a discussion of their activities).

The Trade School is noteworthy in its specialization in the techniques of Trinidad’s heritage architecture. It was established in 1998 in order to: “1) Promote in youth traditional construction techniques as a competent and educated form of labor to live on; 2) Guarantee the continuity of traditional trade skills indispensable for the conservation and restoration of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley; 3) Help alleviate the unemployment and marginalization of the youth in a city socially affected by the increase in international tourism” (López Bastida 2003). They have 2-year programs in carpentry, bricklaying, foundation, plaster, wall painting, gold/silversmithing, and furniture repair. The students are between 19-25 years old, who have finished 9th grade when entering the program. Upon graduation, the skilled workers are incorporated into the Office’s construction division. As stated in the document prepared by López, the school is concerned with the social welfare of the city’s youth as well as the preservation of heritage by addressing the perpetuation of traditional skills. Also, the Office proposed that rather than having tourism economy offer “easy money” to the local youth, it planned to circulate the tourist revenue through

restoration work. However, as I discuss below, the Office's enterprise was to be integrated only partially into the tourism economy.



**Figure 2.1** Organizational Chart of the Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley (as of 2008)

There are notable changes over the years. In the beginning, the Office of Conservation included the Office of Commercial Management (Oficina de Gestión Comercial), which was to develop and run “touristic operations,” and to work closely with other tourism-related entities in order to promote Trinidad as a tourist destination. The Office had a peso-run restaurant and a craft store; they ran a hostel for students and other guests; they had *Tornapunta* and the *Architectural Guide* for sale. To tap on the tourism economy in order to finance Trinidad’s heritage maintenance—à la Havana’s City Historian’s Office (see above section on legal framework)—was the vision Roberto López Bastida had for the Office of Conservation. It was a comprehensive endeavor that envisaged a synergy between tourism, heritage preservation, and welfare of local residents, rather than competition of the three realms. In 2007, shortly before I arrived, the Office was suddenly stripped of its commercial activities. I was not able to decipher the exact circumstances that led to this outcome. However, from what I gathered, it was a central decision that “reviewed” the legal status of the Office of Conservation in Trinidad that found out the Office had not been equipped with such facility. Since then, the Office became a “budgeted” entity rather than a self-financing one, and had no liberty to seek mercantile revenue. The fact that nobody was able to account for the change of the Office status led me to speculate that it was a political maneuver that López Bastida might have had the social capital to manage. I heard time and again that those who occupied the position of the Conservator after López Bastida have lacked the knowledge, charisma, and social relations, and thus have not had the same impact as the founder did. The revocation of commercial license has restricted the Office’s activities in significant ways. For example, their magazine *Tornapunta* is distributed now to public institutions for free, but cannot be found in shops. The readership, for this reason, is not likely to be extended to tourists and visitors, who may randomly encounter the publication if it were for retail. The Office of Conservation “facilitated” my acquisition of the *Architectural Guide*, or made an exception and sold me a copy for 20 CUC, having identified me as a student of Trinidad’s architectural heritage. Without this favor, I may not have even come across the book. The craft store and restaurants were closed permanently, to the dismay of many residents who enjoyed quality peso-services.

This incident stirred up bitter feelings of Trinitarios towards the center—in this case, not Havana, but Sancti Spíritus, the provincial capital. Within the province of Sancti Spíritus, the cities of Sancti Spíritus and Trinidad are the two major urban centers. They are both founded as first colonies by the Spaniards in 1514, and both have served as regional capitals; Trinidad between 1797 and early 19th century, and Sancti Spíritus from 1976 to present.<sup>13</sup> Sancti Spíritus is an inland city, whereas Trinidad has its own port, Casilda, and beach, Playa Ancón. While Sancti Spíritus sits on the main road and just off the highway, Trinidad is connected by a provincial road from Cienfuegos, about 50 miles away. Curiously, the transportation between the two major

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<sup>13</sup> In 1976, Cuba reorganized administrative divisions, and Villa Clara province where Sancti Spíritus and Trinidad were part of was divided into three provinces. The newly formed province of Sancti Spíritus then placed its capital in the city of Sancti Spíritus.

cities within the province is not convenient. One has to take a *maquina* (a collective cab), a bus that is not run by the national lines, or hire a private cab. The reason for the absence of regular and reliable transportation between Trinidad and Sancti Spíritus, I was told, is because Sancti Spíritus is worried about drug smuggling from the coastlines near Trinidad. This reasoning utterly contradicts the presence of regular buses that connect Trinidad and other cities, such as Cienfuegos, Havana, and Santiago de Cuba. Then through Trinitarios' commentaries over time, I came to understand that there is a sort of regional rivalry between the two cities. "Spirituanos are jealous of Trinidad, because we have tourism," "We have the mountains and the sea, and Sancti Spíritus doesn't," "Sancti Spíritus is ugly, Trinidad is beautiful," "Trinidad is a World Heritage site. Sancti Spíritus is envious of that," and so on. In some Trinitarios' minds, Sancti Spíritus intentionally makes things difficult for Trinitarios, one effect of which is the revocation of the Office's commercial license. Other evidences of such jealousy, according to Trinitarios, included the threat to transfer the library collection from Trinidad to Sancti Spíritus, and the dwindling budget allocation to the Office of Conservation. What is suggested is Trinidad's relative lack of political clout as a provincial town, vis-à-vis Sancti Spíritus, and by extension, Havana.



**Figure 2.2** “Contamination”: Restoration in violation of the building code. Photo by Maki Tanaka.

In some sense, the Office of Conservation has been taken out of the tourism circuit, economically and otherwise, while bearing the accountability over the preservation of heritage for which tourists come. The Office's staff takes extreme pride in their job of safeguarding the heritage of humanity,<sup>14</sup> but often voices frustration with regard to the “contamination” tourism money brings in. They refer to how the locals

<sup>14</sup> UNESCO's World Heritage is *Patrimonio de la Humanidad* [patrimony of humanity] in Spanish.

engaged in tourism businesses are well-off enough to remodel their houses, frequently in violation of the building regulations. Remodeling of individual buildings within the historic zone requires approval of several offices, including the Office of Conservation; nevertheless, many do not have the patience to wait for the paperwork to come out of the bureaucratic maze, and go ahead with the work. To the Office's lament, there is no penalty to be enforced in their capacity. The ensuing landscape is what is referred to as "contamination," buildings out of sync with the historic landscape (Figure 2.2).

Here, the Office finds itself in the middle of the tension between the centralized political structure of state socialism, and the neoliberal rationality of entrepreneurial self-care, so much so that the Office is more or less stranded. The global regime of heritage expects a well-maintained heritage cityscape as the moral status of the subject, which ultimately is the Office in Trinidad, rather than the Cuban state. As I describe later, the Cuban state aligned itself with UNESCO as the overseer of the regime when news reported that Trinidad's heritage was in danger.

### *Big Agenda, Scarce Resources*

How do people plan for the future when the only thing you can be sure of is prolonged uncertainty? How does planning materialize when the economic or political basis cannot be reliable? I intended to explore these questions to shed light on the material state of urban space in late socialist Cuba, especially in the boosted tourism economy. The Special Period in Time of Peace set off by the collapse of the Soviet bloc in the late 1980s has brought on unspecified period of austerity in all facets of Cuban life. Between 1989 and 1993, Cuba's GDP contracted by 40 % (Jatar-Hausmann 1989:46-7), and the everyday life of Cubans fell into an economy of scarcity of an unprecedented scale. The regime resorted to neoliberal measures beginning in the early 1990s that gradually eroded socialist promises. For the research questions that I brought with me to the Office, I sought some answers in the form of a master plan. Under the Technical Office, there is the Master Plan Group, to which I turned and asked if I could take a look at the master plan. They told me that the staff is working on it, and it will be ready soon. I asked them several times, until I felt uncomfortable that I may be jeopardizing my position in the Office as a visiting researcher. Supposedly, once a master plan existed, as Alicia García confirmed with me. Throughout my fieldwork, however, the updated plan never became available. My "colleagues"<sup>15</sup> in the Applied Research Group laughed at my futile attempt to obtain the master plan. As with other things in Cuba, people are weary of waiting—waiting for the ration distribution, waiting in line for the sale of a specific item, waiting for the bus, and so on. In some cases, the wait is not rewarded or is never-ending, as the temporality of the Special Period is often illustrated to be (Weinreb 2009:73, Quiroga 2005:3-5, Settle 2008). My colleagues knew very well that planning for a long term was a near-impossible task, and that the

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<sup>15</sup> As I was not employed by the Office nor involved in their work in a substantive manner, the staff members in the Applied Research Group are not exactly my colleagues. Nevertheless, as I spent most of the time with them in their office, they regarded me as a colleague in spirit. Hereafter, I will call them colleagues without the quotation marks.

simulation of master-planning was more important than the end product.<sup>16</sup> The wait for the master plan, it turns out, was one of these cases. Nobody expected the master plan to be finalized at any moment. Small-scale research projects were conducted here and there, and the Master Plan Group gladly gave me access to such electronic documents as a socioeconomic study of the local population.

If not a multi-year master plan, the Office's planning seemed to function on an annual basis instead. I was presented with the *plan de obras* [work plan], a list of tasks to be accomplished in the calendar year. The yearly lists that I acquired contain renovation of houses in certain neighborhoods, repair of cobblestone streets, façade painting of certain blocks, and some isolated restoration work in the Sugar Mill Valley. They are no more than itemized agenda without detailed description, let alone a statement of an overall vision. I was not able to find out the exact procedure in which these plans were made, and the list contained no financial information. In fact, I was unable to obtain information on the financial scheme of the Office, as it is considered off-limits to foreigners, and perhaps to most staff members as well. In addition to the annual work plan, some restoration works are realized in an impromptu manner. This was the case when the municipal government suddenly came up with a budget to replace all the decorative urns in the Plaza Mayor in time to receive important guests from Havana. The Office executed the replacement with its own trained workers, but it was work outside of the Office's annual plan.

For some unknown reason, the Office's payroll with pay scale figures was made available to me. The highest monthly base wage was 500 pesos (approx. 17.5 CUC or 18.9 USD), and the lowest was 225 pesos (approx. 7.9 CUC or 8.5 USD), according to the document. Though these figures represent typical state employment salaries in Cuba, income difference with people who run private businesses is substantial. Considering the possible income for a family who runs a room-renting service for tourists could reach 500 CUC (approx. 540 USD), and 4 rolls of toilet paper cost about 1.2 USD, the state salary is not considered viable by many. Unable to survive on their peso salary, the staff members of the Office of Conservation often take up a second job (illegally, as a state employee is prohibited from having a side job) that may earn income in hard currency, often in tourism or tourism-derived industries. One secretary made lace products—one of Trinidad's signature crafts—at home, and supplemented her Office salary by selling them through a vendor in the street market. One staff member sold paintings, and yet another helped a friend's room-renting business.<sup>17</sup> The employment at the Office of Conservation is the “real” job, for it is the official

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<sup>16</sup> Verdery (1996) discusses the economy of shortage in the former Socialist nations, whereby the logic of production was to accumulate means of production in the center in order to amass the capacity to redistribute, rather than to optimize profit in the case of capitalist economy. In socialist economy, then, the end product is not the ultimate cause of production, as is the case with the master plan at the Office. The master plan is different, however, in that it is not an industrial product to be consumed, but a bureaucratic planning for which materials necessary are not things but information. All the same, the lack of command over information suggests a rather disadvantaged position in the political system.

<sup>17</sup> This is doubly prohibited, for a Cuban cannot privately hire another Cuban. This regulation was revised in April 2011.

occupation and for the professional staff, it is the career they are qualified to do. In Trinidad, “*la Oficina*” (the Office) refers to the Office of Conservation, and is an institution that is held in high regard, as local residents are proud of the World Heritage status of the city. For many, working for the preservation of the World Heritage constitutes personal and professional fulfillment, to apply expertise in architecture, law, economics, history, sociology, archaeology, philology, design, and so forth, and to dedicate one’s labor to a globally recognized cause. In addition, and importantly, a state employment provides access to resources that are not offered to a private citizen or are difficult to obtain. The use of computer, the Internet, and email is a privilege in Cuba that the Office provides to its staff albeit with close oversight. One colleague contemplated over quitting the Office to pursue full-time painting and cartooning independently; he eventually decided against it, explaining to me that the Office presented possibilities that he cannot afford by himself, such as the publication of cartoons, and access to email and the Internet. The “benefits” of the employment outweighs considerably the nominal salary in late socialist Cuba.

In the double economy of peso and hard currency or CUC, Cuban professionals often abandon their state employment for more lucrative businesses, legitimate or not. One finds a former university professor running errands for his room-renting business, or a former high school teacher working as a driver. The neoliberal reform of the 1990s has reordered values of labor (Hernández-Reguant 2004), such that the professionals working for the state are placed lower in the economic ladder. The dignity of working for the socialist state, and for one’s career has eroded quickly. Since the Office’s commercial license was revoked, it is much like the Office itself lost its “second” job in the tourism market. The limited budget allows little to be accomplished in the name of preservation, and new private construction with the tourism revenue gets out of control in the eyes of the Office, causing the staff to be aggravated. So the professional fulfillment, too, is affected by the economic reforms. With the relative decline in the economic compensation, the social status of the state employment seems to be barely upheld, if at all. In fact, I have seen the flight of a few staff members who sought opportunities abroad, mostly through marrying a foreigner, and at times by acquiring a scholarship to study abroad. The Office’s stunted capacity to perform its mandates—its lack of master plan, loss of commercial license, inability to control the evolving cityscape—manifests in the turnover of the staff, in the side jobs the employees engage in, and in the physical environment of the city.

### *Foreign investment*

Within the historic center, certain restoration works can be sited. There are the neighborhoods of Tres Cruces and Santa Ana, each of which constitutes a Spanish-funded project. The work in these areas focuses on the houses of lower-income residents, to adapt the historic structures to the contemporary needs without changing the appearance. The neighborhoods are commemorated with plaques indicating the agencies involved in the projects. The Office of Conservation is the executing agency in both cases. Here, I want to focus, however, on another development in the historic center that also involves foreign investment; that of isolated incidents of restoration

work. While I followed the ongoing restoration works of the Office, I noticed there were other individual houses being restored that are not mentioned in the Office documents. Neither are they referred to as “contamination” by the Office staff. “Contamination” is when the renovation or new addition to the existing structure violates the building code, or more loosely, when the end product visually disturbs the overall appearance of the street. The isolated houses that are fixed up outside of the Office’s enterprise are rather prominent structures, and are restored to their historic beauty; an accomplishment that the Office may dream of.



Figure 2.3 House being remodeled by private foreign investment. Photo by Maki Tanaka.

These individual houses are remodeled independently by foreigners who are married to or are in relationship with Cubans. Since the properties cannot be sold to a foreign individual, they acquire a house in Cuba through their spouse,<sup>18</sup> and then renovate it to their taste under the name of the spouse. Trinidad attracts visitors, and visitors kindle relationships with locals; their admiration of Trinidad’s architecture prompts desire to possess, just as affection for people may do so. According to a colleague, this suggests a black market gentrification, in which the underground housing market may be welcoming foreign investors while pushing away local residents. From my observation with colleagues, I counted three cases of such individual remodeling by “foreign investment,” two of which belong to the same Italian male, with two female “spouses” in Trinidad (see Figure 2.3). While I heard the Office staff praise the newly remodeled structure and I, too, appreciated the aesthetics, there is an eerie colonial resonance to this development, as the private outside forces reshape the built environment in Trinidad. It is not by necessity that these houses are remodeled,

<sup>18</sup> There is no official housing market, as houses are “swapped” (*permutarse*) rather than bought and sold. The practice of real estate sales involving monetary exchange is strictly in the informal economy.

as largely in the case of “contamination,” where family needs can no longer be accommodated by old structures. The landscape of Trinidad is marking Cuba’s neoliberal reform as well, welcoming international private investment. It is also a representation of the lack of control on the part of the Office of Conservation, as piecemeal, haphazard investment crops up within the historic center, whether it conforms to or violates the broad concept of preservation defined by the Office. In a sense, the willingness to control the ever-shifting cityscape in a stasis is what Boyer calls the “city as a work of art,” a backward-looking and elitist gesture to confine the urban milieu in a “bounded frame” (Boyer 1994:33). The colonial overtone of the city’s remaking adds another layer to this elitist essentializing aesthetics.

### *City without an architect*

What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located. (UNESCO website)<sup>19</sup>

The World Heritage scheme of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a global project. It began with the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. The Convention emerged out of an international campaign to save the Abu Simbel temples in Egypt in 1959 from the construction of Aswan High Dam, and it advocates universality—heritage that belongs to humanity collectively and for which we as “mankind as a whole” are responsible. Yet, this is the extent to which the “global” persists. In a rather utopian rhetoric of UNESCO, “it is essential for this purpose to adopt new provisions in the form of a convention establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, organized on a permanent basis and in accordance with modern scientific methods” (UNESCO 1972), humanity seems to jointly share the task of conservation. Nevertheless, it is an *international* scheme in which the nation-state is the key actor; the nation-state, or the State Party nominates the site within their territory to be included in the World Heritage List, and the nation-state is responsible for its preservation. Article 7 of the Convention states: “For the purpose of this Convention, international protection of the world cultural and natural heritage shall be understood to mean the establishment of *a system of international co-operation and assistance designed to support States Parties* to the Convention in their efforts to conserve and identify that heritage” (UNESCO 1972, italics added). Further more, local governments and agencies within the country specifically bear the task of management of such sites while the entire population of the world is assumed to be consumers of such heritage. As different scales are at work under the name of humanity, certain operational issues arise.

Trinidad’s residents consider their architectural heritage as global as well as local, and the Office of Conservation considers itself as the appropriate steward for the preservation of Trinidad’s heritage that demands locally-embedded knowledge of

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<sup>19</sup> “About World Heritage” <http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>.

construction practices. Indeed, their understanding of the very particular forms and history of cityscape in Trinidad makes them the most important experts capable of safeguarding the global heritage. This stance is in compliance with what UNESCO envisions the system of World Heritage to be where the List of World Heritage Sites is global, and their management remains local. Thus, Trinidad's Office takes full responsibility for the humanity's patrimony and consequently solely suffers the frustration of not being able to do so. As stated in the Convention, UNESCO "encourages" the nation-states to protect the heritage, and offers technical assistance and training, but leaves out its financial responsibility. The Office sees its role in the global scheme of World Heritage, although the resources they can tap on are more local than they would hope them to be. It is a neoliberal sensibility in that the local feels the full moral weight of the global heritage, yet rather than blaming the global forces that constructed the situation, it takes pride in managing its own site which increasingly involves capitalist maneuvers.

UNESCO's offer of technical assistance, therefore, is not what is wanting in Trinidad. The staff members of the Office call their cityscape "city without an architect" to refer to their vernacular quality even when they discuss mansions of prominent dwellers. The houses in Trinidad are works of "master builders" (alarifes). The meticulous research that has been done so far, primarily by the three "pioneers," has revealed that some well-known architects (e.g. Guillermo Hagner) and muralists (e.g. Daniel Dalaglio) on the island may have directly designed and worked on some important houses in Trinidad, but without definite positive evidence (García Santana 2004). Trinidad houses are mostly works of unknown artisans, its architecture a result of a particular evolution. The vernacular style specific to Trinidad cannot be deciphered without the knowledge of its climate for local adaptations, environmental conditions from which the building materials are drawn, specific topography, economic and cultural history that explains the imported goods used in the houses and architectural influences. For example, the Office of Conservations' periodical is named *Tornapunta*, after the specific style of eaves developed in the 18th century and found mostly in Trinidad, representing regional distinctiveness.

One must note the somewhat patronizing subtext of UNESCO's scheme. Explaining the programs to train professionals and to catalogue preservation techniques and policies from around the world, Diane Barthel points out that UNESCO and its related organization International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, established in 1965), among other similar international agencies, create a transnational class of professional preservationists, who "may and frequently do find themselves at odds with the preservation practices and policies (or lack thereof) in specific nation-states" (Barthel 1996:143). Michael Di Giovine claims that the World Heritage scheme is designed to isolate and elevate local sites to universal properties, with UNESCO as the ultimate authority to name, control, and perpetuate the sites. Especially with regards to limited funds that the World Heritage sites can apply for, Di Giovine states "it positions UNESCO as a benevolent sovereign with monetary might in juxtaposition with a needy State-Party as a sort-of vassal entity" (Di Giovine 2008:317). Along with Musitelli's similar point about the hierarchy of scales mentioned earlier (Musitelli

2002:328), we see that UNESCO's Convention confirms this aspect in its assumptions: "protection of this heritage at the national level often remains incomplete because of the scale of the resources which it requires and of the insufficient economic, scientific, and technological resources of the country where the property to be protected is situated" (UNESCO 1972). Without the global scheme of World Heritage, mankind's mutual heritage may fall into disrepair. Given the fact that most resources devised through the UNESCO World Heritage scheme are technically oriented, such as workshops for preservation professionals and diagnosis with ICOMOS delegates, this amounts to discrediting the technical competence of individual state-party to safeguard its heritage material on their own. And more importantly, it does not heed the financial situations in which the preservation offices find themselves. Thus these offices are expected to come up with resources independently, if the state does not provide enough. In current Cuba, where more agencies are disconnected from the centralized state system, the budgeted Office of Conservation epitomizes the late socialist in-between-ness.

Illustrating the authority of UNESCO and the sense that the local control is eluding over their own heritage, Trinidad was featured in an article in *Granma* (national newspaper) in February, 2008, titled "Trinidad, patrimonio en peligro" [Trinidad, heritage in danger]. The article focuses on the violation of the building regulations committed by residents who are "not patient or conscious," and cites the Director of the Office of Conservation ensuring that the city authorities have prioritized the problem lest the "category of World Heritage be taken away" (García 2008). In April, the UNESCO Regional Director, Herman van Hooff, and the Havana City Historian, Eusebio Leal visited Trinidad, purportedly inspecting the conditions of the heritage site. These events triggered anxiety in Trinidad, especially within the Office of Conservation, that the status of UNESCO World Heritage may be en route to be revoked. This fear underlies the global regime of the World Heritage, and the awareness of concerned residents that preservation needs to be up to the "universal" standard. Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley remains on the World Heritage List, and is not incorporated in the "World Heritage in Danger" list. Nevertheless, in these instances Trinitarios are reminded that their conduct over heritage preservation is watched from "above"—the global level.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the fact that the Havana City Historian came to inspect with the UNESCO representative implies that the Cuban state, represented by the Office of the City Historian of Havana (which is directly affiliated to the Council of State), identified itself as the overseer of heritage in the global regime, rather than the one to be disciplined.

Vernacular and artisanal character of Trinidad's architecture signifies that it occupies a position outside of modern professionalism. Theoretically, it was built by artisans, and it can be maintained and restored by artisans. Modern institutions, of course, demand certain professional frameworks, and the Office employs lawyers and architects, among other professionals, to outline their duties. The application of universal professionalism is a modern practice that heritage preservation of Trinidad's

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<sup>20</sup> There have been two sites which were "delisted" from the World Heritage list. Arabian Oryx Sanctuary in Oman was removed from the list in 2007, and Dresden Elbe Valley in Germany in 2009.

historic built environment engages in according to today's construction regulations. The Office of Conservation is an entity established by a national decree, as well as an agent in the global regime of heritage. The form of architectural heritage, nevertheless, falls into the realm of the locally specific. Trinidad is a city without an architect, and that is the value of this city, as one of the pioneers described. Another pioneer called it an ecological city, explaining the way the cobble stone streets are formed, slightly sloping toward the middle, so that the rain water collects and naturally drains to the lower area. According to these pioneers, the historically accumulated wisdom that forms the cityscape is organic and unique, thus worth preserving and resisting change. In their view, then, it does not take the global experts to validate Trinidad's universal value, in a rather hierarchical project, but the intrinsic value of Trinidad catapulted itself to the world stage. Locally embedded knowledge, necessary for the actual preservation and restoration works, may not be properly situated in the global (and "universal") framework of expertise, while the general condition of unevenly distributed resources in the world is glossed over as a given in UNESCO's assumptions.

Then again, this deeply-local, vernacular knowledge, in tension with the universal value, legitimizes the Office's and their local staff's being neoliberal subjects. It is up to them to take care of the local heritage cityscape for only they have the "ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions" (Brown 2006:694). While the regime configures a universally desired landscape of heritage, the diversity of culture to be protected imposes the burden of the work to be done on the locals. In a way, the proud discourse of the vernacular in Trinidad becomes a neoliberal talk of the disciplined subject. Further, the regime of heritage finds intrinsic value in each object to be preserved, such that heritage cannot but be saved.

Once I became fascinated by the production of images that happens in the historic center every day, through cameras of tourists. There is no manner of counting the number of digital (and perhaps to a lesser extent, film) images produced in any given day that take Trinidad's cityscape as their object, yet it must be an overwhelming sum. It contributes to an overall image production of the site, which the Office is a large part and plays an important role through its publications. Tourism industry, without doubt, circulates by far most images and with furthest reach, by way of postcards, photo souvenir books, brochures, and websites. These images control and condition tourists' eyes in seeing Trinidad to find what to look (Urry 2002). From my brief survey of tourist photos of Trinidad posted online, the images mostly exclude the modern elements that the Office tends to shy away from, and tourists themselves, unless they are inscribing themselves onto the image. The result is an aesthetic that represents Trinidad as a timeless Other, reinforcing the broader circulation of tourist images of Trinidad, not unlike how numerous other Third World or countryside destinations are represented. This is one of the ways in which heritage on display serves present purposes. In an attempt to disrupt this trope, I presented a talk hosted by the Office to discuss other possibilities of images of Trinidad. Presented by my pictures of Trinidad that contained trashcans overflowing with garbage, a group of tourists clustering around in the Main Plaza, Trinidad street vendors flocking around these tourists, and modern architecture, the Office staff members who attended the talk were mildly scandalized

and immediately began talking about the “problem” of such unfavorable aspects of the city. My “problem” was the uniform image production; their concern was how not to fall out of that image. Disciplining of the heritage professionals as well as tourists is an ongoing process. In some ways, heritage preservation within the World Heritage scheme is maintaining and reproducing the visual aesthetics for the global elite. From a local perspective, this work leads those engaged in heritage preservation to sharing such values and possibly joining the elite themselves.

### *Intellectual Center*

What does the Office of Conservation actually *do*, then? If the cityscape attests to the limited capacity of the Office to restore, I point to the significance of knowledge production that it engages in. To be sure, as the steward of the physical form of heritage, the Office staff voice their concern that the form they hold as ideal has not materialized, as they watch other agents contribute to the changing landscape. Yet the Office has a crucial role in maintaining Trinidad’s identity of the World Heritage site, by being the official safeguarding institution, and by serving as a knowledge clearing house and production center. As chapter five deals more in detail, the Office hosts a number of events throughout the year to showcase local arts and crafts in an effort to support and promote local cultural production, or intangible heritage. Through the publication of *Tornapunta*, twice a year, the Office makes its learned presence known. The journal features local personalities, historical narratives, historic images, and in-depth description and analysis of Office’s undertakings. The multi-color periodical is printed in Spain, and seeks to reach broader audiences than its earlier incarnation, *Jurabaina*. The 32-page *Tornapunta* features more research articles than *Jurabaina*, more photos, and advertisements (of different departments of the Office, not in a commercial sense), in a manner reminiscent of *Opus Habana* (the very popular full-color 65+ page magazine published and sold by the City Historian’s Office of Havana). Although *Tornapunta* may not be sold for profit, its presentation is on a par with the “international” standard and its presence symbolizes the intellectual endeavor of the Office. More irregularly, the Office engages in publications for educating the public about Trinidad’s heritage and history, one of which is *Volver a Trinidad*, a cartoon book published in 2008 by the Office (Morales Izquierdo 2008). The author, Ramsés Morales Izquierdo, part of the Office’s workforce, tells the story of two young adults who discover the value of the city through their school assignment. These efforts come from the creative forces of the Office of Conservation, and constitute the discursive construction of heritage in Trinidad.

In this section, among these activities, I focus on the Office’s annual archaeology workshop as an illustration of the Office as an intellectual center of Trinidad. The annual Archaeology Workshop, or Industrial Archaeology Workshop “Sugar Mill Valley” (Taller de Arqueología Industrial “Valle de los Ingenios”) takes place in the said valley to investigate the remnants of the sugar industry that flourished in the 19th century, and has been organized by the Office of Conservation yearly since 2000 to gather Cuban and international (mainly Latin American) archaeologists, restoration specialists, such as muralists, historians, and so forth. They register to

participate in advance (at no cost), and are accommodated at the Office facility for the duration of the workshop, a week or so. Basically, they participate in the excavation, and exchange opinions while they are at it, but not much else goes on—no lecture, no training, but just intensive excavation. It is not a training session, since they are required to take part in the ongoing archaeological investigation, and it is not an academic exchange, since they are more in the field excavating than analyzing the findings together. It is a professional collaboration and solidarity gathering, for they share the passion of delving into the history, and enjoy the occasion of networking with each other. It also establishes Trinidad as an important site of archaeological and historical research and attracts domestic and international interest through personal involvement. The event fosters engagement with Trinidad outside of the locale, and keeps the site in the international circuit.

The annual Archaeology Workshop takes place in the Sugar Mill Valley every year, as the workshop emerged as a way to ascertain the owners of one refinery, the San Isidro de los Destiladeros in 2000.<sup>21</sup> The objectives of the workshop are to examine the compounds of sugar mills in the Valley, to recuperate sites as architectural and archaeological models of sugar production in the area in its peak (ca. 1820-1850), and to promote exchange of experiences regarding archaeological study of sugar industry heritage.

In 2008, the Archaeology Workshop was held from March 3rd to 14th at a site within the tourist park “El Cubano,” run by the tourism enterprise of the Cuban armed forces, Gaviota. I went with the participants who were brought to the site in two trucks, about 3 miles from the city of Trinidad. El Cubano is a natural park that mainly features a trail, a waterfall, and a restaurant. Behind the restaurant was the excavation site of this workshop, where they had earlier found remnants of a mansion. This workshop was the first attempt to excavate the location, and they were unfolding the site day by day, starting from 8:00 am and working until 4:00 pm. About 40 participants from 18 to 50 years of age (estimated by appearances), both men and women worked in small groups scattered over the site. I walked around with Teresita Angelbello, one of the “pioneers” and an indefatigable student of the Sugar Mill Valley, who enthusiastically explained to me the ongoing analysis and speculation about the site. Though there remained much corroboration to be done, the archaeologists were suggesting that the house was burned down by *mambíses* (Cuban independence soldiers who fought against Spaniards in the 19th century). While the inhabitants at the time probably were able to rescue important belongings before the house fell down, the arson was complete, for the whole house was destroyed and was covered with soil. Trees were growing from what used to be walls, and excavation involved removing roots and big pieces of stone from the remaining structure. The process of excavation gradually revealed walls of the house, and window openings were getting deciphered. The wall painting uncovered indicated that the house was probably built around the 1800s to the 1810s. The researchers were not sure what the house was called, and thus expected a long process of verifying who this house may have belonged to, and what it served for.

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<sup>21</sup> Personal communication with the chief archaeologist of the Office of Conservation.

Teresita went around teaching people what the details they were uncovering might mean. “Younger generations do not know much yet,” she said. Accomplished archaeologists, according to Teresita, who work on other regions and other time periods, may not know enough to investigate the Sugar Mill Valley, either. The enthusiasm of Teresita, ailing from Parkinson’s disease, is also about handing down her work for continuation. She envisions what might be called indigenous archaeology, unearthing of history by Trinitarios, who can carry on the wealth of knowledge from previous generations. Knowing Trinidad takes living in Trinidad, dedicating oneself to Trinidad, so the workshop may promote collaboration among archaeologists around Cuba, but the fundamental work has to be Trinitarios’ responsibility. Teresita’s implication that the hub of knowledge about Trinidad must reside in Trinidad is not simply about controlling the discourse, but illustrates the depth of established intellectual legacy, and the weight of carrying it forward. There are and have been a number of intellectuals within Trinidad and without, who dedicate their work to the city’s history and tradition; Teresita gives a particular nativist or localist bent to this configuration.

During lunch time, all the participants ate together the meal served by the restaurant, and then some chatted on the lawn; others took a well-deserved nap until 2 pm, when they resumed excavation. This was a socializing moment, and I got to talk with some of the participants. As mentioned before, archaeology is not an established university career in Cuba,<sup>22</sup> thus practicing archaeologists come from a variety of walks of life. Some are trained as archaeology technicians (*arqueólogo-técnicos*), some are muralists, and some have practiced archaeology professionally for years after studying history or other specialties. Yet more are just “helping out”; my colleagues who usually work on editing publications came for a day to expend manual labor. One of the days the crew included a North American tourist, who has a Cuban friend with an international marine archaeology career. The workshop was quite open-ended and welcoming, offering many opportunities for individuals to connect and communicate, while serious in its archaeological investigation.

Two senior figures of the excavation team were talking to the representatives of Gaviota on site, as to what needs to be done after the workshop. The site needed to be covered to seal from random trampling and weather, and they also suggested its tourism possibilities in the future. Clearly, the site was not strictly under the jurisdiction of the Office of Conservation. Gaviota managed the entire park of El Cubano, while the Office had the responsibility to oversee the heritage preservation of the larger region of the Sugar Mill Valley. Here again, the overlap of responsibilities and the Office’s anxiety of controlling heritage foreshadowed. Given the fact that main site of the Sugar Mill excavation continues to be the San Isidro de los Destiladeros, this Workshop was a possibly productive deviation from the norm, though outcomes are yet to be seen. At any rate, the workshop provides a prominent space for academic networking and exchange, with the actual site as only a backdrop for the gathering. The Office, as an organizing body, marks its place annually in the domestic and international circuit of

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<sup>22</sup> Many study history or philology, then begin excavating with practicing archaeologists.

knowledge production, by situating the Sugar Mill Valley in the regional archaeology-  
scape.

### *Conclusion*

The lack of resources and political clout has restricted the Office of Conservation's activities to less than optimal with regard to the physical landscape. Over the years, the Office lost its charismatic leader, and commercial license, and never gained legal means to enforce building codes in the historic center. The staff saw their economic compensation for the socially prestigious position shrink relative to the hard-currency sector. Consequently, the Office produces publications without being able to profit from them, leaves remodeling violations unregulated, and remains buried in the labor pains of a master plan while repairing cobble stones and painting house façades street by street. The Office's anxiety over the out-of-control building stock contrasts with the confidence of the haphazard "foreign investment." The Office attempts to live up to the expectations of the global regime of heritage, while their lack of control over cityscape frustrates them and causes anxiety that they might be slipping off the global hall of fame. Therefore, this anxiety stems from being a failing subject of, not being disciplined well in the global regime of heritage.

On the other hand, the Office traces its genealogy to the three young locals, whom I have called the pioneers, who came together to establish a systematic knowledge of Trinidad's architectural heritage. The Office founded the Trade School to organize the vernacular building and decorative arts skills and techniques, and has called Trinidad the "city without an architect." The result is valorization of distinct indigenous knowledge and celebration of the vernacular quality of the local building stock by disengaging it from a larger discourse of architectural history. By carving out a realm of specialized knowledge embedded in locality, the Office of Conservation has legitimated its status as the steward of World Heritage. The Office, then, is capable of and has largely practiced discursive control of Trinidad's heritage as a hub of knowledge production. The vernacular becomes the site of neoliberal legitimation, where the Office disciplines its entrepreneurial subjectivity, as well as the space possibly outside of the global regime of heritage. If we consider the vernacular to include the "contamination," which the Office currently does not, there is a potential force that criticizes the regime from outside.

Besides running the Annual Archaeology Workshop, some staff members of the Office of Conservation advise university-level students working on their theses about Trinidad, be they the legal aspect of heritage management, intangible heritage such as local crochet, or history of architectural details. The Office as an intellectual endeavor is also manifest in ex-employees building on their credential of working in the World Heritage preservation to advance their career outside of the Office, especially abroad. A number of Office staff members went abroad to pursue Master's degrees or other professional careers outside of Cuba, as such opportunities arrive for Trinidad's international visibility in the global heritage industry. Often they do not come back to work in Trinidad, which is more indicative of the general state of professionals in Cuba than dwindling commitment to Trinidad on the part of heritage professionals.

The Office of Conservation strives to maintain a “good” heritage cityscape according to the global regime of heritage, and is a willing subject in that vein. Nevertheless, as much as they cannot be an active entrepreneur to finance their cultural mandates, they are morally inadequate. In looking at late socialist Cuba, heritage preservation is an interesting practice in an apparently cultural realm, though regulated in (market-)economic terms. Neoliberal rationality seems to be relevant here without proclaiming as such.

## *Chapter Three*

### Three palaces: Heritage memories and practices in Trinidad, Cuba

The houses were collapsing and the hands of dirty speculators hastened the work of total annihilation, ripping off magnificent wood and ornament pieces to trade in faraway places...In the cruel course of time there will only remain some stones of our numerous things and few names among our compatriots. For those we will be judged by the future generations...

--Rafael Rodríguez Altunaga, Historian of Trinidad.<sup>1</sup>

Historic value of built environment seems to have been on Trinidad people's minds since the early 1900s—well before the nomination of the city as a national monument in 1944. In 1904, municipal ordinances prohibited demolition of some buildings within the city limits. This did not yield much in terms of actual physical preservation, but in the 1930s, local intellectuals and business leaders formed the Committee of Tourism and Action Pro-Trinidad (Comité de Turismo y Acción Pro-Trinidad), which eventually turned into the more vigorous Association Pro-Trinidad (Asociación Pro-Trinidad) in 1942. This group of local leaders, which included entrepreneurs, journalists, lawyers, teachers, and historians, was concerned as much about their affection for the region as about economics, and their effort mainly focused on converting Trinidad into an important tourist destination, to earn it the attention it deserved, and to earn money. Much of these intended goals were couched in the expression “resurgimiento de Trinidad” (resurgence of Trinidad) (de Lara Echemendía 1954), the consensus having been the prolonged recession of the city. The historian Rafael Rodríguez Altunaga praised in an essay the potential of Trinidad as a tourist destination though he lamented the loss of architectural gems the city had destroyed (see the epigraph above). These men were also well connected to the business and political leaders in Havana, as Trinitario Teodoro de Lara Echemendía worked in Havana to promote his hometown and, the City Historian of Havana, Emilio Roig de Leuschenring wrote about Trinidad from the 1920s to the 1940s. In addition to promoting the natural settings of the mountain and the beach, they were eager to publicizing the rich local traditions of music, dance and crafts, as well as the architectural environment, and embarked on publicity appeals (Hernández de Zayas 1992, de Lara Echemendía 1954). Association Pro-Trinidad's undertaking resulted in several feature articles in magazines, and the

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<sup>1</sup> Sus casonas se derruían y la mano de sórdidos especuladores precipitaba la obra de su aniquilamiento total arrancando magníficas maderas y piezas de ornamentación para negociar en tierras extrañas...De la marcha cruel de los tiempos no nos quedarán más que unas piedras del montón de nuestras cosas y unos poquísimos nombres de entre la muchedumbre de nuestros coterráneos. Por ellas y por ellos nos juzgarán las generaciones futuras... (Rodríguez Altunaga 1954:50).

coordination and hosting of national conventions in Trinidad. There seems to have been no qualms about provoking what could be deemed as an “invasion” or a “contamination” by outsiders that might be adverse to historic preservation. Nor was any concern voiced that commercialization may harm natural and cultural assets regarded as invaluable. Rather, it was believed that tourism was necessary in order to protect and preserve what resources Trinidad had. The “resurgence of Trinidad” was unavoidably economically geared. Thus the nomination of Trinidad as National Monument in 1944 came as a consequence of the concerted promotion of Trinidad as a worthwhile place to visit.

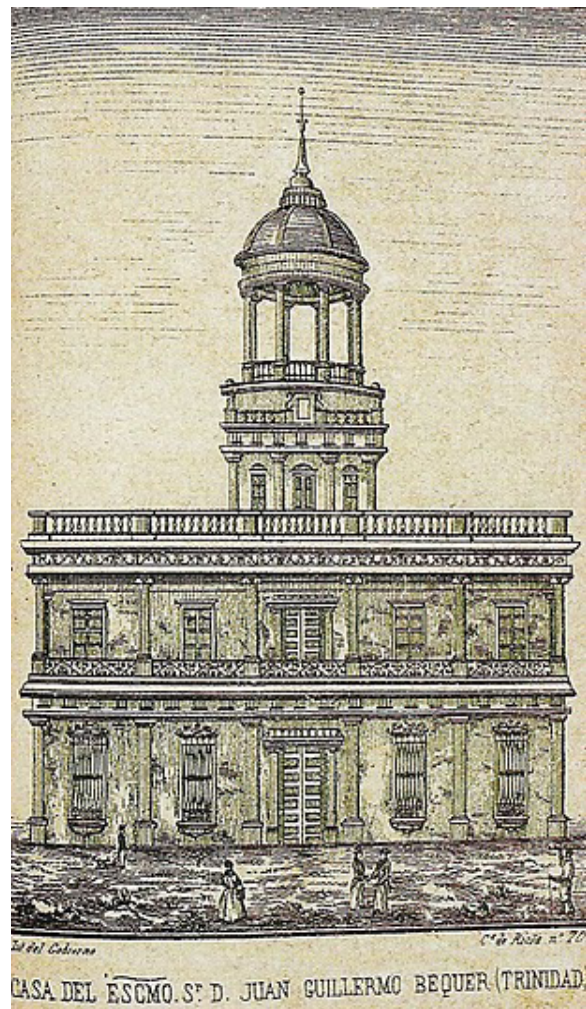
In this chapter, I draw on stories of three significant houses, the erection of which marked Trinidad’s prosperity in the early to mid-19th century, to consider varied manifestations of heritage preservation in this city. These are specific landscapes brought about through the processes of heritage practices with different intentions and interests, and with some unintended courses of events. The histories and the current state of three palaces attest to the historic and geographical articulations of Trinidad as a place. Each palace also embodies the modernity of Trinidad in a specific time period. The landscape of Trinidad, in the end, suggests the private and surreptitious nature of the city. Modernity here does not entail modernism as an architectural aesthetic or movement, which in Cuba did not really take off until the mid-1920s (Rodríguez 2000:xiii). The architecture with which this chapter deals, and the overall townscape of Trinidad as a World Heritage site are noteworthy precisely for their pre-modernist forms and aesthetics. Rather, modernity here refers to a wider, more general sense of moving forward, being in charge of that forward movement, of attempting to make home the ever-changing modern life, or tumultuous tides of modernisms (Berman 1982), some of which may have had to do with breaking away with the tradition, others with explicitly fulfilling the international expectation of the modern state. It is not the modernity of grand narrative and universal history, but a structure of feeling (Williams 1977) that is ephemeral but largely shared and based on the social and cultural reality of the time.

#### *Palacio Béquer: A negative heritage*

I learned about *Palacio Béquer* (Figure 3.1) from reading the history of Trinidad; I had already been to the lot without knowing what it was supposed to be. My research focused on the current activities of the Office of Conservation of Trinidad, and I visited the *Escuela de Oficios* (trade school) run by the Office to find out about training restoration technicians. The school is located close to the main plaza, home to many early prominent figures of the city, is surrounded by high walls, and has an ostentatious gate. I went to interview a teacher and view the school, which was obviously a renovated ruin, a one-story makeshift structure of classrooms surrounding a large courtyard. The teacher I interviewed did not mention what the building had been before. He explained to me different programs they have, discussed their equipment and facilities or lack thereof, and showed me some samples of students’ work. My thoughts did not wander over the question of what place the premises occupied in history; after

all, Trinidad is a landscape of decay—dotted with noticeable ruins, and this was just another one of them.

In talking about vanishing heritage, or Trinidad’s crumbling landscape, the concerned persons in Trinidad always refer to *Palacio Béquer*, or Béquer Palace (named after a prominent 19th century merchant from the U.S. by the name of Juan Guillermo Baker). It was a luxurious mansion built around 1831, at the height of the sugar economy in the area, allegedly using an Italian architect and a North American construction company. At the time, it was considered an example of the most outstanding architecture in the country, and made news across the island.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 3.1** Palacio Béquer. Source: The Office of Conservation of Trinidad.

It was a two-story neoclassical building with a central cupola, the height of which overwhelmed the surrounding. Béquer made his fortune in the slave trade, which

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<sup>2</sup> García Santana (2004:53) cites a contemporary article published in *Revista Bimestre Cubana* that informs about the new construction of the palace.

constituted one of the most important sources of Trinidad's cityscape. Nevertheless, its decline was rapid. After Juan Béquer passed away in 1860, when the region had already gone into a serious recession, the heirs gave up the property in 1873 to a mercantile society to which they were in significant debt. When it was resold in 1909, the new owner asked for a permission to demolish the mansion. The 1904 ordinances should have prohibited the demolition, but it permitted exceptions when the structure was in an insecure state, and on the condition that a new building would be built in its stead. The appeal asked just that; that the palace was in an unsafe condition, and the lot was to be divided to accommodate two new homes. Alarmed by this request, one of the local leaders, Santurnino Sánchez Iznaga, petitioned the City Hall to bar what he saw as thoughtless destruction. His petition was unheeded, and the City Hall authorized the demolition in 1913. The owners then reneged on the promise to build new houses, arguing that they had run out of funds (García Santana 2004:52-55).

Despite the presence of the ordinance against demolition within the historic center, this incident demonstrates that it was a time before the protection of historic buildings became an uncontested issue, and when the new probably carried more cachet than the old. Cuba had gained independence in 1902, and was beginning its Republican era. Breaking with the past was more important than carrying on the legacy of the immediate past. Rather than refurbishing the existing structure, the owners considered it more lucrative to dismantle and sell what was left piece by piece. The proposed new houses never were to be; the lot stood empty for the coming decades, reflecting the town's economy. In the boom and bust of industrial capitalism of the late 19th and the early 20th century, Palacio Béquer—erect and inhabited for thirty-plus years—exemplified the height of sugar economy based on slave labor. Following the boom in the early 19th century, in the Trinidad region, the sugar industry failed to evolve into mechanized production, as it was happening elsewhere on the island and in other sugar-producing regions of the world.

In the early 20th century, then, there was a budding consciousness of preservation in Trinidad that had to do with the perceived intrinsic value of the built environment. The appeal of the conscious elite did not make an impact, as the society at large was possibly more concerned with the stagnant economy and the forward-looking beginning of the Republic (1902-). The competition between restoration and demolition skewed towards cherishing the new and the progressive. By then, Trinidad had already gone through the rise and crash of the local economy—the maelstrom of creative destruction of the industrial modernity (Berman 1982).

Trinidad's non-inheritance of Palacio Béquer represents the stalled effort of preservation that keeps reminding Trinitarios of the consequence of ignorance and indifference. It also stands literally as an empty reference to Trinidad's opulence in the past. In publications concerning the history of Trinidad, one finds repeatedly illustrations of Palacio Béquer; never a photograph, but pristine images of the architectural gem in print or oil paint. It is a phantasmagoric image that haunts the consciousness of Trinitarios, an image of what was in the past, and what could have been today. It is haunting, too, since today's Trinidad is scattered with crumbling buildings that await unscheduled restoration work. The emptiness of the lot and the

images of the mansion that recur in publications overlap with the general sense of decline in post-Socialist Cuba, and point to the unaccomplished promise of the Cuban Revolution. It is doubly poignant that allegedly one of the most important mansions on the island has been erased from Trinidad's landscape, and the political position of Trinidad has become ever more precarious over time. Trinidad is celebrated on the tourist map, but it is just another town without much political consequence when it comes to the administrative map. Palacio Béquer is a negative heritage that lurks in the shadow of today's cityscape of Trinidad. It is only fitting, then, that the lot where the palace once stood now houses the trade school, where local youths learn the necessary skills for restoration of the historic buildings. The building lost in favor of the new now fosters techniques to restore the old. The haunting image of Palacio Béquer is a reminder that gone are the days not only of Trinidad's splendor, but of wealth accumulated through exploitation of human beings. Today, Trinidad's economy is in the preservation of past forms by the locally trained craftsmen, awkwardly embracing its colonial legacy.

*Palacio Cantero: Nostalgic modern*

One afternoon, I agreed to lend my digital camera and amateur photographic skills for a friend's granddaughter's premature *quinceñera*<sup>3</sup> photo-ops. My friend wanted it done before I left town to make the most of resources I had although her birthday was months after my departure. As a photogenic town, Trinidad is full of possible background settings for quinceñera images. My friend chose *Palacio Cantero*, or Cantero Palace for the special occasion (Figure 3.2). We ended up staying there for nearly two hours taking more than a hundred pictures at every corner of the palace. It was a bright day, as usual, and the contrast of the sun and shade made it difficult for me to adjust the camera setting. We took pictures against the fountain in the patio, a mirror in the entrance hall, in the old-fashioned kitchen, next to a set of wash bowl and pitcher, on the rooftop looking out the entire town, and more. The palace is home to the Municipal History Museum, and museum attendants let us in for free and gave us access to parts usually not allowed for visitors. That is, we were waived the one peso per head admission usually required for Cubans, while tourists paid two CUC to get in. We thoroughly enjoyed the charming quality of the setting—but it wasn't our concern to know the historic details of what might have happened in the mansion, how the mansion came into being, who the previous occupants were, or why it is a museum today. It was a mere background, a stage for the new adult.

Palacio Cantero, a carefully restored one-story mansion, was originally built in 1829, the same era as Palacio Béquer. It is an iconic building in Trinidad that boasts a watchtower that enables a spectacular view of the city, making it a must-see for tourists. The house stages a typical dwelling of a well-to-do family of the late 19th century, featuring architecture, furniture, decor, and other details. There are not too many descriptions in the museum, except for a few panels that explain who the Canteros were.

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<sup>3</sup> A girl's 15th birthday, a coming-of-age usually celebrated with picture taking with the girl dressed up and a party.

As one goes up the staircase to get to the tower, one passes souvenir shops set up by the government that offer music CDs, shot glasses, postcards, drinks, T-shirts, and so on, which are not specifically about the museum, but goods that you would find in any tourist destination in Cuba. Here one could pick up postcards of Santiago de Cuba, a guidebook on Mexico, Che Guevara T-shirts, bookmarks featuring Havana, shot glasses that bear “Varadero” on them, and Cuban flag fridge magnets made in China. What is represented at Palacio Cantero, then, is not a particular history of Trinidad or the mansion, but rather a non-specific “historic” attraction, a generic visual image of what the Trinidad upper class of the 19th century lived like for an aesthetic consumption.



**Figure 3.2** Palacio Cantero. Photo by Maki Tanaka.

Eighteen-twenty-nine was the year when the original owner’s sugar mill yielded the highest harvest in the world of the period. The mansion showed off Jose Mariano Borrell y Padrón’s wealth, furnished abundantly with luxurious material from Cuba and abroad. The large neoclassical structure boasts a spacious courtyard featuring a fountain

in the middle, and enclosed by long arched galleries. Upon inheriting the house, his son made elaborate additions, above all Daniel Dalaglio's colorful murals that embody the cultural sophistication of the Trinidad elite at the time.

The mural decorations of Palacio Cantero represent the most complete repertoire of the city's academic style and one of the most notable ones in Cuba. (García Santana 2004:202)<sup>4</sup>

Again, the remarkable edifice bears no architect's name, but it is considered to mark the pinnacle of Trinidad houses, a landscape of sugar-derived wealth. The mansion owes its current name to its last owner, who moved into his wife's house.

Prior to being converted into a museum and after it ended its role as a residence, Palacio Cantero served as an arts and crafts school, a tobacco warehouse, among others. The restoration of the mansion began in the 1970s, and the Museum of Municipal History opened in 1980. The literature does not clarify when the house came into the possession of the government, but the structure was never abandoned to a similar fate as that of Palacio Béquer. The restored building is presented as if it stood the challenge of time, representing uninterrupted history from the splendor of the colonial times. The 1968 Humberto Solás' film *Lucía*, however, reveals Palacio Cantero as an abandoned, ruinous estate, where lovers chase each other in a tryst that takes place in 1895. In the scene, the ceilings had caved in, the floors were covered with disorderly furniture and random timbers, the central courtyard was scattered with mounds of rubble. It was presumably soon after the movie was shot that the restoration of the house was planned and executed. The problematic of restoration, in the case of Palacio Cantero, is that it erases the history of restoring. The palace is brought back to its state in the colonial times without referring to the process and the politics of restoration of past forms of a particular period. The colonial is resurrected in socialist Cuba without being questioned.

As discussed previously in chapter two, the valorization of the past and the accompanying act of museumification emerged in the 1970s in Trinidad, pointing to the nascent country-wide interest in the heritage industry in the wake of the debacle of the 10-million ton sugar harvest. We may call this a modernism of nostalgia, or in Ananya Roy's term, nostalgias of the modern, a longing for the past, or tradition, which compares more stable than the shaky present. Roy warns about the trappings of nostalgia, since it calls upon utopic incarnations of tradition that glosses over past struggles against hegemonic values (Roy 2004). Further, conceptualizing heritage as formalization of nostalgia, she argues

Nostalgia as heritage serves a double function—on the one hand, it generates aesthetic icons of value, icons that add value, icons that revalorize and revitalize; on the other hand, through this aestheticization, it renders invisible the brutal mechanics of capitalist valuation. In this way,

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<sup>4</sup> Las decoraciones murales del palacio de Cantero representan el más completo repertorio de corte académico de la ciudad y uno de los más notables de Cuba.

nostalgia also magically resolves the problematic of change and transformation. (Roy 2004:65)

Heritage is a process of legitimization of the past through aestheticization and commoditization that seals other possibilities of remembering. In today's post-Soviet economy, it is unequivocally part of "capitalist valuation" that Roy points out. But longing for the past is an inextricable part of modernity, a manner in which the "modern" can be delineated against the "traditional." What does it mean, then, to put on display the bourgeois lifestyle of the bygone era in socialist Cuba? Does it legitimize the revolution through showing what it eliminated? Or, is it this act of historic representation as collective memory that dissolves the contemporary issue of classes? What does it do to articulate or not the differential positionalities of such a past?

Another museum, Museo Romántico, a few houses away from Palacio Cantero, faces the Plaza Mayor. It was restored and converted from Palacio Brunet (originally belonged to the first owner of Palacio Cantero) and opened as a museum in 1974. Both showcase the material wealth of sugar barons in a rather uncritical fashion. I argue that the 1970s nostalgia in Cuba, after the first momentum of the revolution had waned, pressed Cuba to turn to the preservation of the Spanish colonial history. This gesture served to demonstrate the responsibility of a modern and civilized state of which the international community was becoming increasingly aware. And Spanish colonialism was a safe resource to tap on, for it unlikely brought forth anyone's *personal* memory; as such, it allowed for an aesthetic formalization as icons of heritage. At the time of museum opening, the displayed colonial estates may have resonated with the population fleeing the revolution, the upper- and middle-class Cubans in disagreement with the direction which the new regime was heading, the number of whom amounted to more than 654,000 by 1971 (Gott 2004:212-214).<sup>5</sup> The museums also exhibit fine craftsmanship in colonial Cuba, which implicitly compare starkly with the Soviet-style mass-construction technique of the revolutionary brigades. The former served dwellings of the exclusive elite, revealing the hierarchy of classes, and the uneven income distribution at the time, whereas the latter intentionally abolished the distinction between the workers and the clients, guaranteeing housing for all and by all in the new Cuba.

Palacio Cantero, then, is a nostalgic recollection of a distant past—distant from the current revolution, distant from the ordinary citizens—that legitimizes the Spanish colonialism in an aestheticized representation. There is a conscious distancing that separates the past from the present, as if the present has nothing to do with the colonial past. In the post-Soviet context, I suspect that this distancing and flattening, severing relationship to the past and forgetting the hierarchy of classes of the earlier period also keeps us from recognizing the newly emerging social differentiations that we are witnessing today. In addition, it is not a particular historical examination, confronting

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<sup>5</sup> This is an estimate that added the numbers suggested by Gott (2004): 40,000 that left in 1959 and 1960, 80,000 in 1961, 70,000 in 1962, the 14,000 children sent in the Operation Peter Pan in the same years, and more than 260,000 Cubans who arrived in the U.S. under the "freedom flights" program agreed between the US and Cuban governments between 1965 and 1971.

the brutality that brought the splendor, or delving into the provenance of the house. Palacio Cantero is a package of an abstractly and aesthetically rendered past; a beautiful building and decor of preindustrial Cuba, to be consumed with contemporary paraphernalia of the tropical destination, such as rum, music, and cigars. The Cuban revolution, then, keeps hushed about the commoditization of the bourgeois past that its preceding nationalists fought so hard against, and about the changes that took place since the distant past. As Benjamin (1968) warned us, history is story-telling by the winners, as a particular vantage point can set the past in a perspective. The current Cuban leadership evokes teleological course of history from the independent fighters against the Spaniards, and legitimizes their power through their genealogy. And though Fidel Castro and his company may have once “blast[ed] a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history” (Benjamin 1968:263), the possibility of such a process for today seems sealed off in these museums. Yet, as an aesthetically-pleasing stage, allowing Cubans to enjoy their life cycle rituals and entertaining events (often hosted by the Office of Conservation, see chapter five), the museum is a locally accessible theme-park like space. To the extent that the formerly private and elite house is open to wide use by the public, there is a revolutionary remaking of history that cannot be simply glossed over as nostalgia.

*Palacio Iznaga: Unwanted commodity*

On the way to Palacio Cantero, one passes through a narrow street—width of which is compromised by scaffoldings that stretch out from one side. The scaffoldings hold up another mansion in town; centrally located, but without a sign, without a mention on tourist maps or in guidebooks. This is Palacio Iznaga (Figure 3.3), a crumbling structure that has been abandoned since the early 1990s. The lot is fenced with corrugated metal panels, with a gate staffed with a security guard facing the street usually busy with tourist traffic. All sides of the building have scaffolding, making it look like a construction site. There is no on-going construction, however. The only work being done is archaeological excavation by the Office of Conservation. Tourists pass by, occasionally taking pictures of the unknown building, but in most cases not paying particular attention to the house.

I had interviewed the chief of Archaeological Team at the Office and asked if I could see Palacio Iznaga. On the day David had told me he would be excavating there, I asked the guard for him, trying my best to look professional, rather than a random passer-by, and the guard let me in. David invited me in while his team worked on different tasks to reveal the life of former residents. The palace was obviously falling apart; walls were gone, the staircase was barely holding up, and the roof was collapsing. No furniture was in sight. From the main entrance, the square-shaped structure looked hollow without interior walls that had divided the living quarters and the inner courtyard. David cheerfully showed and explained to me what he and his team had discovered, mostly glass bottles and ceramic shards. They were not lamenting the sorry state of the mansion but rather were proud that they were rescuing what remained of it. I took a number of pictures while I was at the palace.



**Figure 3.3** Palacio Iznaga. Photo by Maki Tanaka.

When I got home, I downloaded the pictures and showed them to my hostess, Bárbara, a retired librarian with in-depth knowledge of local history. She was in awe, and immediately grew visibly emotional.

“It’s criminal, it’s a crime against humanity to let this happen.”

She showed me some pictures from around 1991 of the house, in perfect shape. I told her that I had thought it had been abandoned for half a century from the look of it. Then she related the story of the mansion to me. Descendants of the Iznaga family lived in the mansion until the early 1990s, when the government decided the structure was too precarious for living. Then the government took over the estate, shut it down, and left it at that. Without ventilation, with intense tropical humidity, it did not take long before the walls began collapsing. Bárbara confessed to me that she could not pass by the mansion for the pain it caused her.

“I avoid the street as much as possible. When I have to take it, I look away.”

I was taken aback a little by the impact my photos yielded on her, as she was clearly devastated with tears in her eyes. Architectural historian, Alicia García Santana also told me that she did the same. These are two older women, in their mid- to late-50s, a different generation from the young archaeologists who were excavating at Palacio Iznaga. The older generation, the generation of the “pioneers,” has seen the mansion as an inhabited house. For the younger ones, it was more likely that they recognized only the last stage of its demise that was already set in motion.

Palacio Iznaga is known to have been built by 1826. It belonged to Pedro José Iznaga y Borrell, the first husband of María Monserrate de Lara y Borrell, whose second husband left the name for Palacio Cantero. It is an enormous, full two-story structure facing three streets, with a large iron-fenced balcony embracing three sides. The mansion had always been in the hands of the Iznaga family until it became a municipal property in the 1990s. After the palace was shut down, there was a talk of the Office of Conservation looking for investors to convert it to a five-star hotel (Scarpaci 2005:215). In the tight economy of post-Soviet Cuba, restoration often cannot be funded for the sake of restoration. Restoring means utilizing for other purposes, namely tourism, and private capital is the source of restoration. Nevertheless, the abandonment of heritage for lack of resources is blamed on its official steward, that is, the Office of Conservation. In a circumstance like this, the ownership of heritage becomes a thorny and poignant issue.

Who takes care of heritage, for whom? Who owns this piece of “world” heritage? Who uses it and how? This could be called neoliberal modernity, where the role of the government shrinks, and the private capital is the dominant player while the local agent is blamed for its lack of action. Palacio Iznaga is a property in the age of post-Soviet Cuba, of the global regime of heritage. In neoliberal modernity, heritage awaits private investment in a crumbling state, already owned by the anonymous corporate capitalist force. Cuban heritage, then, is inevitably global heritage for it to survive today. The process of collapsing that we see in Palacio Iznaga is the failure to become a neoliberal subject, unable to take care of itself by navigating the market economy. The universal value attributed to it is activated only through private investment, coming from outside the island. Otherwise, the material remain of the history is left to oblivion, but the global regime of heritage keeps note of the moral landscape.

Instead, what is happening at Palacio Iznaga is excavation—digging into the history, unearthing material witnesses of the past. The Office of Conservation is reconstructing the mansion discursively, where it does have the hold on the reins (see chapter two). Discursive restoration is the terrain of local heritage, perhaps until the five-star hotel rewrites history in a shiny brochure. Even then, we see in the prolific intellectual production, and the memories that Palacio Iznaga evokes in Trinitarios’ minds, a compelling local claim to heritage. As much a reminder of the Office’s

inability to restore, Palacio Iznaga is yet to go through a global makeover, refusing to be part of “destination Trinidad,” and stays off the tourist map.

### *Trinidad in the world*

The three palaces with their varied histories embody multiple aspects of Trinidad and its contested state of heritage. They also elucidate different modes of modernity with regard to their relationship to the past. Palacio Béquer is an empty reminder of Trinidad’s prosperity in the past, vanished in the creative destruction of industrial modernity. Palacio Cantero attests to the exemplary representation of the past, of the internationally responsible state operating in the nostalgic modernity. The current state of Trinidad, however, may be best exemplified by Palacio Iznaga, losing ground in the neoliberal economy of the global heritage.

The stories of the three palaces may seem to symbolize the grandeur of Trinidad’s past, but I would be hesitant to concur. Trinidad is not a monumental landscape. Religious buildings—churches, convents—punctuate the cityscape, and plazas give certain serenity to the town. Yet, Trinidad features no monuments: no fortress, no governor’s palace, no revolutionary tower, no large statue in sight. The landscape is apolitical, in that power is not communicated by the enormity of edifices (except, perhaps, the sanatorium built in the 1940s by Fulgencio Batista in Topes de Collantes, 14 miles from the center of Trinidad). Trinidad has seen a sugar boom in the nineteenth century, but never yielded political clout nationally; rather, the nature of the economy preferred a low-profile existence behind material splendor. The rich were private individuals who made wealth off their sugar or slave trade, and were happy to be living sumptuously in a prosperous but backwater small town.<sup>6</sup> The slave trade especially was connected to contraband and involved business behind the back of Havana and Madrid. The Caribbean sea connected Trinidad with the world, more than the land transport connected it to other cities on the island. Trinidad’s non-monumental cityscape is a landscape of the discreet slave economy, which does not lend itself to a heroic narrative of history today.

It is interesting, then, to note that the three palaces we have looked at—Béquer, Cantero, and Iznaga—all feature or are related to remarkable towers. Record shows that Palacio Béquer had a tall cupola that stood out despite the fact the residence was only one level. Palacio Cantero still entertains tourists with its mirador that overlooks the entire city and the coastline. Palacio Iznaga does not have a tower, but the name Iznaga rings today in tourism literature and local discourse more for *la Torre Iznaga* (Iznaga Tower, Figure 3.4) in the Sugar Mill Valley. The Iznaga family’s sugar mill estate (Manaca-Iznaga sugar mill) boasts a 7-story, 43.5-meter (about 143 feet) watch tower with a bell. The Iznaga Tower is the highest tower of its kind in Cuba today. These towers substantiate the history of slave economy, but some argue that there is more to them. They served not only to control the slaves on the estate, but also to observe the

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<sup>6</sup> I thank Professor Raúl Fernández for mentioning the backwater-ness of Trinidad, even in the recent history.

passage of their clandestine shipments.<sup>7</sup> The height of these towers suggests that the vista they offered exceeded well beyond their compounds, offering a good grasp of the coastal traffic. Trinidad’s landscape is as much formed by slave labor as designed to the needs of stealthy operation of contraband trade. Rather than appealing monumentally to the Cuban polity, these towers attest that Trinidad maintained surreptitious links with other parts of the world.



**Figure 3.4** Iznaga Tower. Photo by Maki Tanaka.

“It is a crime against humanity” to let the architectural legacy fall into pieces, Bárbara expressed. In other words, Trinitarios have a *global* responsibility to protect their heritage—the entire world was on their back. UNESCO’s World Heritage Site in Spanish is *Patrimonio de la Humanidad*, patrimony of humanity. The historic landscape of Trinidad city center is not Trinidad’s, nor Cuba’s heritage, but is imagined as belonging to the whole humankind. If the backwater status of Trinidad and its

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<sup>7</sup> Personal communication with a retired Trinidad librarian.

smuggling operations in the 19th century jumped scales from local to global, in today's imagination of Trinitarios, Trinidad's heritage belongs to the global, skipping the regional and the national in many ways (Cox 1998). Hence as early as 1944 in the declaration of Trinidad as national monument, it is stated:

The value of the city of Trinidad as first-class tourist destination *of the Caribbean* is public knowledge and evident precisely for having conserved in its streets and squares and its buildings and monuments all the architectural characteristic of one era... (Italics added. Hernández de Zayas 1992)<sup>8</sup>

Despite its designation as *national* monument, Trinidad is here situated in the Caribbean. The Caribbean as a relevant territorial unit for Trinidad had been articulated even before, and still expressed in today's discourse. Trinidad's location on the southern coast afforded a favorable environment for maritime activities of various kinds in the colonial period. To reiterate, the geographical isolation over land from Havana, the power center on the north shore of the island, made Trinidad particularly desirable for illicit dealings—unreported to Havana, that is, to the Royal Crown of Spain—involving slaves, sugar, and other items of trade between the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa. The prosperity of sugar industry in Trinidad was supported by slave trade that bypassed the colonial authority, the profit of which was flaunted in luxury European goods to build and decorate the streets and houses. Houses in Trinidad are floored with Bremen tiles, decorated with French vases and Italian statues, and equipped with British china. There was more exchange between Europe and Trinidad, via the Caribbean, than between Trinidad and Havana, which Trinitarios saw at times as an impediment to their commerce (Venegas Delgado 2006). Trinidad's aversion of authority is reflected in the non-monumental cityscape and splendor of private homes. The rise and fall of the three palaces trace the positioning Trinidad has had politically and economically in the island and the larger geopolitical terrain the city has considered as its playing field.

#### *Museum-city of the Caribbean*

When referring to its own history of origin and prosperity, Trinidad mostly highlights the period between the 16th and the 19th centuries, the material evidence of which can be seen in the cityscape of the historic center. The historic center legitimates the uniqueness—identity—of the city. By deemphasizing the current revolution, which is politically the most imperative trope of today's national integrity, Trinidad is able to affiliate itself to the Caribbean, and by logical extension, straight to the world. Before the revolution, Trinidad was a favorite locale of Fulgencio Batista, the very dictator Fidel Castro overthrew. We see Batista's clout in the construction of roads between Trinidad and neighboring cities (Cienfuegos and Sancti Spiritus), and the completion of the impressive tuberculosis sanatorium in the nearby Topes de Collantes in the 1950s.

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<sup>8</sup> Es público y notorio que el valor de la ciudad de Trinidad como primer centro turístico *del Caribe* por haber conservado en sus calles y plazas, y en sus edificios y monumentos todo carácter arquitectónico de una época...

Trinidad has a museum for the fight against anti-revolutionary forces that took place mostly in the nearby Escambray mountains in the 1960s (Museo de la Lucha Contra Bandidos), housed in a former Franciscan convent. Apart from this, however, Trinidad is not known for its revolutionary fervor like Santiago de Cuba (“the cradle of the revolution”), and Santa Clara (the site of a decisive revolutionary battle led by Che Guevara).<sup>9</sup>

Thus the history does not quite corroborate the political closeness of Trinidad to Havana after 1959, except for the curious fact that Fidel Castro’s wife is from Trinidad. It is well known, nevertheless, that Fidel’s family matter is not public knowledge, and Cuba’s first family has unofficially and arguably been that of Raúl Castro and the late Vilma Espín. Obviously, Trinidad did not gain an elevated status because of Fidel’s private connection. It is quite noteworthy that possibly the most intimate relationship the Comandante (or ex-Comandante) has is traced to Trinidad, and it remains hidden. Trinidad is apolitical, and utterly private.

People in Trinidad do not particularly feel connected to the rest of the island, or well plugged into the current regime. Instead, Trinitarios call their home “Trinidad, the museum-city of the Caribbean,”<sup>10</sup> and form affective relations globally, circumventing the provincial and the national capitals. There are restoration projects funded officially by Spanish organizations. There are houses being remodeled through individual Cubans’ affiliations with foreigners (see chapter two). Most significantly, Trinidad is full of international tourists throughout the year. Trinitarios come in contact with them, do business with them, befriend them, and sometimes develop romantic relationship with them that generate kinship affiliations beyond national borders; in other words, the presence of international tourism that almost defines today’s Trinidad places the city and its populace in a global alliance of affect. Trinitarios leave with friends and partners to their countries of origin, or they are visited by friends and family members who live abroad. Such a global alliance of affect is nothing new or specific to Trinidad or Cuba. And yet, Trinidad’s consistent and conscious effort to imagine itself belonging to the Caribbean is an interesting move in overly nationalistic politics of revolutionary Cuba (though the contemporary alliances center on Europe, rather than other countries of the Caribbean). The cityscape of Trinidad is certainly affected by such global alliances of yesterday and today.

There is a strong sentiment of Trinitarios, then, that emphasizes the isolation within the island, and connection to the world. In an interview, an Office of Conservation staff proudly said to me, “not everyone has the privilege of living within World Heritage. I am lucky enough to have been born and raised here, and be able to work on its preservation.” Defying smallness of their city, Trinitarios “jump scales,” by finding what Kevin Cox calls spaces of engagement at the global level. According to Cox, locally-specific relationships are termed a “space of dependence,” where communications remain necessarily “spatially circumscribed,” even in today’s postmodern world. An example Cox gives is the relationship between a utility provider

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<sup>9</sup> I owe this comparison to Professor Raúl Fernández.

<sup>10</sup> “Trinidad, la museo-ciudad del Caribe” is the tagline of Radio Trinidad.

and a consumer that cannot be replaced beyond the service area. In comparison, a space of engagement refers to “the space in which the politics of securing a space of dependence unfolds” (Cox 1998:2). Thus, although all politics may be local, not everything is territorially bound; the utility provider may leverage national politics in order to assure their operation in a specific locality. In the same vein, restoration of a particular house in Trinidad may involve an international cooperation. The sugar operation in the 19th century had Trinidad engaged in the transnational slave trade, shunning Havana, while the heritage politics of today also bypasses the national capital and appeals directly to global forces. While in the 19th century, the space of dependence was largely dedicated to sugar production, today, the “museum-city of the Caribbean” is produced through a performance of self. Heritage, an aesthetic showcasing of the generic past, a fantasy land of nostalgia, maintains Trinidad as a global commodity for touristic consumption.

### *Conclusion*

The three palaces reflected various modernities—different structures of feeling—at specific times. Palacio Béquer though vanished in industrial modernity still lurks in the minds of Trinitarios. The value of the past was not regarded as important at the time of Palacio Béquer, and the future of Trinidad was sought in the new; looking forward specifically meant *not* looking backward. Palacio Cantero was restored in the era of high socialism, bringing the colonial past back in the present. The aesthetically represented past conveniently plasters over contested historical processes, especially the class relations. It is also noted that Palacio Cantero was restored as part of the national monument, predating the designation of cityscape as World Heritage. Thus the colonial hierarchy on display is rendered apolitical, perhaps due to its claim on the regional distinctness within the national frame. It is not the bourgeois past embodied in Palacio Cantero, but the regional past that makes Trinidad different from other parts of Cuba. As such, the displayed narratives of Palacio Cantero and the Museum of the Battle against the Bandits stay unconnected. Nostalgic modern operates to confirm the present by glorification of the detached past. It is not to claim the genealogy of the present, but to legitimate the present through heritage practices that demonstrate modern cultural sensibility. If socialist modernity could not bear popular expectations by the 1970s, then nostalgic modern was called in to summon collectivity. It is not a longing for the past, but museumification, or the scientific sampling that validates the present and the restored splendor of generic and distant past that inspires unity. In late socialist Cuba, the crumbling Palacio Iznaga barely stands and stands in for Trinidad as a neoliberal subject that hopes for global investment. The state is no longer looking after all its subjects, but letting them go to be individually responsible for their well-being. Not only the state, but the global regime of heritage operates in a disciplinary mode, and expects to see heritage cityscape restored without bearing accountability for its process. Therefore, Palacio Iznaga is a source of anxiety in Trinidad that derives from what I call heritage modern; the urge to preserve the past on which the city’s future depends. Here, Trinidad’s celebrated regional identity in the Caribbean, of jumping scales, must translate into entrepreneurial link that attains transnational capital. The “museum-city of

the Caribbean,” then, is at the same time a tribute to its past and a somber assessment of today’s reality.

## *Chapter Four*

### Mobility and socialist vanguard: Entrepreneurship of the Cuban “traditional” music

It's a surprisingly easy country to visit: You can rent a car or board a bus and go anywhere. No special rules or regulations hamper foreign tourists. This is one of the last truly unspoiled countries in the world, nearly free of surly locals and drug traffickers omnipresent on some other Caribbean islands.

--*Lonely Planet Cuba* (2000)

There are several themes through which we may understand the reinsertion of Cuba into the global economy in the post-Soviet era. Officially, Cuba claims unchanging commitment to state socialism while letting in market economy for survival, their rhetoric conveniently partitioning economic and political spheres as independent of each other. In many ways, in the economic sphere, the Cuban state is offering “Cuba” in exchange for hard currency. That is, socialist Cuba attempts to stay afloat by commoditizing itself. Commodification of “Cuba” happens in marketing of its beaches, cigars, rum, old American cars, and socialism. The state also “exports” human resources, doctors, engineers, sport coaches, and teachers for political commitment, solidarity, publicity, and favorable trade with other countries. In this chapter, I turn to how this commodification of “Cuba” works in part by actual and perceived mobility and immobility at play. Cuba as a tourist destination is predicated upon the mobility of tourists. Tourists make journeys to arrive in Cuba, and then traverse the island, a mobility that most Cubans experience differently. The fact that it is an island feeds the image of a distinct place to visit, as well as an idea that one is confined as a resident. Through the concept of mobility, I explore the imaginaries of Cuba that inform tourists’ conception and consumption of the island as their destination as well as Cubans’ construction of their identity in light of their perception of what lies beyond the island. These are spatial imaginaries, in which the boundaries of the nations and nationalities are negotiated in the face of today’s political and social realities. I examine the entanglement of the sense of (im)mobility and the sense of being Cuban in a tourist destination in today’s Cuba. In particular, I focus on the issue of how the qualities of being Cuban are produced, lived, and performed through these imaginaries, especially within the global flow of tourism. Here, Cuban characteristics, or Cubanness, are closely associated with the notion of mobility, or in most cases, immobility. I argue that despite the feelings and experiences of immobility of the majority of Cubans who are not able to travel outside of the island, the very notion of immobility conjures up the pristine quality of the island and its inhabitants. This imaginary of pristine Cubanness, in turn, produces certain kinds of commodified “Cuba”—one of which is Cuban

“traditional”<sup>1</sup> music. Examining traditional musicians, I explore the unprecedented mobility of some Cubans who can perform “Cubanness” rooted in the idea of immobility. Stratification along the line of mobility is another emerging reality in late socialism. Some Cubans’ successful entrepreneurship is awarded with mobility, which can easily be converted into hard currency. In other words, physical mobility encompasses socioeconomic mobility.

Focusing on art production and particularly the emergent category of traditional music, creativity seems to work well as a disguise for the seeping neoliberal rationality in today’s Cuba. Is the socialist promise of equality being dismantled through the logic of “culture”? As chapter six explores, heritage cityscape is another realm where the discrepancy in the distribution of resources is legitimized by the achievement of self-care. By eluding the overtly economic quality, creativity and cultural values may be a privileged site to understand the rationality of late socialism that is increasingly adapting to neoliberal efficiency.

The focus on art production emerged incidentally in my fieldwork. Before I obtained my research visa, I was unable to access my main research site, the Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley. While waiting for the visa, I came to know a local traditional music group *Septeto Montimar* by chance and they accepted my proposal to conduct an ethnographic research about their activities. Even after I began working with the Office of Conservation, I continued observing them albeit to a lesser extent.

### *Mobilities*

Mobility is considered to be an intrinsic characteristic of modernity. Moving between one place and another is an inevitable act of living in this world, whatever the scale of that move—from home to work, from one’s native village to the city, from one country to another. And yet, this consideration of movement between bounded and fixed places has been critiqued for its assumptions; it normalizes sedentary practices and supposes places as final destinations for travelers. Moving is deemed a temporary and provisional act prior to settling in a place, and such movement in between is considered as empty and unproductive (Augé 1995).

Recent studies of mobilities (or geography in terms of movement rather than stasis) come from a critique of an ontological conception of geography whereby bounded and fixed places contain distinct peoples and cultures. Taking human societies and practices as flows, articulations, and elusive multiplicity, mobility itself has come to form a focus of academic inquiries. For example, Arjun Appadurai proposed to think of globalization not as interconnectedness of places, but as flows, or landscapes that are “fluid, irregular,” and “perspectival constructs” (1996:3). Doreen Massey similarly considers a place as an articulation that is “a particular part of, a particular moment in, the global network of...social relations and understandings” (Massey 1994:115). A

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<sup>1</sup> I use traditional in quotation marks here to denote my awareness of the arguable nature of the word; see section on Cuban Traditional Music below. Nevertheless, *música tradicional* (traditional music) is an established category in the Cuban music industry. Hereinafter the word traditional is used without quotation marks with the understanding of its historical contingency in mind.

location, according to James Clifford, “is an itinerary rather than a bounded site—a series of encounters and translations” (Clifford 1997:11), as he discusses routes rather than roots. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization capture the fluidity and multiplicity of being (or becoming), and are preferred over the linearity and unity of the root. These works constitute the “mobility turn,” as termed by Hannam, Sheller, and Urry, who find a “new paradigm” of inquiry that transcends the “‘territorial’ and ‘sedentary’” nature of social scientific premise (Hannam et.al. 2006:1-2).<sup>2</sup> Not only spatially significant, but mobility is also a temporal scheme of experience. David Bissell’s work (2007) deals with temporality embodied in the act of waiting. He proposes that waiting as an event involves dynamic bodily engagement. Although he argues against a view of mobility that renders immobility insignificant, his work restores focus on relative immobility rather than dismissing it as an empty in-between time.

While it has been argued that everything is mobile (Adey 2006),<sup>3</sup> and an individual may go through phases of movement and stasis, the problems of uneven distribution of mobility and how moorings (Hannam, et al. 2006) or relative immobility (Adey 2006) enables mobility of the global elite have been raised. Massey stresses the dimension of power in the realm of mobility, where it “concerns not merely the issue of who moves and who doesn’t...it is also about power in relation to the flows and the movement” (Massey 1993:61). The flows and the movement are not only observable phenomena, but they also constitute embodied experiences (Burrell 2008). Where the mobility of the elite jet-setters is highly contrasted with that of immigrant laborers, and with those who move less, mobility should be understood in a particular historical, cultural, social, and political context. As Sennet stated, “[t]he modern individual is, above all else, a mobile human being” (Cresswell 2006:15), one aspect of mobility is the valorization of its quality attributed to the free modern subject.<sup>4</sup> The increased flows of people, goods, finances, and information, then, intensify the sense of immobility of those who come into contact with such movement from a position of relative stasis. Immobility here is not understood as an observable fact (as physical stasis), not as rooted identity (in contrast to mobility as deviance), but as a condition of deprivation. It is about the perceived reality of not being permitted to be mobile. The sense of immobility, then, depends on the imaginaries of valorized mobility, and demands a particular phenomenological understanding.

### *(Im)mobility in Cuba*

Prior to the revolution of 1959, Cubans enjoyed the freedom of movement, as there was abundant exchange between the island and especially the United States of goods,

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<sup>2</sup> Hannam, Sheller, and Urry (2006) write the inaugural editorial of the journal *Mobilities*. John Urry has also published a book titled *Mobilities* in 2007 (Urry 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Adey (2006) argues that in ontogenetic conceptions of space, things that had been thought of as fixed and stable can be thought of as moving. Thus an airport is always transforming in its slow aging, remodelling, and at times in radical reconstruction.

<sup>4</sup> Another aspect is the anxiety that derives from mobility—gypsies, drifters, homeless people, etc.—where the norm is the sedentary population that regards rootlessness as suspect (Cresswell 2006).

capital, information, and people. But the actual mobility of people only came with economic means, and pre-revolutionary Cuba was rife with income disparities. If a small group of elite Cubans had the privilege of being mobile before the revolution due to their socioeconomic status, then after 1959, this privilege grew increasingly political in nature. Leaving the country became an ideological matter to be restricted and controlled by the government. Many cases of mobility also came to signify a one-way affair, of exiles leaving the island without the prospect of return. The Mariel boatlift of 1980, and *balseros* of 1994 are cases in point, which were precipitated to an extent by political decisions of the Cuban and the US governments.<sup>5</sup> During the Cold War, Cuban professionals often traveled to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on government missions and publicly-sponsored trainings. The geographic circumference of mobility reflects the larger political environment of the time. In the middle of the 1990s, however, mobility in Cuba began to see yet another tide of changes. Cuban doctors and other health care providers are deployed in missions in other countries of the Global South (Blue 2010). Sport coaches and engineers are sent to African countries. Artists are traveling to Europe and North America. With the promotion of international tourism, an increasing number of tourists from Europe and other regions are visiting the island, developing personal contacts with Cubans, who then get invited to visit and occasionally stay in these countries as friends and spouses (see chapter three). And behind such mobilities are the vast majority of Cubans left outside of these exchanges.

A glaring divide between Cuban nationals and foreigners is evident when one visits the island today. Various restrictions prohibit Cubans from actions that are taken for granted by visitors. Since the upsurge of tourism from the mid-1990s, the difference is particularly ingrained through everyday encounters in major tourist destinations in Cuba, intensifying the sense of being Cuban on the island in specific ways. The case of Trinidad is characteristic in the sense that the city's economy is singularly dominated by international tourism today, and consequently its sociality, too, is significantly affected by the economy of tourism. This background helps us understand the sharpened sense of divide between Cubans and non-Cubans. I argue that for traditional musicians, it is the very sense of being Cuban that enables mobility, while the majority of the island's population equates Cuban citizenship with immobility. Mobility and immobility are articulated through Cubanness, which, in turn, has become a state-sponsored commodity in late socialism. José Quiroga captures the interplay of *cubanía* (Cubanness) performances between the Cubans in exile and Cubans on the island. While the former attempt to define the essence of Cubanness as belonging to the diasporic nation, the latter try to equate with it the territorial boundaries. In the end, the interplay becomes a theatrical chase over elusive and open-ended identity (Quiroga 2005:80). This chapter focuses on the operative aspect of such performances by Cubans on the island.

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<sup>5</sup> Mariel boatlift refers to an exodus of Cubans by boat from Mariel Harbor in 1980. The Cuban government had declared that it would not intercept those who attempt to leave. In 1994, the government made a similar statement, causing many to leave for Florida in makeshift boats (*balsas*). Both occasions arose in the midst of economic hardship in the country. It is also a Cuban strategy to expunge dissidents from the island.

A sense of immobility that can be referred to as a “structure of feeling” characterizes what it means to be Cuban in the revolutionary Cuba. A structure of feeling is a historically and spatially specific social experience—evanescent in nature, and not formally expressed as in an ideology (Williams 1977). For a Cuban national, movement out of the island is a politically charged act, as it always entails the possibility of remaining outside, of exile, signifying an opting-out of the revolutionary effort. Predictably, impediment of movement is multiplied by the lack of economic resources for most Cubans. Under the double economy of Cuban pesos and hard currency, many without access to the latter would spend their lifetime without leaving their province, let alone the country. People are barred from leaving the island or face insurmountable difficulty, while the U.S. embargo impedes goods (and people) from coming in, intensifying the feeling of isolation. As such, the national boundary is imagined and experienced as an inwardly confining force. The space beyond the border, the imaginary of *allá* (there, or over there), has become a reference point from which the reality of everyday life in socialist Cuba (*aquí* or here) is assessed.<sup>6</sup> The boundary crossing of the two spheres of economy (from Cuban pesos to hard currency) is not necessarily facilitated by social class,<sup>7</sup> but most remarkably by one’s access to remittances and proximity to the tourism sector.<sup>8</sup> For example, renting rooms to international tourists, though the taxes are high, brings in an amount of cash incomparable to state-employed professionals’ salaries.<sup>9</sup> As to the crossing of the national boundary, many cases are realized as occasions of family visits, professional opportunities to represent the country elsewhere or engineers’ and athletes’ training abroad, and invitation by foreign friends. The Cuban government “exports” its human labor to overseas, such as teachers, doctors, engineers, sports trainers on inter-governmental contracts. A notable trend of recent years, among these movements, is the case in which musicians go on international tours engaging in profit-making explicitly. This, as discussed below, is particularly true of the emergent Cuban traditional music.

The general sense of immobility is underlined even in instances of crossing the national border, for the process of realizing the opportunity to travel is painstakingly laborious and costly. For a Cuban national to visit a friend in the U.S., for example, one

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<sup>6</sup> The imaginary of the West in the socialist Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is discussed by Verdery (1996), Yurchak (2005), among others. The economy of shortage that socialist societies experienced fueled the popular fantasization of material abundance in capitalist economies, instigating, in addition, certain fetishes for symbolic commodities such as jeans. There were also negative connotations to this imaginary West, but in any case, it was based on and substantiated by the perceived incongruity of the two sides of the Berlin Wall.

<sup>7</sup> Despite the official claim of Cuba being a “classless” society, it cannot be denied that there remain some legacies of prerevolutionary class divisions. Nevertheless, the social mobility has been facilitated by economic and social reforms the revolutionary government has realized.

<sup>8</sup> However, de la Fuente (2001) cautions that race is an important factor in thinking about privileges such as access to the tourism industry. Still, the pre-revolutionary class structure is not neatly duplicated in the distribution of access to employment in tourism.

<sup>9</sup> As a reference, in Trinidad, a professional state-employee of an upper echelon may earn 500 pesos (20 CUC, approximately 22 USD) per month, whereas a private business of lodging may earn as much as 500 CUC (approx. 540 USD) after taxes.

has to go through a number of bureaucratic steps: applying for a passport, obtaining a letter of invitation accompanied by proof of financial support for the Cuban citizen's stay, sitting for an interview by the U.S. Interest Section and the government ministry most closely associated with the nature of one's business or trade, booking a flight, getting a U.S. visa, making a deposit to guarantee one's return, and obtaining an exit permit from the Cuban government.<sup>10</sup> Often the visa is denied, for foreign embassies are suspicious of overstays. This laborious process is highly contrasted in front of their eyes with the tourists who come to their island with ostensible ease. The tourists' access to financial resources and taken-for-granted freedom of movement help intensify the feeling of entrapment and of a definite division between Cuban citizens and non-Cubans.<sup>11</sup> The label of "tourist" marks the dominant category to which non-Cubans are classified in the everyday parlance. My status in Cuba as a resident foreigner, for instance, had always perplexed as much as amused most Cubans whom I came across.<sup>12</sup> It was also a dubious category that many government officials did not know how to deal with, especially outside of the national capital.<sup>13</sup>

The difference between foreigners and Cuban nationals is also made obvious by the type of currency used in certain transactions. This is to protect peso-earning Cubans, as much as to take maximum advantage of the hard currency that tourists bring. Museums and performance art events charge differentiated admission fees, accommodation of visitors is separated,<sup>14</sup> and long-distance bus lines are independently run in pesos and CUC, the former being barred to tourists.<sup>15</sup> Private cars cannot carry a foreigner unless the registered owner is behind the wheel, and most remarkably, it is illegal for an ordinary Cuban national (i.e., unlicensed for renting) to board a foreign friend overnight in their own house. Heavy fines are imposed in case of violation.

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<sup>10</sup> There are rumors of upcoming bureaucratic changes regarding the restrictions on Cubans leaving the country, circulating since Raúl Castro officially assumed the government authority in February 2008. These speculations have been confirmed nominally by removal of the exit permit fee, though the passport issue charge has been raised. More realistic revisions remain to be seen.

<sup>11</sup> I was dining and laughing with some Cuban friends, when one of them said, "We're happy here [with all the problems]; imagine what it would be like over there!" (¡Estamos felices aquí, imagínate allá!). It was as much an affirmation of their resilience against adversity as a sarcastic invocation of allá as a better place.

<sup>12</sup> All foreign researchers who officially conduct academic research in Cuba are required to obtain a research visa. Though the procedure for obtaining such a visa changes frequently, it remains to be a complicated and time-consuming process, as it pertains to the Cuban state's need to control information. My research visa was issued as student visa for 12 months through the Ministry of Culture. This visa allowed me access not only to the Office of Conservation as a researcher, but to a range of peso services normally offered exclusively for Cuban nationals.

<sup>13</sup> Seeing my frustration over bureaucracy regarding my residency, a friend declared that I complicated my problem by obtaining a Cuban ID, hence making myself almost a Cuban.

<sup>14</sup> Private houses (*casas particulares*) may be licensed to rent to international tourists (*arrendador de divisa*, or hard currency renter), or to Cubans (operating in pesos), but they cannot mix clientele in principle.

<sup>15</sup> A resident foreigner with proper documentation can ride peso buses, and a few seats in the peso buses are available to non-Cubans in CUC. For example, between Havana and Trinidad, the peso-operated bus (the Astro bus line) charges 66 pesos (2.64 CUC or 3 USD), whereas the CUC-operated bus (the Viazul bus line) costs 25 CUC (27 USD). A non-resident foreigner would pay 25 CUC for a seat in Astro.

Discourses surrounding immobility are abundant in everyday conversations, though the term *inmóvil* is never explicitly used. One ex-sailor (S) in his seventies who spends his daytime around the main plaza in Trinidad talking to tourists said to me:

S: When I was young, I went to many countries; I remember Europe, Asia, South America... Now that my health is no good, I can't work any more.

To which another man (M), also in his seventies, responded:

M: You're crazy, if I were in another country, I'd just stay there!

To the latter, a chance to leave the country would be a once in a lifetime opportunity, and it did not matter where it was, or how life would be there. That it was “over there” was enough to evoke something better. At the same time, it was decidedly a fantasy for him that did not require critical or realistic thinking.

Another man in his mid-thirties makes his living selling little snacks through the window, and watching the cars parked on the street in front of his house. He characterized his life as “wasted away on this island,” because he would like to do things that life in Cuba did not allow. He wants to be a legal professional but not in Cuba; he wants to be one where—paraphrasing his narrative—freedom of speech is guaranteed and self-realization can be pursued without fear. When I asked him why he hadn't gone to college in Cuba, he responded that in the small town no courses that he wanted were offered, and even if they were, they wouldn't be applicable outside of Cuba (where he would practice his profession). Therefore, they were of no use to him. Instead, he taught himself English, and engages with international visitors when the chance presents itself (i.e., he does not actively hustle tourists) as a way to be connected with the outside world. At the moment, he does not have a realistic means of leaving; he has no reliable family member to sponsor him for a trip abroad, and one time when a foreign friend tried to invite him to his country, his visa was denied. He seems to compare life outside of Cuba to a possibility of self-realization, and aside from knowing English, everything that he considers to be part of his pursuit of a career is supposed to begin after he leaves the island. There is such a disconnect between “here” and “over there,” that as long as he is physically bound to the Cuban territory, his aspiration remains out of reach.

On the contrary, an independent cultural organizer who has traveled abroad a few times before confided in me that she would like to see other countries again, but would always come back to Cuba because this was where she “knew how to live.” Notably, she has the know-how of realizing visits to other countries, and is active in planning and organizing such events. Here, she sees the opportunity to leave the country as something feasible, and as part of her life in Cuba. The “over there” is not something completely detached from the island as was the case with the two men above. Still, the aspiration to temporarily leave the island is significant, and in the face of impediment, mobility is valorized in her consideration with regards to her career as well as her personal development.

In popular tourist destinations in Cuba, contact with tourists presents occasions to confirm or add to such imaginary “there,” and often interaction is sought whether or not it may involve potential mobilization of resources. Much talked about *jineterismo* (jockeying) constitutes a part of such an effort. Jineterismo usually refers to a variety of activities that exploit economic opportunities represented by the presence of tourists, ranging from illegal sales of cigars and rum, offering oneself as tour guide, to pimping and prostituting. More broadly, jineterismo is defined as “any attempt to integrate oneself into the global market economy at whatever level and through whatever means” (N. Fernandez 1999:85) thereby attenuating the illicit and immoral nature often associated with the term. Somewhat provocatively, Nadine Fernandez employs jineterismo for such instances as “intellectuals tailoring their work to gain invitations to conferences abroad” (1999:85). At any rate, it alludes to a new social space that opened up as international tourism became vigorously promoted by the Cuban government after the collapse of the Soviet bloc. On the street tourists repeatedly hear Cubans calling out to them questions such as “where are you from?” usually in English. This urge to know the origins of tourists seems to come, at least partly, from the desire to experience a connection with the outside. Tourists embody the “over there,” the foreignness that Cubans associate with whatever Cuba is not. Mobility, in this sense, suggests an amplification of such contact with the outside, a symbolic breaking-out of the imposing boundary that ideologically and geographically circumscribes the island.

To the extent that the “outside” or “over there” is imagined, the contrasting “Cuba” or “here” becomes imaginary as well. Mobility and immobility get mapped onto the difference in nationalities, the former exclusively enjoyed by tourists and the latter symbolizing what it means to be Cuban. However, as we shall see below, this contributes to the imagination of Cubans as something pristine, paradoxically enabling mobility.

### *Cubanness*

Fernando Ortiz, in his oft-cited essay based on a 1939 lecture, defines *cubanidad* (Cubanness) as “the Cuban quality,” “the consciousness of being Cuban, and the desire to be one” (Ortiz 1981).<sup>16</sup> This rather overarching concept of *cubanidad* has been historically and diversely implicated and enunciated as a national project as well as in popular sentiments. To the revolutionary Cuban authorities, the distinguishing Cuban quality, or Cubanness is coterminous with the commitment to socialism. The national project of socialist Cuba has been expressed in a language that suggested the inherent unity of the people against the injustice of capitalist imperialism. Within such a unifying framework, the identification of diverse socio-cultural elements as being suitable or not for revolutionary Cuba has been arbitrary at best. Or rather, careful management of the safety zone of the socialist ideology has brought about frequent and minuscule adjustment of cultural policies. For example, social scientific studies of Afro-Cuban cultural practices, which are inseparably linked with sacred thought, were promoted in

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<sup>16</sup> “[L]a calidad de lo cubano” (Ortiz 1981:73), “la conciencia de ser cubano y la voluntad de quererlo ser” (Ortiz 1981:75).

the early years of the Revolution in an effort to locate Cuba in solidarity with the Third World. In later years, however, with the adoption of “scientific atheism,” academic interest in such themes was largely muted for their religiosity (Moore 2006:204-212).

Ariana Hernández-Reguant (2005) argues that the official national identity of early revolutionary Cuba had a universalist orientation, and that it was conceived as the culmination of anti-colonialist world struggle.

Specifically, the adoption of Marxism as a guiding doctrine meant the sole attribution of social hierarchy to class inequality, which in turn meant that social restructuring, geared toward the vision of a classless society, would eventually produce a harmonious social body in which categories of difference would be neutralized. (Hernández-Reguant 2005:284)

In this conceptualization, Cubanness is manifested socially as a hard-laboring citizen, uninterested in personal gain and devoted to the overall social improvement, as the aspired classless society guarantees equivalence of all labor. Culturally, Cuba was an evolving mix that Fernando Ortiz called an *ajiaco* (stew) that blended different elements (Ortiz 1981, Hernández-Reguant 2004). Thus Cuban characteristics were imagined to be socially (class-wise) and culturally (ethnicity-wise) teleologically homogenizing. The official discourse time and again reminds us that there is a continuing commitment to the socialist project. A brief look at an official newspaper any day confirms this. In a *Granma* (national newspaper) article ostentatiously entitled “Epic that never ceases,” one reads:

Cuba returns to become news again in the field of education. Headlines of a good number of news agencies recognized Cuba as the first Latin American nation to achieve the objectives of Education for All program, which was approved by 164 countries in the Dakar World Forum in 2000. (Núñez Betancourt 2007)<sup>17</sup>

Cuba’s educational achievement is emphasized to be part of an ongoing effort since the beginning of the revolution, as the epoch-making literacy campaign is recalled. For the state, the country has achieved much to be enjoyed by the citizens, and aspires yet more towards the future. The boundary of the island secures the population’s coherence and integrity in a timeless manner. Implied here is the steadiness of the Cuban population, or Cubanness as immobility.

A book held high, pencil, certificate, manual, lantern and the immense proclivity to overcome ignorance. Such was the beginning of this epic that never ceases. In his historic speech at the United Nations General Assembly

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<sup>17</sup> “Cuba vuelve a ser noticia en materia de educación. Titulares de un buen número de agencias de prensa la reconocen como la primera nación latino americana en cumplir los objetivos del programa Educación para Todos, aprobado por 164 países en el Foro Mundial de Dakar, en el año 2000.”

of September 26, 1960, Fidel stated: "...our people propose to wage a great battle against illiteracy..." (Núñez Betancourt 2007)<sup>18</sup>

Despite the rhetoric of the continuous struggle of all, since the reinsertion of Cuba into the world economy in the 1990s, the global market has set off differentiation in the values of labor and labor products on the island. Work in the hard currency sector is remunerated ostensibly more than that in the Cuban peso sector. In the process, some iconic instances of Cubanness have become new national products to be sold to international consumers. Symbolically, in 2000, the ubiquitous photographic image of Che Guevara taken in 1960 by Alberto Diaz Gutierrez ("Korda") became copyrighted and began incurring unprecedented revenue from its international use (Hernández-Reguant 2004). Likewise, after the *Buena Vista Social Club* (both the documentary film and the music album) became an international success around 1997, an increasing volume of Cuban traditional music began to be made, performed, and sold worldwide. Thus a special profit-making sector of a sort developed rapidly with state support while most Cubans kept earning a tiny fraction in pesos. Nevertheless, government officials justify such discrepancy in labor value as part of a socialist process. One asserts "that socialism signifies 'justice in the distribution of riches' but emphasizes the need to generate riches in order to provide them to the public" (Moore 2006:248). In an insightful expression of Quiroga (2005:147), "[m]usic and the state seem to dance around each other, and with each other."

Mobility is also differentially distributed among various forms of labor in the post-Soviet era though it is mobility as government functionaries to disseminate the idea and ideal of socialist Cuba. A number of medical doctors have been sent to other countries, such as Venezuela, Bolivia, and Nicaragua, to support health services in these countries. Musicians are increasingly allowed to tour outside of the country, but often the invitations are addressed to those who play traditional music. The National Ballet of Cuba periodically goes on international tours. Intellectuals attend international conferences abroad. In other words, mobility is allowed and even encouraged for those who can bear the responsibility and capability to demonstrate what Cuba now is, in the authorized language.<sup>19</sup>

Today's Cubanness, then, allows some to accrue economic wealth from newly gained international consumers, and others to be geographically mobile, while for a vast majority it signifies a standstill in the island. This association of Cuban citizenship with immobility helps to envision the uniqueness of the island, and accounts for the valorization of Cubanness as a desirable commodity.

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<sup>18</sup> "Libro en alto, lápiz, cartilla, manual, farol y la disposición inmensa de derrotar la ignorancia. Así comenzó esta epopeya que no termina. Lo había adelantado Fidel en su histórica intervención en la Asamblea General de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas, el 26 de septiembre de 1960: "...nuestro pueblo se propone librar su gran batalla contra el analfabetismo..."

<sup>19</sup> Quiroga points out this aspect of the Cuban regime, which "cannot be explained simply as repressive, but rather as disciplinary" (2005:17). As all Cuban baseball fans are aware, when athletes go abroad, their ideological stability is probed as much as their athletic talent in order to minimize defection.

### *Cuban art production in the economy of tourism*

In the revolutionary Cuba, art production has been ideologically defined against that of capitalism. Socialist art is free of commercialism or “capitalist censorship” (Moore 2006:20) which artists in capitalist societies allegedly suffer. In a market economy, the end of profit-making dictates the direction of artistic creativity, resulting in an inauspicious environment for intellectual and cultural development. The capitalist artist, then, can find “his temperament oppressed, his creation coopted, his right to glory and happiness suffocated” (Moore 2006:18).

This socialist logic created a new realm of art production in early socialist Cuba, which minimized the distinction between professional and amateur labor, and emphasized “art for all,” while the pre-revolutionary entertainment industry equated with the decadence of capitalism was suppressed. Night clubs and cabarets declined and were taken over by the government, juke boxes were banned, and recreational centers were closed. With particular regard to music, eventually jazz and later rock were considered unfavorable for their North American association, and resources were allocated to those fields that were overlooked in previous times—experimental classical music, folklore, and political songs (Moore 2006:56-79). Importantly, protection of copyright was regarded as a capitalist impediment in the free distribution of art, and as a consequence, Cuba slipped out of the international framework of intellectual property rights. Opportunities to perform and record abroad practically disappeared, significantly diminishing musicians’ mobility. Artists were deemed no different from other workers, hence the establishment of the *plantilla* (staff, payroll) system, which required artists to belong to an agency as full-time staff, and guaranteed them a fixed salary. This arrangement effectively put an end to profit as motivation in artistic activities, prompting many well-known artists’ flight from the island.

Since the 1990s, Cuban art production has seen a new phase, as Cuba adjusted itself to the post-Soviet economic environment. The series of reforms that followed the withdrawal of the COMECON support changed all facets of economic activity in Cuba. Legalization of the possession of hard currency (1993), of small private businesses (1993), the signing of the Berne Convention (1997) and accompanying revision of the Cuban intellectual property law to bring it to the international standard, have paved the way for an emergent entrepreneurship of artists and elevation of art-as-profession. Hernández-Reguant describes this situation in recent Cuba as exceptionally significant for it enabled artists’ labor to be “the most productive of all: it operated as capital itself” (Hernández-Reguant 2004:13), whereas other spheres of production have not benefited as much from such conditions.

These economic reforms coincided with the promotion of international tourism while Cuba’s favorable sugar “market” of the Soviet bloc disappeared. By 1998, tourism replaced the country’s long-standing sugar industry as the most profitable trade. International visitors numbered 2,319,000 in 2005, up from 1,774,000 in 2000.<sup>20</sup> Export transactions now take place not outside of the island, but before the very eyes of Cubans

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<sup>20</sup> Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas (National Statistics Office).  
[www.one.cu/anuariopdf2005/capitulo13/XIII.I.pdf](http://www.one.cu/anuariopdf2005/capitulo13/XIII.I.pdf), accessed December 29, 2007.

as visitors bearing foreign currency purchase Cuban goods and services on the island. Such a transformation has brought about new social phenomena, including the so-called “Cuban apartheid” or “tourist apartheid,” whereby new tourist venues such as hotels, restaurants, and night clubs are effectively closed to Cuban nationals, and especially to those of darker skin (Cabezas 2006, Schwartz 1997, De la Fuente 2001, Hagedorn 2001).<sup>21</sup> More social stratification has surfaced as legal possession of hard currency and cutbacks in rationing have allowed for disproportionate distribution of material comfort—or discomfort. Cuban citizens are witnessing erosion of the socialist ideal of the undistinguished labor, and selling pizzas on the street was found to bring in more income than being a medical doctor. Under these conditions, increasing encounters with international visitors have encouraged Cubans to come up with creative ways of engagement, as the above discussion of jineterismo attests. Artistic production is no exception, and it has rather excelled in capitalizing—literally—on the newly gained opportunities.

Within this sociality afforded by rising international tourism, Cubanness in different forms, fragments and presentations gets performed and consumed. That Cuba has been “opened up” only recently to the global economy adds substance to the imagery of Cuba as something relatively unspoiled. Still-standing socialism surviving the Soviet collapse has become a must-see for politically and historically interested tourists, and perhaps for the “imperialist nostalgia” of witnessing the vanishing object before it completely disappears (Rosaldo 1989). The perceived tropical permissiveness lures visitors in search of brief and long-term sexual and romantic liaisons. Colonial landscape and old North American cars accentuate the pre-revolutionary imagery of Cuba. Music, too, is a dominant characteristic of “typical” Cuba that is much sought after by international consumers.

### *Cuban traditional music*

From the discussion above, Cuban traditional music can be largely characterized by 1) the recent valorization of creative labor, 2) the newly opened market, protected by the intellectual property law, 3) its importance for growing international tourism, and 4) its authorized Cubanness.

The field of music is especially noteworthy because of the so-called “Buena Vista Phenomenon” (Moore 2006:132). It is fair to say that a new popular category of Cuban traditional music has emerged after the international success of the Buena Vista Social Club in the late 1990s. *Cubadisco*,<sup>22</sup> an international music competition and fair that Cuba has held annually since 1997 has a category of “*música popular tradicional*” (popular traditional music), along with “popular danceable music,” “folkloric music,” and others, establishing it as a distinct kind of music that includes *son*, *bolero*, and

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<sup>21</sup> Despite the official rhetoric of freedom from racism, Cuban society still carries its legacy of racial discrimination in everyday life. In early 2008, changes were made to allow Cubans to become customers of hotels catering to international tourists, domestic tours, rental cars, and cell phone services.

<sup>22</sup> *Cubadisco* (Feria del Disco Cubano) was first held in 1997, and is a trade exposition developed by the government in search of international record contracts of Cuban musicians, thus pursuing potential hard currency income (Moore 2006:233).

*danzón*.<sup>23</sup> Both Cuban state music labels, EGREM and BIS Music carry “*tradicional*” as one of their categories of music. Wim Wenders’ documentary dramatically illustrated that the kind of music performed by the Buena Vista Social Club, notably *son*, had been overlooked by Cubans since the 1960s. The trope of “discovery” is operational only very specifically here: “[t]he mythology of the album is entirely constructed around the fundamental cultural misunderstanding that has made something that was perfectly known to local audiences appear as new and exotic to international audiences” (Perna 2005:248), where “international audiences” largely consist of non-Spanish-speaking Europeans and North Americans. As part of the increased trafficking in music since 1987 under the marker of “world music” (Stokes 2004), Cuban traditional music has been celebrated as “authentic,” partly due to the fact that cultural production and consumption on the island have been tightly controlled in Cuba, and partly due to the effect of embargo that romanticizes the forbidden island. The socialist enclosure of music as *culture* rather than entertainment was discovered by the international market as unspoiled by the capitalist force (Quiroga 2005:147).

Traditional music is so qualified vis-à-vis “new,” “contemporary,” or other comparable qualifiers that mutually define each other, and in the context of the Euro-American dominated music market. According to Shelly Errington (1998), the nineteenth-century progressivists in the West invented “authentic primitive art” as something left behind by modernization in order to measure the state of the West’s progress. Cuba, in its discourse and geopolitical performance has defied being fitted neatly into such dichotomous categories of the West and the Third World, or the West and the rest, as it has always negotiated multiple identities of a European descent, North American, and after the revolution, Afro-Caribbean. As such, Cuban traditional music is not imagined to be spatially remote non-modern musical practices as is the case with other “world music” genres, but produced mainly through the trope of discovery (by Euro-Americans) through time. Within Cuba, traditional music is placed in comparison with contemporary Cuban music, be it hip-hop, jazz, or rock. By highlighting the competition between the revitalized *son* in the late 1990s, which specifically targeted European and North American audience unfamiliar with the Cuban music scene, and contemporary “danceable music,” such as *timba*,<sup>24</sup> which has “descended” from *son*, Vincenzo Perna notes “a sample of music from the past, supposedly authentic and superior to the Westernizing contemporary music, has been co-opted into a neo-colonial representation of Cuba as a romantic, cool holiday destination. Meanwhile, ‘Westernized’ local music has kept on singing stories of life in the barrio that the global

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<sup>23</sup> *Son* is “[a] genre of dance music created by Afro-Cuban performers in eastern Cuba toward the end of the nineteenth century...*son* demonstrates the fusion of African and European elements” (Moore 2006:315). *Boleros* are slow romantic songs that developed in Santiago de Cuba around the 1880s (R. Fernandez 2006:vii). *Danzón* is “[a]n instrumental dance genre that developed in Matanzas during the late nineteenth century in black middle-class social clubs. *Danzones* are in duple meter and are danced by couples” (Moore 2006:312). Cubadisco does not define what their categories consist of, but maintains its authority to denominate participating albums.

<sup>24</sup> Moore (2006:315) defines *timba* as “[m]odern Cuban dance music. *Timba* combines influences from traditional Cuban *son* and foreign genres such as jazz, funk, and rap.”

public has not been able, and perhaps is not even willing, to hear” (Perna 2005:262).<sup>25</sup> Martin Stokes discusses the discourse of world music in general, which implicitly embraces Ry Cooder’s performance of “discovery” in the *Buena Vista Social Club* as a constitutive part: “Locality was conferred in a language of place, roots, and opposition to the global, each emphasized by metaphors of musical exploration and of the consumer as traveler (as opposed to tourist) on a journey of personal discovery” (Stokes 2004:59). After the film acquired global fame, Cuban traditional music rapidly gained followers worldwide, some of whom would choose to visit the island as this “rediscovery” coincided with the compelling promotion of tourism: “Like other musical projects marketed under the umbrella of world music, *Buena Vista* could be best described as a form of tourist art, a ‘form of contemporary art produced locally for consumption by outsiders’ and based on assumptions about the aesthetic expectations of the foreign market (Jules-Rosette 1984)” (Perna 2005:246). The kind of derisive undertone designated to the term “tourist” has been examined more seriously with regard to the relationship between producer and consumer intrinsic to art (Graburn 1976) and by problematizing art as produced through commercialization (Errington 1998). Here, I am interested in how resources are mobilized through the operative term “traditional” for which the contemporary global music market has a special place.

Once a strong market for this music category was established and recognized, many musicians as well as music venues specializing in the traditional music appeared in Cuba. If we call the global phenomenon of music-making and appreciation the musicscape, to appropriate Appadurai’s terminology (1996), today’s Cuban traditional music did not just reappear from the past as something preserved and place-bound—it also emerged as an effect of the global flows of information, people, goods and capital. As Quiroga puts it, “[d]uring the late 1990s, “Cuba” became almost a kind of franchise within the capitalist music scene” (Quiroga 2005:164). This franchised “Cuba” is the state-authorized Cubanness that is distinct in post-Soviet Cuba, and that banks on its unique socialist history. In many ways, the neoliberal rationality has found an entry point through such cultural performance of Cubanness, as entrepreneurship is decoded as cultural talent, rather than in strictly economic terms.

The modifier “traditional” suggests its longer history in contrast to newer genres such as *timba* and *reggaetón*, which arguably enjoy more popularity among the Cuban public. Traditional also signifies lack of institutionalization, as many musicians who have played music such as *vieja trova*<sup>26</sup> and *son*, were not formally trained. Additionally, the fact that the artists reside on the island is vital in the appreciation of this art form (Hernández-Reguant 2004:23), which perhaps contributed to the christening of this particular category of music as traditional—quintessentially Cuban—for the international audience. Partly due to this fact, music from Cuba retains its own category of “Cuban music” rather than be absorbed into a larger genre of “Latin music.”

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<sup>25</sup> Although the “authenticity” of *son* evokes a fantasy of purity or singularity, *son*, as any cultural form, is a product of hybridization (Perna 2005:99, 251, R. Fernandez 2006:22-41).

<sup>26</sup> Old *trova*. “Traditional Cuban song, usually romantic in nature and performed by two singers with guitar accompaniment. It first became popular in eastern Cuba among black and mulatto shopkeepers at the turn of the twentieth century” (Moore 2006:316).

In other words, it is a particular imaginary of Cuba that helps feed the wider musicscape. “Tradition,” understood as such, translates into a kind of Cubanness especially amenable to mobility. It is rather ironic that music salvaged from the pre-revolutionary entertainment scene came overwhelmingly to represent what Cuba stands for today in an international context.<sup>27</sup> In contrast, other genres such as hip-hop which appeal more specifically to contemporary Cubans (thus in a way more Cuban) find less relevance internationally, and hence are less mobile to go beyond the national border.<sup>28</sup>

Cuban traditional music gives the revolution visibility abroad, so its Cubanness has become authorized. The music is an icon for the artistic excellence of Cubans and the socialist embrace of cultural expressions, and not for the capitalist hedonism that it once symbolized. Those musicians privileged to earn a disproportionate income in the capitalist system<sup>29</sup> contribute to the state coffer, and are thus considered to be at the vanguard of socialism. This is legitimate to the socialist project, since what they are doing is not subordinating their creativity to the whim of the market but demonstrating the strength of the ongoing Cuban revolution. Musicians, by being allowed by the state to earn profit through cultural performance of Cuba, or seemingly ideologically neutral commodification of Cuba, have been made into celebrated entrepreneurs in late socialism. As much as it is state-sanctioned, nevertheless, this mobility is socialist mobility, or mobility in the name of socialism. Therefore “[t]he liberating force is music, but the beat of the music is never allowed to stray from the beat of the state” (Quiroga 2005:147).

Moore argues that the current debates over artistic policy speak to the issues about how best to adapt socialism to new conditions since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Moore 2006:247). He finds irony in the economic crisis becoming a blessing for the Cuban music industry, with musicians moving to the forefront of recent capitalist endeavor (Moore 2006:232). Irony aside, however, I find the emergence of this new socialist vanguard through capitalist music-production to be a privileged site where neoliberal subjects are made in late socialist Cuba. Cuban traditional music is now an important realm through which the resilience of Cuban socialism can be advocated abroad, and through which the rhetoric of socialist politics and market economy can be reconciled. While tourism economy has made socialism into a commodity in Cuba, an authorized Cubanness more associated with immobility that must be consumed on the island, Cuban “traditional” music, as franchised “Cuba,” is a mobile commodity to be performed throughout the world. Unleashing this potential of music, the Cuban state has ardently introduced market economy into the cultural realm, and made musicians entrepreneur-citizens, whose morality is measured by the monetary contribution to the socialist state.

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<sup>27</sup> And yet, this marketing of tradition resonates with the political economy of heritage, the overall theme of this dissertation.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of Cuban hip-hop, see Fernandes (2003), and for timba, Perna (2005).

<sup>29</sup> Hernández-Reguant describes an example of the effect of the new copyright-generated revenue: “Isolina Carrillo, author of the famous bolero “Dos Gardenias”...was said to have gone from near starvation to being driven in her own chauffeured car and treating her friends and acquaintances to lavish meals...” (Hernández-Reguant 2004:18).

### *Septeto Montimar*

Locals assert that Trinidad is particularly rich in musical tradition. As a popular tourist center, the city is abundant in music venues, such as restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, and subsequently, the opportunities they provide draw musicians from around the region. Day and night, one hears music everywhere in the historic center. The local music scene cannot be extricated from tourism in Trinidad.<sup>30</sup> One of Trinidad's major music groups is Septeto Montimar. It is a *septeto*, that is, a traditional seven-member formation for playing *son*, consisting of a guitar, a tres, a double bass, a trumpet, congas, bongos, and a lead vocal with minor percussion (e.g., maracas, güiro<sup>31</sup>). The history of Montimar goes back to 1990, although only one founding member remains today. As an artist group (plantilla), they belong to the provincial music agency (empresa) of the Cuban Institute of Music (Instituto Cubano de la Música). This means that they have to maintain the seven-person format—they are not allowed to add or subtract any position, though they could substitute one member for another. The music agency has the task of routinely examining the quality of their performance to maintain the professional level. Theoretically, the agency is also in charge of finding work and recording opportunities for the artists registered, but in reality artists are left to their own devices. Whereas the agency used to invariably collect 42.2% of the income every plantilla made, Montimar is now charged 35.0% under the new payment scheme started in 2008 as part of the economic reforms introduced in the 1990s. The new scheme allows each artist group to negotiate the percentage that the agency covers. This has induced changes in the relationships between the agencies and artists, allowing more flexibility in artistic activities, while the security of the plantilla system slowly fades away. Artists are becoming more free-lance, although it is still obligatory to belong to an agency and submit part of the proceeds as well as pass the periodic auditions to be able to perform as professionals at all.

The scarcity of resources, especially in the provinces (i.e., outside of Havana City), makes it extremely difficult to record for a professional musical group like Montimar.<sup>32</sup> In 2005, Montimar won an award at Trinidisco, a music contest that took place in Trinidad. The award included a recording right at a studio in the city of Cienfuegos with BIS Music, one of the state record labels. The group recorded all twelve songs of their album, *Un Swing Sabroso*, in merely one week in 2006. The album came out the same year, and was then nominated among five albums of traditional music in the national contest of Cubadisco 2007, bringing the group to the

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<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, the clientele of these venues includes both tourists and local Cubans in Trinidad, unlike the notable segregation of these two categories of people—the “Cuban apartheid”—in similar places in Havana.

<sup>31</sup> Güiro is “[a] scraped percussion instrument made out of a dried gourd” (Moore 2006:313) and other materials.

<sup>32</sup> Moore reports general complaints of musicians: “difficulty of getting permission to record, allegations that rural performers receive less support than those in Havana, inadequate performance facilities, and frustrations over limited production of sheet music and other supplies” (Moore 2006:100). I was asked by Montimar to bring such supplies as trumpet oil and guitar strings.

national stage. It should be noted that behind such a modest achievement lie innumerable artists who are yet to have a recording opportunity, while high-profile artists gain multiple contracts with foreign record labels.

Despite such accomplishments, Montimar is not very well recognized even in the city of Trinidad. Far from celebrity status, their daily activity consists of playing at a restaurant for tourists during lunchtime. This is their salary basis, and a permanent deal. In addition, Montimar picks up a few performance slots weekly in other venues, which are distributed by a cultural/tourism enterprise (*Artex*, which runs shops and restaurants).

Their lunchtime routine is at a restaurant on the edge of the historic center where organized tourists are brought in coaches. The tourists are largely from Europe. Lunch is included in the tour, and the tourists arrive without having chosen the place themselves. Apparently, they do not come for the music, and it is by coincidence that they hear Montimar while they eat. As far as I have seen, individual tourists do not come, perhaps due to its location outside the central area. Montimar usually plays softer music because the setting is more for dining than listening to the music. Depending on the atmosphere of the tourists, they do perform upbeat songs occasionally. Their routine includes many internationally well-known tunes, and a few of their original ones. For example, a typical opening is *Quizás*, followed by such songs as *Dos Gardenias* and *Bésame Mucho*. These *boleros* are tunes especially prepared for international tourists, as one would hear in many other restaurants played by various groups, and are not included in Montimar's album. Members of Montimar take on this daily performance as necessary work to live on music, but find it not particularly inspiring. Indeed, they often referred to the difference between *vivir de la música* (living on music) and *vivir para la música* (living for music), and emphasized that although performing in the restaurant is not the favorable part of their job, they at least don't have to resort to other means to sustain themselves (ensured by the *plantilla* system), as artists in capitalist societies often do. Montimar's expectation of the musical understanding of tourists at the restaurant is not high, and as a result their work falls into a rather tedious routine, a "necessity."<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, they do collect tips and sell their CDs to add to their peso salary to cash in on the setting. To illustrate the effect of tourism in their business, their monthly salary from the agency is 225 – 310 pesos (9 – 12.4 CUC, or 9.7 – 13.4 USD), depending on the experience of the member, while they may collect anywhere between 1 and 10 CUC (1.08 – 10.8 USD) each per day from tips and CD sales. For most tourists, the music presents itself as an abstract feature of the overall experience, rather than an encounter with distinct performers. In the tourist scene, it is not the examples of world-famous bands such as the Buena Vista Social Club and Los Van Van, but the ubiquity of unknown musicians of decent quality that validates Cuba's characteristic excellence in music, one of Cuba's strongest attractions for tourists.

In contrast, when Montimar plays in the evening at bars, patrons—both tourists and Cubans—come to enjoy the music, if not Montimar's music, and the atmosphere

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<sup>33</sup> This may be characterized as a ubiquitous situation in popular tourist destinations where music constitutes a major attraction.

presents a contrast to that of lunchtime at the restaurant. They play more fast and upbeat songs, and there seems to be a lot of interaction between the audience and the group. Some patrons clap their hands or dance to the rhythm of the music. Rather than playing here and there amidst dining tables, they have a fixed space of performance, at times with electric sound equipment. Montimar is seemingly more animated in these performances, and as they present more original songs, their CDs sell better than during the daytime. In a sense, the “tourist art” part of their music is emphasized during the day, whereas a more creative side of Montimar that finds space within the realm of traditional music is expressed in the evening performances. The distinction Montimar’s members made between living on music and living for music can be interpreted as that of commercialized art (tourist art) and art for art’s sake. Even then, tourist art is not shunned, because they *can* live on music, rather than do something else to make a living. This distinction gives the realm of tourist art another layer of meaning, that which is placed in the context of art and non-art. Commercialized art, or playing for indifferent tourists at a restaurant could be non-inspiring, but they are still playing music. At times, this activity can even turn into something more exciting than a routine work. Here, traditional music provides more than a performance of the past, inspiring new creations, as revival movements cannot be contained in repetitions.<sup>34</sup>

Montimar belongs to another institution, apart from the empresa or local music agency; the Saiz Brothers Association (Asociación Hermanos Saiz, AHS) is a youth wing of the National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas Cubanos, UNEAC), and supports young creators and organizes events for them. So far, their membership in the AHS of the province Sancti Spíritus has enabled them to participate in festivals throughout Cuba and beyond. To name but a few recent examples, Montimar was invited to two festivals in Holguín in 2005; a festival of septetos in Havana in 2006; and a couple of cultural events in Sancti Spíritus in 2007. In all AHS events, performance is given gratis, as admission is free. However, the AHS does facilitate participation of artists by providing transport, meals, and when necessary, accommodation. Such events are distinct in that they involve mostly Cuban audiences, and take place outside of their routine in Trinidad. Whereas hard currency revenue is always expected in the tourist setting, resources for events like these in the peso realm are not as readily available. The post-Soviet turn of the Cuban revolution is manifest in such occasions. Consequently, there is a lot of uncertainty before the event; transportation, stage setting, sound quality, audience, and so forth. As noted before, within the Cuban public, only a fraction is eager consumers of Cuban traditional music.

The contrast between “here” and “there” is also significant in music performance. If the earlier example is about “here” (performing within the socialist system), then the connection with “there,” too, happens in Cuba for the musicians. In December 2007, a Canadian punk rock band from Edmonton, Alberta came to perform in several cities in Cuba. The tour was supported by the AHS, and in Trinidad their concert was preceded by an opening act by Montimar, which was obviously an odd

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<sup>34</sup> Yvonne Daniel (1996) has explored the creativity and authenticity in dance performances in tourist settings.

combination of genres. The mostly Cuban audience was distinctly younger than Montimar's usual public, and palpably punk-oriented. When Montimar began playing, people paid little attention, walked about, and some even left. Afterwards, the same audience was moving their heads back and forth and dancing to the punk rock, all looking towards the stage. Montimar did not stay until the end of the Canadian band's performance, as it was not to their taste. Later, I asked Montimar's manager why they even bothered to play, having known that the audience was not going to be sympathetic. She responded, "That night, Montimar did not play for the Cuban public. They played for the Canadians there, and those who would see the documentary they were filming, to possibly broaden the audience in the future."

It is, then, an example of the entrepreneurship that Cuban artists exercise in order to expand their chances, and to enhance their potential mobility. Mobility becomes a measure of audienceship, and thus artistic potential as well as business opportunities. Engagement in foreign relations as such may or may not result in further work, recording opportunities, or participation in events. But Montimar takes encounters like this one seriously, and besides being inspired by novel artistic experiences, makes investments for the future. As much as the control of artistic work has been relaxed, and possibility augmented, they are more responsible for themselves. Due to the lack of resources in the region, Montimar and presumably other artists seek recording and performing opportunities abroad, bypassing Havana, through direct international connections. Musicians as cultural emissaries of the revolutionary Cuban state are to succeed in their artistic capability, now possible to assess through their entrepreneurial capability. The state, therefore, is able to legitimize market economy of a neoliberal kind under the banner of "culture" that circumvents an overtly economic impression. The stern stratification of Cubans by neoliberal rationality is more naturalized through the rationality of musical talent.

Because the Cuban traditional music has emerged as an international category, artists playing this kind of music are more likely to tour abroad. We see successful entrepreneur traditional music groups like Afro-Cuban All Stars, and salsa bands like NG La Banda and La Charanga Habanera tour the world and distinguish themselves from ordinary Cubans. Nevertheless, lesser-known groups also have mobilized resources to realize international visits. Montimar is a case in point. In July 2006, Montimar flew to Rome and began a three-month tour in Italy, Sweden and Denmark.<sup>35</sup> This was not a tour for profit, but was accomplished under the framework of a "promotional tour," that is, they went not through the empresa, but through the AHS. What this means is that they did not owe a percentage of proceeds to the empresa, for their performance was given free of charge as an act of cultural exchange. Nevertheless, the opportunity of traveling abroad was tremendous for Montimar and their accompanying personnel, and is part of an ongoing exchange with contacts in these

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<sup>35</sup> It is an interesting contrast between Montimar's daily activity of playing *for* tourists and Montimar performing abroad *as* tourists. Their excitement in the latter case and lack thereof in the former follow the outline of Graburn's travel as a secular ritual (Graburn 1989).

countries.<sup>36</sup> Members of Montimar describe such experiences abroad as extraordinary and a privilege that is out of reach for average Cubans. Their tour was realized “by coincidence,” according to the group’s manager. The manager’s initial contacts with Poland and Denmark around 2001 had developed into exchanges of artists’ visits between Cuba and several European countries, bringing about an extended tour of Montimar five years later. Finances were arranged through individual friendship rather than institutional sponsorship, and the Cubans were housed in schools and individual houses during the tour.

The manager of Montimar time and again confided in me that the group’s daily routine is killing their creativity, for “their potential is a lot more than that.” It is interesting to note that the routine work for Montimar is precisely what they do for money, a la capitalist principles. According to the manager, Montimar’s repertoire exceeds that of the usual septeto, and includes *son*, *merengue*, *bolero*, *bachata*, and jazz-fusion. They distinguish themselves for their ability in composition and arrangement, as well as having more than three vocals, amplifying their sound “almost like an orchestra.” This belief in Montimar’s musical capacity drives them to seek a broader audience, and support from abroad.

The “typical Cuban traditional music” heard in tourist venues is what enables groups like Montimar to live on music, yet this also puts them in a cast that they need to escape from if they are to excel as musicians. Nonetheless, Montimar finds itself firmly within the realm of Cuban traditional music, and does not define its music otherwise. Cubanness is what they feel they represent. This emphasis seems to arise from the international emergence of a music category that always presumes an audience outside of the country, that is, the franchised brand of “Cuba” the music represents.

Members of Montimar reiterated “If you don’t know how to sing or dance, you’re not Cuban. It’s in the blood,” rather than describing themselves as particularly gifted individuals. Being Cuban itself indicates musical excellence. Despite the ubiquitous presence of a stereotypical music for tourists that the musicians feel is limiting, Cuban music is perceived as a source of immense potential. In Montimar’s original *son* piece, *Hasta que salga el sol* [Until the sun rises], Alaín Valdés Oria writes:

Somos cubanos  
Y le ponemos el sabor que se merece  
Con este ritmo que a la gente enloquece  
Bailan todos, porque el corazón lo siente.

We are Cubans  
And we put in it the zest it deserves  
With this rhythm that drives people wild  
Everybody dances, because their heart feels it

Oye, este es mi son  
Este es mi son sabroso,  
No tiene comparación,

Listen, this is my son  
This is my zesty son,  
There’s no comparison

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<sup>36</sup> In December 2007, an amateur Latin music group from Sweden came to visit Trinidad and played with Montimar. Montimar’s manager was instrumental in making this happen, having administered for two years the complicated procedure of obtaining cultural visas for the Swedes.

<sup>37</sup> Montimar 2006.

Este es el son cubano.<sup>37</sup>

This is the Cuban son

Musical careers and their being Cuban are inextricably intertwined in late socialist political economy. To the extent that this Cubanness enables Montimar's (and other artists') mobility beyond Cuban territory, achieving greater artistic expression and financial reward, their national identity is securely anchored.

### *Conclusion*

Art always finds itself in a dubious tension between forces of commercialism and "pure" aesthetics (Marcus and Myers 1995, Myers 2001), and in Cuba, it must also maneuver through the entanglement of capitalist and socialist ideologies. Commoditized "Cuba" allows for commodification of culture in revolutionary Cuba, as market economy steadily changes the nature of socialism. As mentioned before, the Cuban government pledges to being a politically socialist state while selectively introducing market economy that supposedly only remains an economic matter. Within this tension of late socialism, the realm of culture has become a market extraordinaire; it performs the "purity" of art and socialism in the name of franchise "Cuba." Cuban traditional music is exceptional in that it emerged as an international commodity in the post-Soviet era, and its Cubanness is state-authorized and promoted in comparison with other genres such as hip-hop. On the one hand, this historical and ideological conjuncture has generated global phenomena like Buena Vista Social Club. On the other, numerous less-famed traditional music groups sprang up especially in tourist destinations on the island. These bands are not as mobile as those world-famous bands, playing routinely the typical repertoires in tourist venues. Nevertheless, the market is international, and it has opened up an artistic realm whose virtuosity may be evaluated by their mobility. Bands like Montimar become entrepreneurs to make their own way at the moment when the state support system that initially de-commercialized art fades away. Thus the cultural realm has turned into a privileged site where neoliberal subjects are made in late socialist Cuba. Through seeking artistic potential, musicians seek mobility beyond the island, where their artistic capacity is rewarded by monetary means. That is, by becoming entrepreneurs themselves, they strive to "succeed" musically, which increasingly signifies identifying with and performing "Cubanness." We see in the lyrics of Montimar's *Hasta que salga el sol*, Cubanness proves to be a powerful commodity of late socialist Cuba.

Reward according to creativity naturalizes the differentiation of subjects in market economy, but culture as the guise of neoliberal rationality is not limited to music and fine art. Heritage cityscape, for its indisputable intrinsic value, also calls for the value of culture to mask stratification of subjects in today's Cuba. Both heritage cityscape and music perform authorized Cubanness, and both are commodities in the tourist economy. Their commodification is founded on the divide between Cubans and non-Cubans, and they bear the augmented uniqueness of Cubanness. The Cubanness that has enabled Montimar to become mobile is at the same time imagined to be standing still, be it through ideological resoluteness or deprivation of freedom to move. The realm of art production in current Cuba, and of traditional music in the current

economy of international tourism, articulates the (im)mobility of Cuban citizens, real and imagined.

For traditional musicians in late socialist Cuba, being mobile involves breaking out of the immobility of the Cuban norm, and being viable in the turmoil of changing values. Mobility verifies not only one's creativity, but also being close to *allá*, on a par with the global standard. Being mobile, therefore, implies being modern. The neoliberal subject who succeeds in prospering in the eroding socialism confirms the late socialist state through the promotion of Cubanness, and at the same time gains independence from it by being remunerated outside of the state system.

## Chapter Five

### Dressed up and sipping rum: Local activities within the touristic space

This is a paradox of the frontier: created by contacts, the points of differentiation between two bodies are also their common points. Conjunction and disjunction are inseparable in them. Of two bodies in contact, which one possesses the frontier that distinguishes them?

--Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*<sup>1</sup>

Tourism worldwide, especially in the global South, tends to produce segregational practices, and/or differential spaces due much to the socioeconomic differences between “hosts” and “guests,” as well as the differences between work and leisure modes of operation in which each group is engaged. For example, Dean MacCannell (1999:92) discusses his theory about the front/back stages of tourism: “The front is the meeting place of hosts and guests for customers and service persons, and the back is the place where members of the home team retire between performances to relax and to prepare.” The urban space manufactured especially for tourists has been labeled the “tourist bubble” by Dennis Judd (1999). Emphasizing the unevenness of power, Dennison Nash (1989) argues that tourism constitutes a form of imperialism.<sup>2</sup> The dichotomy of hosts/guests and touristic space/local space is easily discernible and invites valuable criticism against the uneven geography. And yet, such an emergence of touristic space also gives rise to particular local ideas and practices that underscore global-local dynamics. Keeping this hierarchy of spaces in mind, I propose to explore other dimensions of this difference that may defy dichotomous inferences.

In Trinidad, the Office of Conservation addresses the cityscape as vitally local while fully recognizing the city’s significance on the tourist map. Newly restored buildings include tourist restaurants and bars, but the Office also restores and renovates the houses of the underprivileged.<sup>3</sup> It is in this setting that cultural activities of the Office find their place. The Department of Cultural Promotion of the Office plans and hosts events for locals, such as art exhibits, poetry readings and live music, and lectures on local culture and history, featuring local artists, musicians, artisans, and academics. These events are held at the Office’s gallery space or a museum, and offer the opportunity for socializing with snacks, soft drinks, and rum. Programs are loosely structured, and spontaneous participation is encouraged. Such activities also underscore

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<sup>1</sup> De Certeau (1984:127).

<sup>2</sup> See also Pattullo (1996) for the Caribbean region, Davis and Marvin (2004) for Venice, Nyiri (2006) for China, with regard to spatial differentiation in tourist destinations.

<sup>3</sup> In a few projects with the aid of Spanish organizations, the Office of the Conservation in Trinidad has restored historic structures in some neighborhoods according to the demands of the current occupants.

the discursive control of heritage and intellectual production by the Office that I discussed in chapter two.

These events provide an important space of expression for locals in a town dominated by tourism. Whereas the ubiquitous international visitors appear more entitled in the touristic space—having ease of access to venues where residents are practically shunned—there are locally claimed practices and spaces which exist, perhaps paradoxically, *because* of the sojourners' presence. Alternatively, these practices gain certain significance in relation to the touristic ones. This chapter explores the social, political, and emotional significance of this cultural pocket, where locals affirm the value of Trinidad and of being Trinitarios in the global space of post-Soviet—touristic—Cuba. Put another way, it is also an illustration of space-making micropractices that appear within the global regime of heritage.

Following the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the economic restructuring of Cuba in the 1990s made the force of tourism definitive in Trinidad, as elsewhere in the country. In Trinidad particularly, tourism dominates the town, something that differentiates it from Havana or other larger cities in Cuba where tourism looms large, but is short of overwhelming other aspects of urban space. Since the early 1990s, space in Cuba has become increasingly restructured, and this overall transformation has produced a particular articulation in Trinidad (see Hill 2007, Scarpaci 2000, Scarpaci and Portela 2009).

After more than three decades of the revolution that guaranteed equality to all, the Cuban government made a choice to create enclaves for international tourism within its territory. This act was an especially difficult one for Cubans to accept because one of the first reversals of the Batista policies undertaken by the revolutionary government was to democratize access to the private clubs and beaches from which most Cubans had long been excluded. Taking what seemed to be a step back, spaces were once again differentiated and hierarchized in favor of Cuba's international visitors (see Patullo 1996, especially chap. 4, Rosendahl 1997:epilogue, Schwartz 1997:chap. 13). That said, the differentiation observed in Cuba is by no means the segregation via barricade building that is witnessed in cities like Los Angeles (Davis 1992) or São Paulo (Caldeira 2000), whereby a crippling process in which difference is perceived as a security issue and leads to the deliberate annihilation of public space in an irreconcilable demarcation between the "safe private" and the "dangerous public" realms. As Lefebvre (2003:133) distinguishes, difference is about relationships, whereas segregation enforces non-communication. Barricades are meant to prohibit communication, but in the case of Cuba, it is important to keep in mind that the non-Cubans who visit the island do so willingly, and do not necessarily seek segregational practices for security reasons. Although some tourist practices may include visiting what is supposed to be dangerous parts of society to confirm the safeness of home (such as ghetto tourism<sup>4</sup>), the comparative safety of Cuban streets defies such general

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<sup>4</sup> Ghetto tourism, or poverty tourism refers to visits to poorer and socioeconomically underprivileged neighbourhoods of cities, such as favelas in Brazil, slums in India, and Harlem in New York (e.g., Weiner, 2008; Ly, 2008; *Africa News*, 2008; O'Neil, 2008).

characterization of visits to the country. Rather, in Cuba, tourist spaces are carefully demarcated so as not to “contaminate” ordinary Cubans’ life with the ills of capitalistic practices of tourism. Dubbed “Cuban apartheid” (see chapter four), this practical segregation of spatial use between Cubans and non-Cubans is justified officially in terms of the moral superiority of socialism and necessary sacrifice for the revolutionary future (Hagedorn 2001:27-8).

In the post-Soviet era, where state socialism could no longer be insulated in the Eastern Bloc, Cuba inevitably resituated its own form of socialism while requiring its citizens to persevere in the “Special Period.” The country also looked to the tourism industry to replace sugar production. Tourism, however, as the export business that takes place within its own territorial boundary brought with it a spatial conundrum: capitalist consumption that is visible to, yet out of reach of ordinary Cubans. Prior to 1993, Cuban citizens were not allowed to possess hard currency, which meant they were excluded from those venues that operated in dollars, such as shops, hotels, restaurants, and bars, which catered exclusively to foreign visitors and residents. Nevertheless, even after the 1993 “dollarization,” when Cuban citizens were permitted to use hard currency and their patronage of dollar stores was legalized, they were still barred from entering hotels, bars, and restaurants that catered to international tourists. Besides the official rhetoric of possible capitalist contamination, the policing of tourist spaces was enforced to assure tourists’ comfort; the assumption here being that Cubans who approach tourists do so with the intention to harass or hustle them. Cubans are seen not as a potential source of danger, but as an annoyance. In addition, it is convenient for the revolutionary government to conceal the luxurious tourist consumption as much as possible from the local population upon whom they were imposing extremely austere conditions. I was not able to find legal references for this segregational practice, but in early 2008, Raúl Castro officially lifted the restriction, accordingly implying the previous state endorsement of the policy.<sup>5</sup>

In what follows, I will explore the local articulations of space in contemporary Cuba. First, I attempt to ethnographically illustrate the spatial practices that occur in Trinidad, and then theoretically contextualize the touristic space and processes of local space-making.

### *Gatherings*

It was already dark, around 9:00 p.m. A crowd began to form around the gallery owned by the Office of Conservation. I had taken a shower and changed before coming, and everybody else seemed to have done the same. They were more elegantly dressed than I had expected, however. Some women had more makeup on than usual; it was a night out for many of us. Among other Trinitarios, I recognized people from the Office, their families, and local scholars that I had met. This *peña*—a venue where various types of performances take place for a small crowd of audience—at the gallery was not advertised as far as I knew, and had I not been to the Office that day, I would have

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<sup>5</sup> It was official in the sense that tourist hotels were informed to accept Cubans as guests, but no public announcement was made by the president.

missed it, too. Some had already gone in, occupying seats that were arranged in the form of a tiny theater. There was no stage, but a little open space with a few standing microphones. No program was offered. The room was brightly lit, and people were chatting with friends and colleagues. The atmosphere was especially jovial, infused by colorful dresses.

Ana, Director of the Department of Cultural Promotion came up to the microphone and announced that the *peña* was to start. Everybody took their seats. The person who opened the evening was a local historian; he talked about the family who once occupied the house that is now the gallery—Galería Tristán—named after them. This mini-lecture was followed by poetry reading by several local poets, praising Trinidad's beauty and historic richness. The audience was listening carefully, and responded with enthusiastic applause. Soon rum was served in plastic cups. A colleague of mine from the Office took the stage, too, with his piece of verse. One after another, presenters stood in front of the microphone with ease, as if speaking in front of the public was routine. Everybody knew each other more or less, so it almost gave an impression of the literary salon of yesteryear Europe. Indeed, at future functions, the Department of Cultural Promotion began calling these events *tertulias*, social gatherings of an intellectual sort. People came in and left throughout, but at any moment the room had approximately thirty to fifty people.

Music was performed by *trova*<sup>6</sup> singers, who took the stage with guitars and performed their original songs. *Trova* takes second place in the tourist realm in Cuba, compared with more internationally-famed *salsa* and jazz, but is tremendously enjoyed by Cubans (and other Latin Americans) and considered an important musical genre. Many of the songs are only heard locally, as musicians often do not have the chance to record, preventing these songs from being broadcasted. These small-scale local events are their major performance venues, and local audiences gain a particular understanding of these artists and songs from their shared social and cultural contexts. The lyrics may evoke the minutiae of life in Trinidad or in Cuba or satirize the government, which are meant only to be understood by Cubans and close observers of Cuban society. The audience sings along, for they have heard the songs many times; the musician would perform *with* the crowd, rather than to them. Such a set of performances is conducive to intimate interaction that only familiarity can bring about. In contrast, music performed to tourists is predicated upon few common denominators, focusing more on the light-heartedness and ephemeral nature of tourist experience, and lyrics do not evoke the kind of intimacy possible in the local *peña*.<sup>7</sup>

The night continued with more storytelling, poetry, and singing; the structure of the program was loose, and people were welcomed to jump in with their own performance. Rum came around several times. Again and again, Trinidad was mentioned, praised, and sung about as a beautiful home. Fittingly, one of the poems

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<sup>6</sup> *Trova* or *nueva trova* is a genre of music that developed in the 1970s in Cuba, associated with politically-conscious verses and folk-song like melodies. For old *trova*, see chapter four, footnote 30.

<sup>7</sup> I thank Professor Graburn for reminding me about Yvonne Daniel's important contribution in this regard. Daniel (1996) has demonstrated that at dance performances in tourist settings, often the audience and dancers experience moments of intimacy.

presented in the evening was entitled “Intimacy,” to express the poet’s relationship with the city.

Intimidad  
Yansert Fraga León

La ciudad sede sus luces a la sombra  
pero se ilumina benévola, naciente.  
Ahora que recorro sus calles me doy  
cuenta:  
terror en mano,  
reconstruyo el tiempo  
mientras el polvo de sus adoquines  
delata mi rostro  
ante su historia centenaria.

Solo somos ella y yo  
trasmutados por la posteridad de la noche:  
en silencio,  
ella absorbe mi doble condición inmortal  
(mortal y no, como a ella le gusta)  
y abre sus piernas arrugadas de espasmos  
para mostrarme la lujuria de sus parques  
y el misterio infinito que resguardan sus  
muros.

Intimacy  
Yansert Fraga León

The city hands over its lights to the shade  
emerging and benevolent, it enlightens.  
Now that I’ve covered its streets I realize:  
terror in my hand,  
I reconstruct time  
while the dust from the cobblestones  
betrays my face  
before its centenary history.

We’re alone, the city and I  
transformed by the night’s posterity:  
in silence,  
she absorbs my immortal double condition  
(mortal and immortal, as she likes)  
and opens her legs wrinkled from spasms  
to show me the lust of her parks  
and the infinite mystery that her walls  
shield

Yansert expresses the city’s embrace that is benevolent and sensual, and his exploration of its history reveals the double condition of the mortal and the immortal. Mortal residents are part of the city’s immortal history that has woven numerous mysteries into itself for them to relish, explore, and be infatuated with. This city could be any city, a historic city, with cobblestones, walls, and parks. And yet in the context of this peña, it could be nothing other than Trinidad; it is a poem written by a Trinitario and presented to fellow Trinitarios. It is worth noting that this poem portrays a solitary relationship between the resident-poet and the personified city, rather than other forms of sociality with streets as the background. The city itself is the interlocutor, one that seduces and incites. There is nothing that deters this intimacy—though in reality, the kind of immediacy invoked may not be as readily available. Trinidad emerges as a poetic subject around which artistic expressions flourish; its physical beauty and rich history cannot be overstated. It is an idealized Trinidad, a perfect object to be worshipped. What is left out is the clamor of the streets and the ubiquitous tourists, which would render impossible such an exclusive interaction.

It was probably past midnight when the peña officially ended, and for some, it was only the beginning of the night. Several colleagues from the Office wanted to visit the *escalinata* (staircase), the name by which the people of Trinidad refer to the town’s main dance venue, *Casa de la Música* (House of Music) with its vast set of open-air stairs for people to “hang out.” For the young and not-so-young, Casa de la Música is

where happenings are expected, it is the place to be. One after another, live bands play “danceable” music,<sup>8</sup> interlaced with performances by local dance troupes and other performance groups. The floor in the middle of the staircase is filled with tourists and locals dancing, and the nightly merriment lasts until early hours of the morning. In contrast to Galería Tristá, Casa de la Música is extremely touristic; it is a structured show with announcements in Spanish and English, and bands vie for a spot in the program in order to sell their CDs and collect tips. The drinks are priced for international tourists, that is, in hard currency, from 3 CUC up. Local Trinitarios go there with their friends, but many also expect to meet foreign visitors there. Once the performance group finishes or takes an intermission, they come around with a tip box especially asking tourists for money but bypassing the locals. Every evening, there are hundreds of people in the *escalinata*, which faces the main town square.

Blocks away from the square, Galería Tristá is situated, and as there are no tourist restaurants or bars around, not many tourists pass by at night. As explained above, the Office does not advertise the peña event widely—it is more word of mouth than anything that people hear about it.<sup>9</sup> It is, then, rare for tourists to find out about the events. If any tourists showed up, they would be cordially included, as I saw on other occasions; but it is not particularly in the interest of the Office to reach out to a wider audience. Unlike tourist venues, the drinks and snacks are offered gratis, and though they are by no means lavish, it is a treat. In a city where most bars and restaurants operate in CUC, it does not cost anything to attend these events. Again, it is meant to be small as finding out about the peña, attending it, and feeling comfortable in it would require cultural competence of a very local nature. Nevertheless, it is a public event sponsored by the Office of Conservation, which is a government agency. The Office is not mandated to earn a profit, thus the sole purpose of peñas is to provide local residents a space to socialize and express themselves. In contrast, the agency that runs Casa de la Música is one of the profit-making enterprises of the government.

These two venues represent the differentiated spaces in today’s Trinidad, a town overridden with international tourism. They are not exclusive of each other, and they do not operate as a form of segregation. Nevertheless, the general socioeconomic difference that divides visitors and local residents produces differentiated spatial practices. The ways in which space is differentiated need to be examined specifically, exploring the implications of the particular dynamic of differentiation. Events like the Office’s peñas that are geared towards residents are spaces that are valorized in the context of international tourism. Space in Trinidad encompasses layers of differentiation that complicate our understanding of the touristic and local spaces. Further ethnographic inquiries illustrate the way in which spatial practices are embedded in the Cuban social, economic, and political context.

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<sup>8</sup> Danceable music (*música bailable*) is a category of Cuban music that includes timba, merengue, cha cha cha, etc. See chapter four.

<sup>9</sup> They also advertise through the local radio, but tourists rarely listen to it; if they do, they are most likely either not understand the Spanish announcement or the locally specific place names and other details mentioned.

*Differential space 1:*<sup>10</sup> *Disciplined dancers*

One night at the Casa de la Música, I witnessed spatial policing at work. It was a Tuesday night, but the escalinata was packed. I was with a few tourist friends, and a Cuban man whom one of my friends had met the night before. I had danced with the Cuban, but we were all now seated on the outdoor staircase and watching the band and the dance floor. The band plays until midnight, but people usually keep dancing to the recorded music until the early hours. I thought the night was winding down. The tables were still occupied, mostly with tourists with drinks, and we were surrounded by people chatting and drinking on the staircase. The dance floor, however, was oddly empty. Perhaps the recorded music was not to their liking—I did not pay too much attention. Then, in a bitter tone, Carlos, the Cuban who was sitting with us, told me that the police were around. “Now Cubans wouldn’t dare dance with tourists,” he explained. I noticed the few officers and two police cars at the bottom of the staircase. When I looked around, there were two Cuban men, perhaps in their twenties, who were interviewed by the police. It was not apparent to me why these men were being questioned, but the officers were checking their identification cards. There was no brawl or commotion that preceded the questioning. “It could be random,” I thought to myself, “used as a scare tactic to control public conduct.” But what I realized is that what was being controlled was the relationship between tourists and Cubans, and this was achieved by criminalizing Cubans who associate themselves with foreign visitors.

In Cuba, touting tourists is known as *jineterismo* (see chapter three), largely referring to prostitution, as the phenomenon emerged prominent with the upsurge of tourism and the rapid impoverishment of Cubans in the mid-1990s. To counter this practice, more police were placed in tourist areas and suspect Cubans were detained on the street. It is well known that in a stereotyped characterization of white tourists and darker-skinned *jinetero/as* (those who engage in *jineterismo*), this policing of public space is highly racialized (for example, De la Fuente 2001, Fernandez 1999, Hagedorn 2001). Indeed, in the case of the two men mentioned above, I later saw them escorted by officers to police cars (it was too dark to see whether they were darker skinned). Nobody made a big deal out of the incident. Tourists are usually not subjected to treatment like that, and Cubans are well aware of the risk they are taking when they come to places like Casa de la Música. As such, they act accordingly. Notwithstanding, the bitterness in Carlos’ voice reminded me of the invisible spatial and social boundaries within which Cubans behaved.

*Differential space 2: Comfort of separation*

The Ancón Beach is Trinidad’s local beach and another prime example of the differential spatial practices at work in the area. It is local in the sense that it lies a mere eight miles away from the city, and it has historically been considered part of Trinidad’s natural resources. However, today to go to the beach, one either takes a taxi for 6 - 8 CUC, the tourist bus for 2 CUC, or asks a favor of one of the service buses that shuttle hotel employees for two local pesos. In some cases, people wait on the street to see if

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<sup>10</sup> As I discuss later, I use Lefebvre’s concept (1991, 2003) of differential space.

any horse carriage with extra space will pass by. Given these relatively restricted and mostly costly transport options, local residents with no CUC to spare are that much farther from getting to the beach that they boast about.

Further, all taxis and the tourist buses take passengers who ask to go “to the beach” to one specific location, which lies in between two large, all-inclusive resorts. This part of the beach has palm-thatched parasols, beach chairs, yacht and boat rental, and a CUC-operating bar and restaurant. It is usually full of tourists, and the nearby parking area accommodates rental cars and taxis waiting for returning clients. Up about half a mile away, however, there is another part of the beachfront that also gets crowded. This is Ancón viejo (Old Ancón), where once government-operated restaurants and showers stood. These facilities are now defunct and in their place are a few small kiosks selling drinks, small snacks, and pizzas in local pesos. One of the government businesses also runs a stage where loud music is played, and an attached bar offers cigarettes and drinks in CUC. Horses and horse carriages find their temporary spots in the surrounding area while their owners and passengers enjoy the day. As they are taken to the other side of the beach, foreign tourists are hardly seen in this area. I became familiar with Ancón viejo because I accompanied some local friends who organized regular trips to the beach by hiring a bus and having neighbors sign up. It cost ten pesos (0.4 CUC or 0.48 USD) per person for a return trip. A full-size non-air conditioned commuter bus gets easily overcrowded with locals waiting for an opportunity to get to the beach. And the driver makes extra income from this side business. Such a neighborhood outing involved multiple ways to spend time at the beach; they brought dominos, dogs, complete lunch, soft drinks, rum, and the radio. Ancón viejo presents a distinct sociocultural dynamic that is very different from that on the other side of the beach which is occupied by tourists. The tourist part of Ancón usually had small gatherings of people—couples, groups of friends, and families, whereas the regular crowds at Ancón viejo were larger. Although it did not cost more or less to occupy any part of the beach, comfort zones and invisible boundaries have developed for each group.

### *Differential space 3: Dining in and out*

In Trinidad, there are restaurants operating both in local pesos and CUCs. Government-run CUC restaurants and bars are housed in restored buildings in the historic center, and patronized by individual tourists and organized groups. They have large signs at the entrance and bilingual menus, and some of the staff speak English. As mentioned before, a typical meal costs 10 CUC, and a drink costs 3 CUC. This effectively bars Cubans from entering the restaurant, unless of course they serve or play music there, as all these venues feature live music. There are also private restaurants (*paladares*), which are individual homes that have business licenses to serve meals for similar prices in CUCs, and private houses that sell pizzas, sandwiches, and complete meals in local pesos out of their windows, but these are strictly take-out businesses. Local peso restaurants are less conspicuous in appearance, and their menus are far simpler than their tourist-catering counterparts. Although you could have a pizza or a complete meal for less than a dollar at these places, Cubans do not consider them as places of

entertainment. Rather, one dines in such a place out of necessity—because he or she commutes and has no other way to have lunch, or does not have the conditions to cook at home. During my research, I never heard of locals going “out for dinner” at a peso restaurant for a special occasion; in fact, I have never heard of my Cuban friends ever eating in any of these places. Generally, people entertain in their homes because dining out is not really an option. I went to birthdays, weddings, and neighborhood gatherings at people’s homes, but I was never invited to nor did I witness similar occasions at a restaurant. Thus restaurants, too, are indicative of the spatial separation between tourists and locals in Trinidad.

However, it should also be noted that other cities (less touristic than Trinidad) offer more options for Cubans in pesos and that Trinidad is an extreme case where Cubans do not have eateries to go to in their own town. By way of contrast, in Holguín, the capital of the eastern province bearing the same name, one encounters a number of peso-operated restaurants that are of quality and offer various kinds of dishes. Likewise, when I traveled to other cities, I discovered that Trinidad was an exception. In Baracoa, Santiago de Cuba, Bayamo, Santa Clara, Sancti Spíritus, and even in Havana, one finds restaurants that Cubans go to for special occasions which are affordable. One can dine for a dollar or two at an elegantly decorated restaurant facing the main plaza in these cities. So it seems that if the government opens a restaurant in Trinidad, it would do so for tourists—to gain hard currency, rather than to entertain peso-paying locals.

We understand from these ethnographic observations that space in Trinidad is palpably differential. Residents and tourists have different codes of behavior, separate stretches of beach, and distinct sets of dining options. In other words, they largely occupy separate spaces. Rather than simply denounce this practice as oppressive or discriminatory, however, I will contextualize these spatial practices and instances of differentiation in a larger framework of urban processes.

### *Urban space dynamics*

The idea of urbanization as a modernization and/or a modern process has been well theorized, and tourism is becoming an increasingly crucial aspect of urban processes. How, then, can we understand a space like Trinidad, where tourism seems to overly identify its urban center? The rhetoric that surrounds Trinidad emphasizes the static nature of its urban built environment, and by extension, of the city as a whole. A 1999 *National Geographic* article on Trinidad reads, “Along streets resonant with the clip-clop of horses’ hoofs and the squeak of bicycles, life moves at a pace from decades past” (Williams 1999:95). Similarly, in a tourist brochure, Trinidad is characterized to be “as if suspended in time” (Ministerio de Turismo, n.d.).<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the city did not end its history with the demise of the sugar industry that contributed to most of the cityscape. Rather, the trope of Trinidad as a representation of the bygone era is part of the production of modernist nostalgia at the global scale (Graburn 1995, Roy 2004). Trinidad capitalizes on its rustic image because it is a highly marketable commodity in the global economy. Such a fantasized destination, nevertheless, is also home to the

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<sup>11</sup> The original text in Spanish: “Como detenida en el tiempo, Trinidad...”

everyday life or the mundane of the residents. The rustic and stagnant, when lived, may come alive in a distinct, and more dynamic pronunciation.

For Lefebvre, urban space is by definition a differential space, where complex social relations constantly mark spaces through difference. Places are identified (isotopy) against the place of the other (heterotopy) while elsewhere that never happens (u-topia) is always referenced (2003:128). That is, certain spaces in time are recognized as identifiable, isotopy in Lefebvre's triad terminology, as a familiar place and as a place to which one has a right. This identification happens against the background of unidentified spaces, the spaces one does not recognize, or spaces of unfamiliar others. This space of the other is Lefebvre's heterotopy. These processes of recognition and identification are spatial practices that are not fixed in a place, but temporary articulations of social relations. Spatial practices, on the other hand, are realized by referencing the ideal—u-topia, or how the space should be—whether explicitly or implicitly. U-topia is imagined in endless ways depending on the subject position and the context, and underlies spatial practices. Urban space is always a dynamic interplay of subjectivities, where difference or differentiation is what makes a place identifiable, if only for a moment. According to Lefebvre, then, difference is intrinsic to the urban, and it is a generative force rather than a finalizing one. Difference in Trinidad is particularly pronounced due to the force of international tourism. The touristic realm of Trinidad is a mixture of isotopy and heterotopy for the locals. One feels at home and alienated at the same time. More isotopic for Trinidarios is the space of peñas hosted by the Office of Conservation while tourists would more likely find the same space heterotopic. Conversely, Casa de la Música can be more heterotopic to locals than to tourists. Spatial practices are the result of the interaction among isotopy, heterotopy, and u-topia; consequently, the peña emerges and takes the characteristics that it has in the context of today's Trinidad, in search of how space should be.

MacCannell theorizes the drive of modern international tourism as the attraction of the differentiation. The alienation that the modern subject feels in their own society launches them in the quest for authenticity elsewhere. Tourism embodies modernity; for modernization is social structural differentiation (1999:11), and "*sightseeing is a ritual performed to the differentiations of society*" (1999:13). In other words, MacCannell equates modernization with the process of differentiation, where socioeconomic development induces a global awareness of different social, cultural, political, economic, ethnic, and historic identities. Consequently, international visits are predicated on perceived differences, and are performed to reinforce differences while desire to incorporate them through experience is fulfilled in the act of consumption by the visitors. Differential spaces are corollary of this process, and in turn they are what enables tourism. Difference does not automatically translate into injustice, however. Whereas socioeconomic differences at the global scale privilege a certain class of consumers, and spatial practices reflect these differences, it also invigorates the production of their own space by the underprivileged. Because the international visitors come and claim space in Trinidad, however fleeting it may be for each visitor, local space-making becomes ever more significant. The sense of being Trinidario has gained an international context, the affirmation of which is performed in small-scale practices

such as the state-sponsored peñas. Being Trinitario is coupled with being a UNESCO World Heritage resident, and this sensibility is intensified when juxtaposed with passing travelers (chapter four).

### *Conclusion*

Trinidad is undeniably a global tourist destination, drawing visitors from various continents. Its status as a UNESCO World Heritage site only reinforces this fact. As a small town without many other industries to depend on, tourism dominates Trinidad in an exceptional way even within Cuba. Space in Trinidad is differentiated to serve international visitors and local Trinitarios separately, mostly for socioeconomic reasons observed in other destinations in the global South. Further, differential spaces sustain the socialist state by carving out a special capitalist zone of tourism that contribute financially, and supposedly stays separate from socialist Cuba. The differentiation requires constant management, however, as observed in the policing at the Casa de la Música. We have seen that although at times different codes of behavior are applied to tourists and locals and tend to privilege visitors over Cubans, the local dynamics of global relations do not necessarily penalize the latter. It is this difference that vitalizes the sense of being Trinitario; the presence of visitors from around the globe makes the city's worth felt in everyday life, and Trinitarios' intimate relations with the city are expressed and highlighted. The imaginary Trinidad figures as a quiet and secluded place—with the touristic Trinidad consumed by visitors—as well as a seductive lover for the residents. Peñas, the small gatherings sponsored by the Office of Conservation are a non-touristic space that emerged because of the excessively touristic nature of the city's public space. It is a productive space of the locals, an indispensable part of the urban process that is animated by articulations of differences which constantly redefine the space.

Above, I described the space of peña as *non-touristic*. Is the peña a space where tourism is absent? Is it trying to subvert or resist the touristic space? In light of my argument so far, here I consider some possible ways to describe this space. These locally specific practices that affirm the value of Trinidad and cultivate intimacy among residents and between residents and the city emerge *in relation to* the touristic practices and the tourist-dominant space. It may be akin to de Certeau's "enunciation" of space by walkers (1984), if we take tourists as voyeurs for their fleeting hence distant positionality to the locale. For de Certeau, "[t]he act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or to the statements uttered" (1984:97). The peña is an organized event, not an arbitrary everyday expression. Unlike walking, the peña does not stand in opposition to a system; it is not what de Certeau terms "tactics" as compared with "strategies" (1984:29-42). In this sense, the peña is not the reverse of tourist practices, as the prefix *non-touristic* may suggest. Nor is it against tourism or *anti-touristic*, explicitly resisting the tourist realm. Moreover, the locals at the peña are not serving the tourists there. Could it be then an *atouristic* space? Perhaps, yet I am also cautious to call the peña as completely devoid of tourism. I have documented the presence of tourists at the peña, and though this may have been accidental, the principal characterization of Trinidad as a tourist destination forecloses the possibility of any

physical space within the historic center being atouristic. Rather, I want to underline the aspect of the space of the peña that exists in a dialectical relationship with the touristic space, which is a mutually productive one. I may call it a *counter*-touristic space, not in the sense that the peña is *opposing* the touristic space, but in the sense that it is *in correspondence with* or *complementary to* the touristic. The very locally-g geared practices arose in the tourism-dominant context, but not in order to override the context, or to delimit the local in opposition to the external. The semi-structured nature of the event, its openness suggests the fluidity of boundaries, and the focus on Trinidad as home and a world-class city is in conversation with the international interest that situates Trinidad on a global map.

Here, the epigraph of this chapter becomes relevant. To apply these words of de Certeau, Trinidad is the “frontier,” the contact between the touristic and the counter-touristic spaces, and it is the “points of differentiation” which are also the “common points.” Neither of them exclusively owns the frontier, but they are dialectically engaged through the common points, which also differentiate them. Difference, to recall Lefebvre, is a generative force. Spaces of Trinidad are being produced through differences, which is an ever-ongoing interplay between conjunction and disjunction in touristic encounters.

## Chapter Six

### Comparative aesthetics of heritage cityscapes: Old Havana and Trinidad

Cuban built environments have historically marked distinct aesthetics that were enabled by political economy of the times. According to Zukin (1991:16), “[i]n a narrow sense, *landscape* represents the architecture of social class, gender, and race relations imposed by powerful institutions.” Different times embrace distinct aesthetics, and distinct monies materially shape the urban landscapes. The Spanish colonial power formed the walled city of Old Havana from the sixteenth century, the early republican Cuba graced Havana with neoclassical civic buildings like el Capitolio (the legislature building reminiscent of the U.S. Congress). In the 1940s and 1950s, North American mafias who were welcomed by the Cuban regime built casinos on the island that connected their modern architectural styles with those of Las Vegas and Miami. More recently, as Cuba reinserted itself to the global economy after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, albeit in its own socialist manner, new cityscapes began to emerge. The emerging cityscapes are shaped by newly inserted capitalist economy. Especially of note are the heritage cityscapes throughout the island—Old Havana, Cienfuegos, Trinidad, Camagüey, Bayamo, Santiago de Cuba—the urban historic centers that feature Spanish colonial architecture that constitute important tourism resources in Cuba’s economy today, which are vigorously being restored. These cityscapes also compose the heritage-scape (Di Giovine 2009) that spreads over the world and is produced by the UNESCO World Heritage program. Nevertheless, these post-Soviet cityscapes are not uniform throughout the island, and embody dynamic local processes. In this chapter, I compare two restored buildings in two localities to discuss distinct aesthetic possibilities that have to do with the locale’s relation to the past, and their standing as the entrepreneurial actors in the neoliberal regime of heritage. The comparison is made between Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo in Havana (Figure 6.1), and Hotel Iberostar in Trinidad (Figure 6.2). Both buildings were inaugurated in 2006, and both restoration works are part of the efforts of historic preservation in UNESCO World Heritage sites. The World Heritage status imposes on these places certain responsibility over the maintenance of the cityscape whose historical significance is recognized as universal, which, in turn, draws tourists from all over the world. To some extent, these buildings in Havana and Trinidad embody in their forms respective engagement with the past and the neoliberal subjectivity of the two preservation agencies in charge.

Aside from the buildings being part of the UNESCO sites and inaugurated in the same year, there are certain characteristics that distinguish them, which additionally point to the larger situations in which the cities find themselves. Colegio San Gerónimo is a public educational institution, whereas Hotel Iberostar is a public-private joint-venture leisure enterprise. The former is a civic building serving Cubans, the latter a profit-oriented business to accommodate international visitors. Colegio is in the 0.826 sq. mi. (2.14 sq. km.) historic center consisting of 3,370 buildings (UNESCO 2006:8) in

Old Havana, and is located near the tourist-popular Plaza de Armas. It is surrounded by carefully restored colonial buildings, such as Hotel Ambos Mundos and Palacio de los Capitanes Generales (Palace of the Captains General). On the other hand, Hotel Iberostar in Trinidad is situated on the edge of the historic center, but facing a plaza where the municipal government sits and sandwiched between a residential building and a state-run barbershop. The designated historic center of Trinidad is 0.143 sq. mi. (0.37 sq. km.) (García Santana 2004:xiii), with 1,207 buildings (García Santana et.al. 1996:7), about one third of the area and the number of buildings of Old Havana. Thus even technically outside of the historic center proper, the hotel constitutes part of the broader heritage cityscape, which is the touristic zone of Trinidad. The plaza that the hotel faces is a local gathering place, with an enormous green pergola offering shade in which to cool down.



**Figure 6.1** Colegio San Gerónimo, Havana. Photo by Maki Tanaka.

As noted before, Old Havana and Trinidad are major tourist destinations in Cuba, partly due to their World Heritage status. The value of tourism in these places is marked differently, however, requiring some comparison in order to elucidate the characteristics of the contexts in which Colegio and Hotel Iberostar are situated. Havana is the national capital of Cuba, and one of the first seven settlements by the Spanish colonists. Along with the surrounding fortifications, its old quarters were designated as

the UNESCO World Heritage site in 1982. The preservation of Old Havana is administered by the Office of the City Historian (La Oficina del Historiador de la Ciudad de La Habana, OHCH), headed by Dr. Eusebio Leal. The prominence of this Office has been mentioned briefly in chapter two; I will bring Leal and his office back to our discussion later in this chapter. The city of Havana has a population of 2.1 million, 91,227 of which live in the municipality of Old Havana.<sup>1</sup> Some 2.3 million tourists visit Cuba annually, about half of whom stay in Havana.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 6.2** Hotel Iberostar, Trinidad. Photo by Carlos Sentmanat, used with permission from the photographer.

Another one of the first colonial settlements, Trinidad, also among the first seven colonial settlements, is situated in the South-Center of the island, in the Province of Sancti Spíritus. Trinidad has a population of 74,892, 70% of which live in the urban area (52,988).<sup>3</sup> The urban historic center of Trinidad made to the World Heritage List with the surrounding Sugar Mill Valley in 1988, the preservation of which is overseen by the Office of Conservation of the City of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley (OCT). Trinidad's proximity to Havana (four to five hours by bus, allowing day-trips from Havana) and the Caribbean Sea (Ancón Beach, eight miles from the city center) makes it a popular tourist destination on the island. Still, a little more than 300,000 international tourists visited Trinidad in 2006.<sup>4</sup> And yet, the tourism industry is an overwhelming force that shapes the cityscape of Trinidad, whereas it is just one dimension in Havana. The city of Havana is the administrative, cultural, and economic center of the island, and has within its limits industries such as manufacturing and

<sup>1</sup> Population statistics as of 2009. Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas (National Office of Statistics, Cuba) 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Oficina Nacional de Estadísticas 2009

pharmaceuticals besides tourism. Due to the political economic situations of the two cities, the logic of heritage preservation manifests differently. Heritage preservation is dictated by tourism in Trinidad while it is rather its own industry in Old Havana, though tourism is a vital cog in the heritage enterprise.

This chapter examines different aesthetics of restoration realized in the buildings of Colegio San Gerónimo in Havana and Hotel Iberostar Trinidad as a means of comparing the relations to the past in the two cities. The exercise allows us to see different neoliberal subjectivities within the same state, in relation to the global regime of heritage. Consequently, the chapter attempts to complicate the monolithic depiction of Cuba that Havana tends to metonymically represent.

### *The buildings*

#### Havana: Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo

The current Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo draws on a long history of the site dating back to the beginning of the history of Old Havana. Dominicans began settling in Havana around 1578, and founded the Santo Domingo church and the monastery of San Juan de Letrán. This was the original building that occupied the grounds in Old Havana where Colegio sits today. The idea of establishing a university here arose in 1679. Some 50 years passed before the Spanish crown approved the establishment of Royal and Pontifical University in Havana in 1728 (La Real y Pontificia Universidad de San Gerónimo de La Habana). For more than a century, the original building accommodated the Santo Domingo church and the monastery of San Juan de Letrán, and the University, making it a cultural and intellectual center of the country. In 1842, the university became secularized, and in 1902, the university—now the University of Havana—was relocated to the present location in Vedado. One of the functions of the original building was removed from the site.

The other functions, the church and the monastery, too, found a new site in Vedado, leaving the building in Old Havana vacant. In 1916, a company bought the premises with a plan to demolish the buildings and construct an enormous structure filling the entire block. Nevertheless, the demolition was delayed for forty years due to financial troubles, and the remaining structure became home to squatters. In 1956, the ground was finally razed.<sup>5</sup> In its place, a modernist structure was elected on the lot with a rooftop heliport.<sup>6</sup> After the triumph of the revolution in 1959, the building accommodated the Ministry of Education (Hill 2009, 2011).

The property was then transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Office of the City Historian (OHCH) since then, though I have not been able to verify the exact date of the transfer. What we know is that around 1999 the renovation of the building to

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<sup>5</sup> There was another building that was constructed on the site in 1941 (Hill 2009), apparently beside the half-demolished university and monastery building. The 1956 clearing of the site also leveled this building.

<sup>6</sup> The mentioning of the rooftop heliport in literature (OHCH 2006) seems to indicate the modern characteristic of the new building, marking the passage of time from the preceding structure rather than the political function of the building.

commemorate the original university was suggested, and later the City Historian, Eusebio Leal proposed the creation of Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo, the faculty of Preservation and Management of Historic and Cultural Heritage. It is the first of its kind in Cuba to offer bachelor's degrees (licenciatura) in heritage management, and was inaugurated in the academic year of 2007-2008. Further below, I will discuss more on the function of the building in relation to form.

The new building is a renovation of the existing modernist structure where the Ministry of Education was housed. In the words of the OHCH, it is work that “projects the future from the past,” to recreate “with contemporary language the image of the disappeared site of the pontifical university.”<sup>7</sup> The façade is renovated “with glass covering that reflects the surrounding”<sup>8</sup> (OHCH 2006:11). In Old Havana, an environment where tourists come for the architectural heritage from the colonial period, glass walls that mirror the bright tropical sky are a strikingly bold insertion. In the heart of colonial cityscape, the tourist zone with beautifully restored Spanish colonial buildings, Colegio faces the City Museum, or the Palace of the Captains General on one side and Hemingway-themed Hotel Ambos Mundos on another. The Colegio stands out for its modern appearance whereby it does not hide the periodical discrepancy of the overall urban fabric. Matthew J. Hill (2011) describes the restoration of the Colegio building as the “creation of new layers.” The new historical layers added in Old Havana are visible and identify themselves as modern additions. The particular manner of layering of history that comprises heritage practices in Old Havana is a point of comparison with Trinidad. I will discuss more on this point below.

What is remarkable is that in the remaking of this building, some references to the “original” architecture are incorporated. Again according to the OHCH, “paraphrasing the original”<sup>9</sup> structure, the bell tower accentuates the building with its representation of a different era and with contrasting stone texture. The bell tower is a steel and aluminum structure covered with stone and embedded in the main modern structure. It is a “replica—in terms of form and scale”<sup>10</sup> (OHCH 2006:9), which is a reproduction using modern building techniques and technologies. The stone façade appears to be the replica of the original, but the construction method was not replicated here. On another side of the building, a replica of the original gate is installed (Figure 6.3). The original baroque-style gate dates back around 1777, and the new design is almost exactly reproduced with the use of a different material. The result is work “in active dialogue with codes of the past, recreated and characterized by contemporary language” (OHCH:11).<sup>11</sup> This, too, is a reproduction with a serious nod to the original. In the interior, the nave of the church is reinterpreted and restored as the auditorium for in the old university, it was in the church that the degree was bestowed. The Colegio incorporates fragments that make reference to the original in its form, and evokes the

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<sup>7</sup> The original Spanish text reads: “Proyectar el futuro desde el pasado,” “con lenguaje contemporáneo la imagen de la desaparecida sede de la universidad pontificia.”

<sup>8</sup> “con una envoltura de vidrio que refleja el entorno.”

<sup>9</sup> “parafraseando a las original.”

<sup>10</sup> “réplica—en términos de forma y escala”

<sup>11</sup> “en diálogo activo con códigos del pasado, recreados y caracterizados en lenguaje contemporáneo.”

genealogy of the site in its function. How this all speaks to its relationship to the past will be discussed later in comparison with Trinidad.



**Figure 6.3** Restored gate at Colegio San Gerónimo. Photo by Maki Tanaka

However, there is a missing section in this restored architecture. The glass façade completely encases the republican-era modernist structure, which for decades served as home to the socialist Ministry of Education. The covering makes a reference to the now disappeared “original” building of the monastery and the university in fragmented replicas of the bell tower and the gate. As such, the seeming relics are reproductions while the preserved past which is a modernist material does not have the weight of the historic reference. The covering of a layer is part of the aesthetic decision in restoring the Colegio building. At first glance, our linear mode of historic consciousness may deceive us into perceiving that the remaining pieces from the colonial era are preserved in the contemporary building. Defying such historicity, is this a postmodern collage that collapses history into design tokens? The layers of time are quite visible in the Colegio, if the chronological order is somewhat confusing. These layers are carefully concealed in the surrounding buildings of Old Havana, for the consistency of appearance achieved in the restoration.

Old Havana was reborn in the mid-1990s, marking another phase of political economy when Cuba decidedly turned towards international tourism industry for survival, and allocated resources to the Office of the City Historian. In Old Havana, the mode of city planning has become historic restoration that generates tourism revenue, which then is invested back in the community in the forms of social services. Since the 1993 refashioning of the OHCH, Dr. Eusebio Leal has taken the task single-handedly to revive Old Havana, its economy, and its material conditions. The OHCH has grown into a multi-organizational enterprise including some profit-oriented businesses.<sup>12</sup> A charismatic figure, Eusebio Leal himself is an institution in today's Cuba whereby tourist businesses, historic preservation and socialist programs materialize at an unprecedented level. There is a sense of exceptionality to Leal (whom Cubans simply call Eusebio); no other World Heritage site in Cuba boasts a celebrity figure equipped with political accessibility of the kind he enjoys. Hence we may describe that Old Havana has become Eusebio Leal's town. Leal's "success" has been acknowledged by UNESCO as "A Singular Experience" (the title of the publication by UNESCO and OHCH in 2006), as an exemplary model to be replicated elsewhere. The conversion of the Ministry of Education building into a university department fits into the overall performance of Old Havana as the responsible agent of the World Heritage Convention. Here, not only the end product (restored cityscape) is on display, but also the ongoing engagement of the Cuban public in managing the humanity's patrimony is showcased. And the responsibility of the present—the training of heritage professionals—is represented by "progressive" architecture while buildings that serve tourists are replicas of the past forms, as seen in the surrounding buildings (Figure 6.4).

The obvious nod from UNESCO expresses the success of entrepreneurial Havana. The OHCH is the exemplary subject in the global heritage regime who can prosper on one's own account. As discussion of neoliberalism underlines, the neoliberal rationality abandons any commitment to egalitarianism the welfare state had embraced. The exceptionality of the OHCH in current Cuba signals the wider social process of stratification observed in the late socialism. Since, in appearance, the regime of heritage stays clear of the economic realm, heritage preservation may well provide an easier entry for the neoliberal rationality to late socialist Cuba.

In this regard, the boldness of glass and steel façade of Colegio San Gerónimo can be interpreted as Old Havana's confidence in its status achieved in the global regime of heritage. The urban fabric of Old Havana is in the making today, inheriting and building on the colonial past. The present is the continuation of the past, constituting a part of the history, rather than a present that operates by nostalgia, or historicist allusion. Today's Old Havana is part of the World Heritage, and it defies being confined to the role of representing the bygone era.

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<sup>12</sup> Under the Office of the City Historian, there are several commercial enterprises, including Habaguanex S.A., which runs hotels, restaurants, and other tourist interests, and Fenix S.A., a real estate company.



**Figure 6.4** Colegio in the historic cityscape (on the second block to the left). Photo by Maki Tanaka.

#### Trinidad: Hotel Iberostar Trinidad

Inaugurated in 2006, Hotel Iberostar is a prominent building facing Plaza Carrillo in Trinidad, a plaza dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. The hotel is the only accommodation run by the government in Trinidad's urban historic center.<sup>13</sup> In the 18th and 19th centuries, the city of Trinidad expanded southward from Plaza Mayor, the town's original plaza. Since then, Plaza Carrillo, where Iberostar is located, has been the political and commercial hub of the city, if not the touristic center (García Santana 2004). The hotel sits technically outside of the historic zone designated as the UNESCO World Heritage but still within the urban center. The original structure housed Hotel Canadá from the 1920s, which remained in business as the most esteemed lodging in town, changing hands a couple of times until it was nationalized in the early 1960s. Hotel Canadá closed permanently in the 1980s, leaving a colorful history of celebrity guests, including the first City Historian of Havana, Emilio Roig de Leuchsenring

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<sup>13</sup> Other hotels are located in the Popa Hill (Hotel Horizontes Las Cuevas), and on Ancón Beach (Hotel Ancón, Hotel Costasur, and Hotel Brisas Trinidad del Mar). Also, there are numerous private homes (casas particulares) that rent out rooms in the city.

(Chaviano 2001). After closing its doors, the building followed its destined course in the tropical climate to its collapse.

As the Cuban government has facilitated joint ventures between the state and foreign investors in the tourism sector in the wake of the demise of the Socialist Bloc, the Cuban hotel company Cubanacán and the Spanish Iberostar began planning a five-star hotel in Trinidad around 1999 (Echenagusía 2007). The Office of Conservation of Trinidad (OCT) then formed a small team of Cuban professionals to oversee the project in order to ensure its aspect of historic preservation while designing to accommodate today's international hotel standards. And this is the extent to which the OCT is involved in this hotel; there is no space for the OCT to be part of the tourism business. The remaining façade of the former Hotel Canadá was restored and continued its design into the new construction. The end result is a seamless edifice that embodies the spirit of the original—without revealing that it is mostly a contemporary addition (Figure 6.5). From the exterior, the hotel maintains the appearance of a two-story building, in accordance with the local norm, where buildings barely exceed two levels. The hotel, in this manner, does not disturb the overall visuality of the cityscape. The interior, however, reveals to the visitors that it is actually a three-story structure to accommodate the necessary number of guest rooms. Restoration work in Trinidad keeps true to the ambience of the historic and cultural heritage for which tourists visit. The preservation specialists at the OCT stress the visual consistency of the cityscape.

A senior staff member of the OCT explained to me what they call the in-depth restoration (*restauración de profundidad*), in which the façades of the residents' dwellings are cosmetically preserved as much as possible while the interior may be radically modified to suit today's needs. As discussed in chapter two, however, the OCT refers to modification of houses that is incongruent with this visual aesthetics of the city as "contamination." That is, the inside of the buildings may be remodeled but the façade should by all means be restored in the historically fitting style. The overall image of the colonial past as described in the UNESCO World Heritage nomination (see the epigraph of chapter two) is what counts in Trinidad; the present gets tucked away behind the façade. Hotel Iberostar was constructed, then, so as not to disturb the visual representation of the static past. The hotel's brochure stresses this point.

#### *Authentic moments*

*We have renovated and redecorated the spaces in the hotel, respecting all the character of colonial architecture in order to create unique atmospheres where one can be in contact with history and also perceive the magic and tranquility of a unique place in which to spend a few days' rest. Simply having a drink in the lobby bar whilst chatting with friends, or submerging yourself in the Cuban evening from the balcony of your room, can be the detail that makes the day something special, in an almost imperceptible manner.*<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Iberostar Gran Hotel Trinidad, Cuba. Brochure.



**Figure 6.5** Hotel Iberostar construction. Photo by Carlos Sentmanat, used with permission from the photographer.

It is probably more apt to describe the hotel as newly constructed than to call it “renovated and redecorated,” yet the emphasis must be placed in the “contact with history.” It is not enough to build a simulacrum, as in the case of Disneyland, but it has to be a renovation of the original, an expansion and glorification of the survived fragment. This emphasis on the fragmented “original” qualifies as a fetish that is a much wider phenomenon than found in Cuban heritage practices.<sup>15</sup> In many ways, the UNESCO World Heritage program itself is part of it, and a driving force to save the “original fragments”—heritage sites—scattered in the world. The appearance of timelessness, we may pause to recognize, can only be maintained through constant work to conceal decay, that is, it requires a continuing engagement in the present. Further, notice that this “contact with history” is all realized within the hotel—having a drink in the lobby, looking out from the balcony, “in an almost imperceptible manner.” Imperceptible, from the everyday life of the streets, perhaps. The imperceptible may be the work of restoration that brings the past into the present. In comparison to the visible layers on display in the building of Colegio San Gerónimo in Old Havana, Hotel Iberostar Trinidad bears little visible conversation with history, that is, passage of time. The hotel *is* history. History is Trinidad. The guests are invited to “step into” an

<sup>15</sup> I owe Cathy Covey for bringing up the concept of fetish here.

aesthetic experience of history, or an aestheticized experience of Trinidad. This is how tourism drives restoration, a material representation of history in Trinidad; history becomes aestheticized here as a tool to produce tourist experiences.

It is even more striking when we recall that before March 2008, Cuban citizens were not allowed to patronize international hotels in Cuba (see chapter five). The space that is set aside for privileged sojourners shields them from the clamor of the streets (“the magic and tranquility of a unique place”), lifting them up from the everyday life of Trinitarios into the fantastic consumption of “history” rendered as images. The emphasis on the visual disembeds history from the social relations *twice*, once from the colonial relations, and again from the contemporary inequality between residents and visitors. The visitors’ experience of the past in Trinidad anticipated in this brochure is a form of imperialist nostalgia, “where people mourn the passage of what they themselves transformed” (Rosaldo 1989:108). Images of the quaint colonial town are repackaged and offered in the post-Soviet market, where World Heritage sites emerge as an inventory of universal achievements in the history of civilization, or humanity (Di Giovine 2009). It is a hubristic compilation of the list of exceptional human cultural practices and creations in order to save them from the contemporary ignorance and barbarism (i.e., the local society). Walter Benjamin once wrote: “The past carries with it a temporal index by which it is referred to redemption. There is a secret agreement between past generations and the present one” (1969:254). By becoming a connoisseur of the “important” things in the world, the consumer of the World Heritage can whitewash their status embedded in the social, economic, and political relations that make such an encounter possible.

The tourism-driven restoration that is realized in the architectural form of Hotel Iberostar suggests a different aesthetic possibility compared to that of Old Havana. Though Hotel Iberostar is not strictly inside the protected zone of UNESCO World Heritage, it is evident that the restoration was executed within the domain of the World Heritage scheme from having had the oversight of the OCT, and from the emphasis they had on the overall visual consistency of the greater historic center (that surrounds the protected area). In this case, the OCT is a side player in restoration in Trinidad, not having the full control of the planning and execution. The joint-venture, the hotel enterprise is the principal restorer, owing to their economic capital. And as discussed in chapters two and three, this is the mode of restoration in Trinidad in late socialism; the Office waits for the economic capital to arrive, upon which they can take part in the restoration project at the discretion of the investor. Restoration is realized piecemeal and opportunistically, and the overall heritage cityscape cannot be commanded by the OCT, as evidenced by the lack of a master plan.

#### *Relating to the past: Comparing Havana and Trinidad*

The relationship to the past in Trinidad is markedly different from that of Havana. Both Trinidad and Havana are tourist destinations and World Heritage sites, but the weight of international tourism is more significant in Trinidad. Havana has other industries, but Trinidad’s dependence on international tourism is beyond compare. Old Havana is but one of the fifteen municipalities within the City of Havana which has multiple centers.

It is also just one of the tourist attractions in Havana that spread across other parts of the city such as Centro Habana, Vedado, Miramar, and Habana del Este; whereas the historic center of Trinidad is literally the core of the larger area encompassing administrative and commercial centers. Trinidad is not the national or provincial capital, but a provincial town, and it does not have the political clout Old Havana has under Eusebio Leal. In fact, the most glaring difference between the two heritage sites is the profit-making function of the heritage offices. Havana's OHCH can run businesses for profit, whereas the OCT in Trinidad had assumed the role of profit-making until it was stripped of the function in 2007, when the national government reviewed the law that effectuated the OCT and decided that it did not have the legitimacy for commercial activities (see chapter two). Between the two offices, the budgetary schemes are disparate, the scales of operations are different; the imagined potential of what they can do is distinct, their positions in the global regime of heritage are dissimilar. The OHCH can self-finance its restoration projects, reaches out to the population by running social welfare projects, and practically runs the municipality of Old Havana. The OCT needs to oversee restoration works of individuals through working with the municipal government and the local Communist Party, and most importantly, major restoration works need outside investment. Its own projects are limited to research and publication, beautification of streets, emergency restoration, community events, training of restoration technicians, and publicity. There are a few large-scale restoration projects that have been financed by outside donors (Spanish NGOs), but these do not guarantee a steady budget to plan for the coming years. As seen in the construction of Hotel Iberostar, large commercial buildings are restored by tourism businesses, but the Office of Conservation does not gain profit from the businesses directly, as the OHCH does. The OCT sees itself as the steward of the heritage, yet quite incapacitated financially and politically. It is worthwhile to keep these differences in mind and revisit the two distinct forms in Havana and Trinidad.

Havana's Colegio San Gerónimo is a modern design that features replicated fragments of the original building. Trinidad's Hotel Iberostar is a seamless restoration that ceases time and brings back the past without visible interference of the present. Here, David Harvey's distinction of modernism and postmodernism is useful in thinking about the form's relationship to the past. Though it does not achieve much to classify a building either modern or postmodern, the exercise helps us understand what these buildings embody in terms of the aesthetic possibilities, what heritage practices mean to the two locales today, and by extension, a range of subjectivities in the global regime of heritage. According to Harvey, modernism takes space to be neutral, *plans* to shape that space with an overall social goal while postmodernism sees space to be autonomous, and can be *designed* according to aesthetics—"timeless and 'disinterested' beauty" (1990:66). Further, Harvey noted that in a postindustrial urban space, an "architecture of spectacle, with its sense of surface glitter and transitory participatory pleasure, of display and ephemerality, of *jouissance* became essential" (1990:91). Taking Charles Moore's Piazza d'Italia in New Orleans as the epitome of postmodern architecture, Harvey points out its "penchant for fragmentation, the eclecticism of styles, the peculiar treatments of space and time" (Harvey 1990:97), and quotes Klotz's

description that “it does not take itself too seriously” (1990:96). The postmodern design does not take history seriously, or the genealogy of design that the postmodern architecture carries. The linearity of time is disrupted, and accordingly, space presents itself in a fragmented manner, at least in the case of Piazza d’Italia. Is Colegio San Gerónimo another archetype of postmodernism? Does the seeming seriousness of Hotel Iberostar qualify as part of modern planning?

In fact, the historical jumbling of material parts and representations notwithstanding, I argue that Colegio San Gerónimo takes its past quite seriously. The reference to the past is not schizophrenic allusion or eclectic ornamentation, but careful replication of the original building. The building houses a new program for historic preservation professionals, restoring the original *function* of the university. Amidst the heritage fabric that mostly serves tourists, this oddly modern structure caters to Cuban students. Yet the modern characteristic of Colegio San Gerónimo seems to only embrace today, skipping the second generation that embodies the high socialism of the Cuban Revolution. The covering accentuates the “original” university and the current university while *obliterating* the recent past. Nostalgia and amnesia are two sides of a coin, operating in tandem in this “restoration work.” Heritage is often defined to engage the present more than the past, and the aesthetics of Colegio’s restoration confirms such an emphasis. In a way, diminishing the republican and high socialist eras facilitates the OHCH’s integration into the global economy, and into the global regime of heritage. Playing down the republican modernism and the Cold War socialism, this serious postmodern aesthetic, if we may call it, nevertheless, is not an end in itself. The Old Havana restoration projects run by the OHCH are a *planning* effort, with a long-term master plan that envisions a better society. Eusebio Leal’s leadership and capacity to mobilize and allocate resources for a social objective are Harvey’s modernist penchant, which make possible the bold and progressive architectural form of Colegio San Gerónimo in heritage context. Further, as mentioned before, the cityscape of Old Havana epitomizes a good subject of the heritage regime, an example to follow and legitimation for the regime by verifying “healthy” accomplishment.

On the other hand, Hotel Iberostar Trinidad sits squarely in the past. For anything that may suggest the modern life or simply stylistically incongruent is considered unfitting in the overall image. In Trinidad, then, the new building of Colegio Universitario San Gerónimo would be frowned upon. There needs to be distance between the present and the past so that one can “look back,” while the task of the present is to ensure that the past is preserved. The touristic Trinidad, for its dependence on the past, has to compose its present with the past; the history does not contain the present, and the present must refer back to the preserved past in order to be. If Trinidad projects its own image (MacCannell’s “front stage”) in a timeless manner, then the present (the “back stage,” see below) is even outside of the timelessness or the static past. Time may be dynamic in the present, but the present can be irrelevant where the town exists in the gaze of the tourist (Urry 1990). Or, the present in Trinidad’s heritage is precisely the staging of timelessness that even Trinitarios pursue (see my discussion on the images in chapter two). Thus the form of Hotel Iberostar is only possible as far as the present is removed and the layers of history—progress of time—is concealed.

Havana, on the other hand, sees today as that which contains the past. It is a burgeoning metropolis that represents the entire nation, and the project of restoring Old Havana is a forward-looking one, where a portion of the city—the municipality of Old Havana within the City of Havana—is a historic center. The blatant and fragmentary borrowing of the past in Colegio San Gerónimo showcases the place of the “past” in Havana. The historic zone of Trinidad is not separated out as Old Trinidad, for it would be a redundant nomenclature. Architectural eclecticism remains that of the early 20th century in Trinidad; in Havana, it figures in the juxtaposition of modern material and historic quotation in a postmodern fashion. And yet, the architecture of Hotel Iberostar was realized by a Cuban state-foreign capital joint venture, and was a project in itself. As discussed in chapter two, the OCT is in a never-ending process of producing the master plan of the restoration of the city; that is, in the absence of the master plan, OCT’s restoration works are not conducted under an overall vision. The hotel was built with tourist consumption in mind, rather than the residents of Trinidad; it was realized because it was a financially viable project. In many ways, the restoration of Hotel Iberostar is a design work that stands piecemeal, unincorporated in a greater plan. Thus seemingly a modernist engagement with history premised on the break between the present and the past, the aesthetics of the hotel’s architecture may rather be a postmodern fragment that is “shamelessly market-oriented” (Harvey 1991:77). And yet, the Hotel still represents a desirable state of the heritage cityscape for UNESCO’s global regime. While lacking an overall vision, saving parts of the original façade, contributing to the visually pleasing landscape invoking history, and even accommodating tourists to consume the World Heritage site, Hotel Iberostar is a successful, financially self-supporting project. More such foreign investment would be welcomed if necessary for the restoration of Trinidad heritage cityscape, according to the neoliberal rationality.

If Trinidad stages its “history” by not highlighting the restoration process (the back stage), then in Havana the boundary between the back and the front stages (chapter five, MacCannell 1973, 1999) is not so distinct. The producer (the OHCH) greets the guests/audience as an artist, transgressing the boundary. In fact, the literature mentions the name of the architect (José Linares) in charge of the renovation of the Colegio building. The OHCH regularly features its own work in progress in the media (their magazine, website, TV, radio, etc.), thus inscribing the work of the present in the representation of the past. In Trinidad, the “city without an architect,” the process of renovation/restoration is rarely emphasized, and the relationship between the Office of Conservation and the consumer (mainly tourists) is not that of the artist and the audience. Rather, the production crew remains anonymous, and the process stays behind-the-scene without bearing the name of the “artist” so as to keep the past in its place.

### *Conclusion*

The two buildings are administered under the same socialist government; one caters to tourists and was built by a joint venture between the Cuban state and the Spanish capital, and the other is an educational institution for Cuban students of historic

preservation, financed by the capital generated by the preservation agency, the Office of the City Historian. In the late socialist economy, capitalist ventures are undertaken by the Cuban government, which shape the landscape, and more visibly so in the tourist sector (Scarpaci and Portela 2009) for the tourism enterprise is a critical force in the present economy. Hotel Iberostar is a profit-oriented business, capitalizing on the heritage cityscape that the Office of Conservation of Trinidad stewards. It also demonstrates the mode of restoration the OCT has to go by, through piecemeal business investment. Colegio San Gerónimo was made possible by the capital the businesses of the Office of the City Historian make, though Colegio itself as a university department does not generate revenue.

Under late socialism, then, contrasting heritage cityscapes materialize in two Cuban cities. These cannot simply be reduced to stylistic differences of modernist nostalgia (Trinidad) and postmodern eclecticism (Havana), however. Aesthetic possibilities of the two places embody the relationship to the past, or the sense of time; futures imagined by Trinidad and Havana seem to point to different directions. Further examination using Harvey's distinction between the modernist and postmodernist characteristics reveals the postmodernist design element of Hotel Iberostar and modernist social planning of Colegio San Gerónimo, defying neat categorization between postmodernism and modernism. Taken as heuristic measures here, these concepts illuminate the differences embodied by the forms of the buildings, yet ultimately fail to sustain their distinctiveness. Colegio and Hotel Iberostar are two restored buildings that are discrete in their forms, aesthetics, functions, contexts, and the ways they relate to the past. Nevertheless, each of them encompasses both modernist and postmodernist qualities, pointing to the usefulness of the concepts when employed heuristically while as *categories* they begin to implode.

The aesthetics embodied by the architecture of Hotel Iberostar informs us that the future of Trinidad is envisioned to lie in the nostalgic invocation of history necessitated by the tourism industry that takes the lead in restoration in the city. At the same time, the haphazard restoration and "contamination" that happen in Trinidad are symptomatic of the control (or lack thereof) the OCT has over the historic cityscape, revealing the limit of their future scope, and their inadequate entrepreneurship in the global heritage regime. The cohesive control of landscape is realized through opportunistic investment, not the socialist rationality of centralized governance and equitability. In Old Havana, the authority of the OHCH is unparalleled; its reign is palpable in the Master Plan that keeps unfolding in the cityscape. To reiterate, the OHCH has been an honorable subject in the UNESCO World Heritage scheme, even playing the part of UNESCO towards Trinidad's OCT.<sup>16</sup> Tourism defines Trinidad, whereas it is an exploitable resource in Havana. The aesthetics of the past becomes an indicator of the neoliberal subject in its management of heritage cityscape. Benjamin's note about hegemony and the control of the past is an interesting consideration in this regard. The past is produced and reproduced materially by heritage cityscapes in Old

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<sup>16</sup> See chapter two, the incident where the UNESCO regional director and the City Historian of Havana came to inspect the imperiled cityscape of Trinidad.

Havana and Trinidad; in Old Havana, it is exclusively controlled by the OHCH, and in Trinidad, the past is articulated polyvocally by the OCT, the tourism economy, the residents, and foreign private investment. Within a heritage cityscape, architectural aesthetics becomes a matter of controlling the past (and thus the present), which, in turn, relates back to Harvey's discussion of postmodern designs. The postmodern critique of post-war modernist urban planning came at a time when consumer differentiation in taste began to conceal class differences. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital that stems from economic capital, Harvey argues that postmodern differential marketing renders socioeconomic differences to those of tastes and aesthetics (1990:77-8).

On one level, the aesthetics of the restored buildings are the symbolic capital of the dominant class of the two cities. On another level, there is a distinction that one city expresses through its aesthetics, namely Havana against other places in Cuba. In Bourdieu's conception, symbolic capital is the luxury goods, social relations, cultural credentials, and the like, acquisition of which translates into "a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability that are easily converted into political positions as a local or national *notable*" (Bourdieu 1984:291). In Havana and Trinidad, the preservation professionals belong to the country's intellectual class,<sup>17</sup> who also occupy certain upper- and upper-middle ranks in the government agencies. However, in the late socialist economy, cultural capital has been disarticulated from economic capital, and state-employed professionals earn less than cab drivers. And yet, expanding hard-currency economy, such as tourism, has enabled certain professionals to turn their cultural capital into economic capital. Spanish professors give private lessons to foreign students, and accountants earn hard currency salary in joint-venture businesses. In Trinidad, the massive restoration work of Hotel Iberostar only happened because of foreign investment in tourism, while the OCT struggles to find means to finance restoration in the historic center. Meanwhile, Havana's OHCH has successfully transformed into a capitalist enterprise. The difference is borne by their legal statuses, the OHCH directly reporting to the Council of State and equipped with profit-making capacities, and the OCT being a budgeted entity under the municipal administration. As such, the OCT's intellectual class remains unable to convert cultural capital into economic capital whereas the OHCH has seized the momentum in such translation, exercising its entrepreneurial potential.

In both cases, the presentation of aesthetics is tied to economic capital, yet the differences are worth noting. The architectural style of Hotel Iberostar in Trinidad based on the interest of visual consistency is a market-oriented "taste" that conceals division between tourists and Cubans, at least in the eyes of tourists. The new cityscape of international tourism in post-Soviet era, that is, the heritage cityscape, marks the break with the high-socialist (thus modernist) urban planning, the central concern of which was to provide housing to all. Hotel Iberostar's aestheticization of history may be a "fetishism" that is "deployed deliberately to conceal, through the realms of culture and

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<sup>17</sup> Education is provided by the socialist system, which makes a qualitative difference to cultural capital in capitalist systems.

taste, the real basis of economic distinctions” while “the modernist push, partly for practical, technical, and economic, but also for ideological reasons, did go out of its way to repress the significance of symbolic capital in urban life” (Harvey 1990:80). The latter, “the modernist push,” criticized for its aesthetics, is seen in the housing complexes built in the early to high socialist years throughout the island. Because the OCT stays poorly connected to economic capital, the commercialization of taste may be more extreme in Trinidad than in Havana. The OHCH’s grip of economic capital, then, allows certain authorial presentation of taste, which is not always coupled with postmodern market orientation. Here, I want to employ Edward Bruner’s dissection of authenticity in tourism studies to the discussion of aesthetics of restoration. Bruner (1994) identifies four different meanings of authenticity in reproduction: a) historical verisimilitude; b) exact isomorphism; c) original; d) duly authorized, certified, or legally valid. Hotel Iberostar goes by a) and c), as it contains an original fragment, and it claims historical verisimilitude. Colegio San Gerónimo, while it doesn’t claim to be authentic, its aesthetics is presented through d) authorization. The OHCH *plans*, in a modernist manner, and while it incorporates many instances of tourism-driven restoration within Old Havana, the case of Colegio with its public service in education of Cuban citizens suggests a certain modernist (socialist) suppression of symbolic capital, as Harvey argues. Or, it is an authorial representation of social relevance that the global regime of heritage demands. Seen this way, the restored architecture of Colegio San Gerónimo is an authorized aesthetics through which Havana can distinguish itself from other cities in Cuba, and in the world. The different aesthetics and differential heritage cityscapes, then, are a testament to the widening “class” gap between Old Havana and Trinidad within the global regime of heritage; the class difference is translated into their moral standing with regard to the expected “self-care,” evaluated aesthetically in the heritage cityscape.

## Conclusion

### Trinidad's heritage modern

*My wing is ready for flight,  
I would like to turn back.  
If I stayed timeless time,  
I would have little luck.*  
--Gerhard Scholem, "Gruss vom Angelus"

A Klee painting called "Angelus Novus" shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.

Walter Benjamin, "These on the Philosophy of History"<sup>1</sup>

I launched this research in the hope of finding the ways in which Cubans dream of the future in uncertain times. When I began inquiring into this question, tourism was burgeoning, and the urban historic centers throughout Cuba were being revitalized for their touristic potentials. I set out to look at the changing heritage cityscape to learn about how Cubans were planning the future. My anticipation was that the blueprint of the future should be laid out in tangible terms in the master plan of Trinidad. What I discovered instead were shadows of dreams, the perpetual background studies, and the impossibility of planning. The staff at the Master Plan Group of the Office of Conservation of Trinidad kept themselves busy, producing data and documents that were to be the foundation of the eventual master plan. Lack of plans did not, however, mean that people were desperate. Unable to have a design of future that they can base their expectations, Cuban planners and heritage professionals still remain optimistic. Their belief in the intrinsic value of the heritage cityscape of Trinidad, endorsed and enshrined by the UNESCO World Heritage scheme, lets them express hope (though generally abstract) for the future. To my question about the future of Trinidad, many staff of the Office offered seemingly ungrounded optimism: "If we really want to conserve the place declared as World Heritage in 1988, then we have to explore all the

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin (1969:257-258).

methods, strategies, and ways to realize the work of conservation.” It is the undisputable significance of their heritage that impels them to protect, regardless of the problems they confront. The resilience of the Cuban revolution is not irrelevant here. In what the Cuban regime called the Special Period in Time of Peace, the time of severe material scarcity induced by the withdrawal of the Soviet bloc assistance, some words took on new significance among ordinary Cubans. The use of *resolver* (to resolve), *inventar* (to invent), and *luchar* (to fight) has been noted extensively (for example, D. Fernandez 2000, Hagedorn 2001:203-233, Weinreb 2009:65-97), indicating the everyday struggle of ordinary Cubans in “getting by” during the time of unprecedented austerity, and their remarkable ad-hoc coping strategies. “Resolviendo el cafe” [resolving coffee] may mean spending hours or even days mobilizing (most likely informal) networks to find coffee beans or grounds that one can’t find in the formal market. This “Special Period lexicon” (Weinreb 2009:65) is “a colloquial language that points, on the one hand, to the leveling of Cuban society as everyone adopts the vox populi of the grassroots and, on the other, to the vitality of folk culture in generating discourse” (D. Fernandez 2000:109), and thus demonstrates the broadly shared spirit in the population. The optimism of the Office of Conservation staff, I believe, is a collection of such individual spirit, rather than an institutional one.

This forward-looking vision is predicated upon the physical preservation of their heritage, the historic landscape of Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley. Indeed, Trinidad’s dependence on tourism economy and architectural heritage for tourist attraction makes the heritage preservation at particularly serious stake. And yet, as we have seen in previous chapters, the physical conditions of heritage cityscape in Trinidad is far from satisfactory, in the eyes of the preservation professionals, of the local residents, and as Trinitarios fear, possibly of UNESCO. The impossibility of wholesale planning, the absence of funds and momentous leadership frustrate the cityscape. The staff at the Office continues to produce reports, and run from one meeting to another (chapter two). The vanished mansion haunts the minds of Trinitarios while another palace barely held up by scaffolds scars the street (chapter three). International tourism shapes the music and space in the city, and redefines mobility and space of the locals (chapters four and five). Trinidad’s cityscape is haphazardly restored according to where foreign investment arrives (chapters two and six). In these times of uncertainty, heritage preservation thrives in Havana with privileged arrangements and charismatic leader whereas Trinidad is left to struggle (chapter six).

I read this struggling, however, as a sign of hope, if not so much about designing the future. Trinitarios, especially the preservation professionals, are struggling to *resolver* the situation at hand, *inventar* solutions, keeping at *la lucha*. Trinidad banks on its heritage, and on its World Heritage status. There is a general agreement that the resource is precious and precarious, as locals praise the city constantly, and the Office staff is proud to be working for the preservation. Trinidad and the Sugar Mill Valley were ascribed “universal value” by UNESCO in 1988, which brought Trinidad to be appreciated at the global scale. The “what if” exercise may be historically pointless, but the life in Trinidad is hardly imaginable if not for the heritage cityscape. If the physical maintenance of the cityscape is less than adequate, then the Office fashions itself

undoubtedly the intellectual center of the heritage by its research and publication activities. While the island promotes itself on the global tourist map as a means of survival after the Soviet bloc was dissolved, the uncertainty of the late socialist economy is felt even more deeply in a town like Trinidad without much political clout or other industries than tourism to sustain itself. Thus the future of the well-being of the population in Trinidad resides precisely in preserving the past—its unique architectural history in its form. I call this particular condition *heritage modern* to express the mode of modernity in which people singularly valorize, attempt to maintain and restore intact the past form in search of a better future.

### *Modernity*

Modernity is a vast and complex concept, a characteristic which rather than renders it meaningless, affords a myriad points of engagement that are potentially productive. Here, I attempt to decipher such a point of engagement that serves in conceptualizing heritage modern. Numerous thinkers including Weber, Foucault, Habermas, Giddens,<sup>2</sup> find the origin of modernity in the Enlightenment and the West,<sup>3</sup> even when conceptualizing modernities in non-European context (for example, García Canclini 1995, 2000). Modernity often gets coupled with the processes of capitalism and industrialism, as was the case with Marx and Benjamin among others, or more recently, development and globalization for theorists such as Appadurai and Bauman. The nation-state is often invoked as a key agent of modernity, as it is considered the basic political structure, and in Anderson's pivotal work (1983), modernity is conceptualized as the process of nation-building itself. Power emerges with a particular nature in modernity, especially in the work of Foucault and his followers like Rabinow and Rose. To some critics of Eurocentric theories, modernity is considered to have risen from colonial contacts and produced the West, rather than the West being the source of modernity. Such postcolonial readings by Bhabha (1994), Gilroy (1993), Mitchell (1988, 2000), and others radically rework the scope of modernity. Modernity is examined in relation to various other concepts. AlSayyad (2001, 2004), Hobsbawm and Ranger (1984) have done so in relation to "tradition," while Harvey (1990), Jameson (1991), Lyotard (1984), Soja (1992) related modernity to "postmodernity" though not always for enriching the idea of modernity itself. Certain influential notions of modernity have been particularly emphasized and critiqued, such as "progress" in the works of Benjamin among others, while "reason" has been taken up by Latour, Rabinow, and science studies scholars. "Urbanism" is associated with theorists including Simmel, Benjamin, de Certeau, and Harvey, and "anxiety," "contradictions," and "uncertainty" with Bauman, Berman, García Canclini, Giddens, and Ivy. This is to name but a fraction of points of entry or discussion that engage the idea of modernity. Critique of the violent nature of modernity, modernism, and modernization abounds in popular culture as well as academic works: George Orwell's *1984*, Charlie Chaplin's

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<sup>2</sup> For some theorists whose entire work or major part of it concern modernity, I did not list the publications in the text to avoid illegibility. See bibliography.

<sup>3</sup> Foucault would not have considered the "origin" of modernity, but neither did he question the West as a given. See Mitchell (2000) for a concise discussion of Foucault's oversight of colonialism.

*Modern Times*, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, and so forth. Nevertheless, the lived experiences of modernity maintain the complexity of the question and do not simply let us move on to, say, postmodernity. In the "hellish repetition" of modernity, Benjamin called for a juxtaposition of the archaic and the new that would blast such a continuum (Buck-Morss 1989:78-109). Modernity's contradictory forces do not necessarily or completely run us over. In them we maintain "our desire to be rooted in a stable and coherent personal and social past, and our insatiable desire for growth" (Berman 1982:35). As there are myriads points of engagement with modernity, there are countless experiences of people who find themselves in the midst. Thus what I call "heritage modern" is intrinsically a fragment of lived modernity.

Given this premise, let me take up a few traces of discussion concerning modernity. In order to provide non-Euro-American perspective on the issue, Nestor García Canclini (2000) looks at modernity through the lens of Latin America. Nevertheless, he places Latin America on the margin of modernity, and sees its conditions such as growing income disparities and shrinking public sphere not as isolated but as having been brought on by the processes of globalization. By focusing on these experiences, García Canclini defines modernity as "an open and uncertain movement" (2000:48), not following a linear course, not scripted. As such, he restores agency in Latin America, through his notion of "hybrid culture" (1995) that breaks up the hierarchy of time and space. Marshall Berman (1982), seeking lived experiences of modernity in the 19th century, finds modernization as a maelstrom of creation and destruction. The experience of people in it, however, is what he calls modernity; in the whirlwind of changes that burst with contradictions, we try to hold our ground, "to get a grip" and make ourselves "at home in it" (1988:5). A similar analogy is made by Anthony Giddens, that of "riding the juggernaut," "a runaway engine of enormous power which, collectively as human beings, we can drive to some extent but which also threatens to rush out of our control and which could rend itself asunder" (1990:139). To ride this juggernaut, he suggests us the mode of "utopian realism," to have utopian ideals and be realistic about them at the same time (1990:154-5). For Giddens, modernity is what it is because we are reflexive about our own deeds and state of being, thus encompasses postmodernity as a product of such reflexivity. It is important to remember that utopian ideals in many incarnations have caused violence and atrocities in human history. Modernism in architecture and urban planning is one such manifestation of utopian ideals, the subject James Holston (1989) explores in Brasilia. The brutality of modernism is well analyzed in his work, but Holston attempts to recuperate from it "Brasília's spirit: its invocation to break with the past, to dare to imagine a different future, to embrace the modern as a field for experiment and risk – a spirit that inspired them to create a city innovative in so many ways in addition to its architecture and urban planning." (2009:1). Brasília's spirit is a very Brazilian version of "riding the juggernaut," and "making themselves at home" in the maelstrom, indomitably daring to dream in "an open and uncertain movement."

Such an attempt to “get a grip” in the midst of relentless changes where “all that is solid melts into air”<sup>4</sup> is all the more acute in the current uncertainty of Cuba.

### *Uncertainty*

As discussed before, the disintegration of the Soviet bloc in 1991 and the consequent withdrawal of COMECON assistance sent Cuba into an economic abyss. One of the consequences was the deprivation of the Cuban government’s ability to plan ahead (Eckstein 1994:88-96). Thus Susan Eckstein (1994) characterized Cuba in the post-Soviet period “Back from the Future,” while Andres Oppenheimer (1992) predicted (prematurely) “Castro’s Final Hour,” and political scientists and economists made guesses and wondered “Whither the Cuban economy?” (Zimbalist 2000), “Cuba in transition?” (Otero and O’Bryan 2002), and so forth. For ordinary Cubans, the crisis that ensued meant drastic reduction in availability of things; less electricity, less food, less transportation, fewer newspapers, and less work. The long cues one might have to stay in for food, medicine, and other everyday essentials were ubiquitous before the Special Period, but they got exponentially worse: “A family typically spent fifteen hours a week in food lines, the burden of shopping falling disproportionately on women” (Eckstein 1994:99). One would leave work to get in line, and thus there was less work accomplished. It was difficult to get to work because the public transport was unreliable. The dire scarcity of goods and services made life chaotic. Mona Rosendahl reports that in 1993,

Ana, who had always been a vanguard worker and a loyal revolutionary, said: “I have stopped worrying about food and other things. If I get it, I get it; otherwise, I will have to solve the problem when it arises. There is no use in worrying all the time” (1997:175).

The worst of the Special Period was over by the early 2000s, but the certainty of the 1980s, of the high socialism of Cuba backed by the Soviet bloc was definitely a past. Informal economy expanded, and the double-currency economy has steadily introduced inequality in Cuban society. In a society whose moral goal was equitable distribution, a new hierarchy in which an illegal cigar seller makes more money than a professional architect overturns values upheld by socialism. That one way or another, everybody needs to be involved in transactions “*por la izquierda*” (on the left, meaning in the black market) signals the uncertainty of life in general.

Just about any curbside offers examples of ingenuity that allows Cubans to survive. Instead of buying all his wood from government supply stores, William, the sculptor, whittles some of his figurines from the banisters and roof beams taken from old Havana’s crumbling mansions. The taxi driver who takes a tourist home at night is likely to ask him or her to agree on a price beforehand, to avoid turning on the meter: “You pay less to me, I

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<sup>4</sup> The title of Berman’s 1982 book that refers to Marx’s phrase in *The Communist Manifesto*.

make a little extra money.” Gisela, who rents rooms in her home, doesn’t declare all the rooms she has for rent. (Barbassa 2005:24)

In chapter two, I recalled that my colleagues at the Office of Conservation laughed at me for waiting for the master plan to come out. I also mentioned in chapter four that my frustration over obtaining my student visa was taken as a problem of a Cuban, not of a foreigner. Cubans deal with a lot more situations that may or may not bring desired results on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, uncertainty is a permanent situation in today’s Cuba. Heather Settle (2008) characterizes it as a unique Cuban temporality.

...everyday life in Cuba is made up of a kind of radical uncertainty in which time marches not forward but backwards, side to side, and round in circles... The crisis then begins to be experienced, paradoxically, as permanent – no longer “special” or exceptional, but a new way of being for perennially uncertain times. This recognition has resulted in a shift in public discourse about the crisis. If the time of the Special Period is marked as exceptional, unbearable, out of the very flow of history, the time of the permanent crisis has given rise to new understandings of the past, present *and* future.

The “permanent crisis” or the “perennially uncertain times” is unevenly distributed within the island. For the most part, people’s access to goods in everyday life is equitable; whether one has money to purchase or not, it depends more on how much goods are in circulation. If there is no detergent, there is no detergent (see chapter one). Nevertheless, not all institutions enjoy resources equally, especially in the post-Soviet era. On the one hand, as described in chapter six, the Office of the City Historian of Havana was granted a special status in 1993, when its functions were amplified to engage in “commercial operations,” to run businesses and gain revenue on its own. With the budget scheme at their discretion, the Office of the City Historian, if not the residents of Old Havana and other protected areas, is capable of minimizing the uncertainty. On the other hand, institutions like the Office of Conservation in Trinidad grapple with the reformed economy where more neoliberal measures are taken, and uncertainty is felt more extensively. For these institutions without means of revenue generation, the administrative control diminishes with the declining economic position relative to other agencies capable of hard-currency earnings. Just as the Cuban state was unable to plan ahead when it was initially disconnected from the Soviet bloc economy, these institutions remain largely unable to plan with foreseeable financial strategies. Late socialist political economy in Cuba has largely generated amplified uncertainty while allowing self-managed entities like the enterprises in the tourism sector.

### *Heritage modern*

The uncertainty of late socialism within which Cubans live, and particularly the Office of Conservation in Trinidad is undergoing today is a condition of modernity that may not have been felt during the Cold War. It is not that the post-Soviet era brought modernity to Cuba, but it did reveal in a magnified manner the uncertain nature of

things that was always lurking. Yet as Berman and Giddens argued, it is in such a condition that people's experience becomes markedly modern, and I find the struggle of Trinitarios a very modern experience. Therefore, being inscribed in the global regime of heritage is a way to be modern for Trinidad and its residents. To ride the juggernaut, to "make their way through the maelstrom" (Berman 1982:16), Trinitarios must hold on to their heritage, and keep its form intact. Keeping heritage intact does not mean that they preserve the form as is or as it used to be, but as what it *should have looked like*, and even what it *should look like today*, involving a conscious rebuilding of the form according to the aesthetic choices of the present experts. As we recall, "[h]eritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998:7). The experts, many working as heritage professionals at the Office of Conservation, but also scholars who study Trinidad architecture, may opine on historic precision of the form, but often focus heavily on the exterior of the buildings when it comes to restoration designs. In a sense, the "in-depth restoration" (see chapter six), in which they restore the façade according to the historic (and aesthetic) cohesion while making necessary changes in the interior to accommodate today's residents' needs, is remodeling with surface restoration. The only way for Trinitarios to move forward, then, is to recuperate and reinstate the past aesthetically; the future is imaginable necessarily through the spatial manifestations of the past. I call this heritage modern.

The urban spatial form in this mode does not aspire to vertical or horizontal expansion through destruction and building anew, nor monumental spectacles that claim global visibility. Most urban historic centers constitute a part of the urban center, museumized separately from the main functions of the entire city, which include modern development. Such is the case of Old Havana and the greater metropolitan Havana. Rather, the historic center of Trinidad constitutes the core of the city, physically and in terms of identity. Accordingly, heritage modern operates to contain—the spatial scale and the built environment are to be preserved according to their past forms. Concepts associated with modernity such as development and progress apply in regards to the quality of life, yet modernist forms of architecture and urban planning do not belong here, as we saw in chapter six. It is rather a paradoxical aspiration for a better life through temporal and spatial containment when we think of the ways in which certain modernization—technological development and urbanization (or suburbanization)—have happened.<sup>5</sup> Looking into the future requires looking backward in Trinidad.

To stay modern, to keep inscribed in the World Heritage List requires restoration works, and the Office of Conservation must stay afloat in the late socialist political economy by becoming a successful entrepreneur. The World Heritage program of UNESCO brings these sites onto the global circuit of tourism. The universal value attributed to Trinidad compels the town to maintain and restore its urban form, thus attracting visitors from all over the world. Contrary to what the nostalgic invocation of a

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, the postmodern urbanism of New Urbanist movement, often characterized as neotraditional, is a reaction to such modernist expansion, and looks at "traditional towns" nostalgically for values to be re-established (Scarpaci and Portela 2009:70-71).

“small traditional town” may imagine it to be, Trinidad is by no means an isolated community, but rather a locale that sits in the global tourist circuit. The heritage cityscape of Trinidad embodies these global relations, though the resultant form is “unique and irreplaceable” in its character—as required by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, as well as “universally” significant. Heritage modern operates in such transnational fields of value. To navigate the rationality of the global regime of heritage, where the individual sites are responsible for their own well-being, preservation offices are disciplined into neoliberal subjects. In many ways, in the post-Soviet era, reinsertion of Cuba into the global economy parallels inscription in the global regime of heritage; while the Cuban state negotiates its political position in the international community increasingly run by the neoliberal rationality, heritage sites like Trinidad strives to maintain its status on the global map. Nevertheless, distinct in the global heritage regime is the way in which the “intrinsic value” ascribed to World Heritage sites necessarily institutes their conservation—that is, it appeals as a *cultural* obligation—although such an achievement depends on entrepreneurial skills of the preservation office in charge, as Old Havana demonstrated (chapter six). Consequently, cultural values manifested materially in heritage cityscape perform the neoliberal rationality of economic efficiency without explicitly announcing so. Morality of the neoliberal subject is measured by the aesthetics of heritage cityscape shaped through, especially in Trinidad, tourism economy. The locally specific architectural heritage defies a universal system of preservation, and yet, the well-being of the heritage site is evaluated by “universally” acknowledged aesthetics. The Office of Conservation in Trinidad desires to be a successful neoliberal subject in so far as it desires to see its heritage cityscape restored in a particular aesthetic that conforms to UNESCO’s taste. “Contamination,” or remodeling in violation of the preservation codes, therefore becomes problematic for the Office in its attempts to being a disciplined subject in the regime.

If the drive of heritage modern is there in the willingness of Trinitarios to preserve their cityscape, then the actual accomplishment lags behind, especially when they see the standard as the universal, not simply endogenous satisfaction. As the Office staff and other locals were alarmed by the scandalous newspaper article and the subsequent visit by the UNESCO representative and the Havana City Historian (see chapter two), the task is to maintain its honorable inscription in the global regime. The Office of Conservation gets frustrated over the underperformance of their responsibility, while the socialist planned economy gradually gives way to neoliberal decentralization, leaving the Office with dwindling state support. Through such erosion of socialist premises, however, the Office of Conservation “gets a grip” on the discursive landscape of Trinidad, conducting historical, archaeological, and architectural research, producing publications, and organizing local events (see chapter five).

Facing out-of-control transformation of cityscape (“contamination” in their terminology), the Office of Conservation has taken the education of the local residents as a pressing task. *Resolviendo* (resolving, somehow making do) resources, the Office has managed to publish two cartoon books as a means of raising awareness of children and young adults with regard to the value of their environment and the richness of

history in Trinidad (chapter two). Because creative forces find their ways within the constraints, and their value pretends to be outside of the economic realm, creativity becomes a privileged site in producing neoliberal entrepreneurial subjects, as we have seen with music in the context of international tourism (chapter four). So, too, the changing cityscape and discursive landscape are part of such a dynamic process. The work of the Office as steward of heritage is construed as cultural responsibility that requires creative responses. The past may be a source of inspiration, a burden, or aesthetic plaster; the jury is still out there on the transformative power of looking backward in Trinidad. Benjamin would wait for Judgment Day. Somehow, I cannot imagine the moment when the angel of history will be released from pain; neither can I fathom that the angel is aghast with Trinidad's heritage modern. As we have seen, heritage modern is not simply about integration into and performing well in the global sphere. Part of looking backward is aesthetic reconstruction of the past like Hotel Iberostar, and part of it is the archaeological excavation that lines up shards to recuperate every moment of Trinidad, Cuba.

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