MARGINALITY BEYOND RETURN
US CUBAN PERFORMANCES IN THE 1980S AND 1990S

Lillian Manzor
“Marginality Beyond Return takes marginality as a keyword in part because of the ways in which Cuban theater and its historiography falls out of the teleological understanding of Latinx/e theater, which is itself based more clearly on Chicano or Nuyorican models of transformation. The contribution of the book is less one of learning something new about Cuban identity and more Manzor’s contribution to thinking about how theater was important to and registered many shifts in Cuban identity over the years, which changes the history/historiography of Latino theatre history.”

**Patricia Ybarra, Professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies, Brown University**

“Groundbreaking and deeply researched, *Marginality Beyond Return*’s comprehensive study of US Cuban theater and performance uncovers little-known archival ephemera and moves skillfully between theory, sociocultural context, theater historiography, and textual and performance analysis to show how performance enacts a US Cuban ‘identity-in-difference.’ The book is an invaluable contribution to Latino cultural studies.”

**Camilla Stevens, Rutgers University**
This study is an exploration of US Cuban theatrical performances written and staged primarily between 1980 and 2000.

Lillian Manzor analyzes early plays by Magali Alabau, Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas, María Irene Fornés, Eduardo Machado, Manuel Martín Jr., and Carmelita Tropicana, as well as these playwrights’ participation in three foundational Latine theater projects—INTAR’s Hispanic Playwrights-in-Residence Laboratory in New York (1980–1991), Hispanic Playwrights Project at South Coast Repertory Theater in Costa Mesa, CA (1986–2004), and The Latino Theater Initiative at Center Theater Group’s Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles (1992–2005). She also studies theatrical projects of reconciliation among Cubans on and off the island in the early 2000s. Demonstrating the foundational nature of these artists and projects, the book argues that US Cuban theater problematizes both the exile and Cuban-American paradigms. By investigating US Cuban theater, the author theorizes via performance, ways in which we can intervene in and reframe political and representational positionings within the context of hybrid cultural identities.

This book will be of great interest to students and scholars in Performance Studies, Transnational Latine Studies, Race and Gender Studies.

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Marginality Beyond Return
US Cuban Performances in the 1980s and 1990s

Lillian Manzor
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Acknowledgments

This book started outside of Duo Theater in March 1990, after the premiere of Elías Miguel Muñoz’s *L.A. Scene*. In a post-performance conversation with playwrights Pedro Monge Rafael and Manuel Martín Jr., they asked me why my research only focused on narrative. They encouraged me to write about what I had seen, which I did and eventually published in *Gestos*. I owe this book to both. On the West Coast, I thank Juan Villegas, for giving me the opportunity to participate for several years in UC-Irvine’s Organized Research Initiative on Hispanic Theaters. This initiative, along with the UC-Irvine Humanities Research Institute, UC-Irvine’s Focused Research Group on Woman and the Image, and Chicano/Latino Studies (SCR 43), funded my earliest research on US Cuban and Latine theaters. I am most grateful to my Irvine colleague and mentor Jane Newman, for reading the first versions of some of these pages, along with the Irvine students who eventually became colleagues and friends: Karen Christian, Grace Dávila López, Carmela Ferradáns, Teresa Marrero, and Alejandro Yarza. I would also like to thank Rosa Ileana Boudet for her willingness to share her knowledge about Cuban theater, as well as her materials and her historical memory as a spectator. Last, but not least, I must acknowledge my carnal Alicia Arrozón, Norma Alarcón, and the many other Chicanas comadres with whom I experienced and from whom I learned embodied theory, practice, and praxis. I would not be who I am today if it were not for them.

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Introduction / Introducción

I remain as foreign behind this protective glass
as I was that winter
—that unexpected weekend—
when I first confronted Vermont’s snow.
And still New York is my home.
I am ferociously loyal to this acquired patria chica.
Because of New York I am now a foreigner anywhere else […]
But New York wasn’t the city of my childhood,
it was not here that I acquired my first convictions […]
This is why I will always remain on the margins,
a stranger among the stones,
even beneath the friendly sun of this summer’s day,
just as I will remain forever a foreigner,
even when I return to the city of my childhood
I carry this marginality, immune to all turning back,
too habanera to be newyorkina,
too newyorkina to be
—even to become again—
anything else.

(Lourdes Casal, “For Ana Veldford”)

Lourdes Casal (1938–1981), one of the first Cuban intellectuals exiled from Castro’s Revolution to return to Cuba, was also one of the first US Cubans who began to build bridges between the United States and Cuba. She was a psychology professor in the United States whose research (published in English) focused on Cuban immigration; she also transformed her Cuba-mania into art by writing poetry and short stories in Spanish.¹ Most importantly, she inspired a whole generation of young US Cubans as founding “mother” of the Antonio Maceo brigade in the United States in 1977 and urged them to do the same: to embark on a trip “home.”²

I write “home” in quotation marks because Casal, as a “hyphenated American,” knew very well the ambiguities of home as a concept. Indeed, the poem I have partially quoted here is characterized by a constant movement
between home-ness and foreign-ness, resulting in defamiliarization of both terms. The poem itself begins with the poetic voice, gendered female in Spanish, contemplating a familiar summertime scene from a bus window. This familiarity is immediately disrupted, however, by the poetic voice in the first verse of the section quoted above: “I remain as foreign . . . as I was that winter.”

The movement from familiar to foreign reverts to the familiar in the verse that seems to situate New York unquestionably as home even as the poetic voice declares in an outpour of seeming nationalist fervor, she is “ferociously loyal to this acquired patria chica” (small fatherland).

In Latin America, patria chica immediately recalls the expression used by Spaniards to refer to their region of origin as opposed to or in relation to Spain, the nation-state. Latin Americans have long been accustomed to a citizen of Spain adhering to a sense of loyalty to his/her patria chica because this relation is conceivable, topographically understandable; there is nothing anomalous about these regions being a part of Spain. In Casal’s poem, however, the construction of New York as the patria chica is more complex. Patria chica in relation to what patria? To the United States? To Cuba? The answer is, of course, neither. New York is constructed in and by the poem as a patria chica in relation to another patria chica, La Habana. The feeling of partially belonging to two patrias chicas thus results in the overarching sentiment of remaining “forever a foreigner” anywhere, as articulated by the poetic voice.³

The last verses of Casal’s poem seem to stabilize the back-and-forth movement between familiarity/home-ness and foreign-ness. Yet, this doubling of the self, suggested in these last two verses, a self that is always already becoming, in process of subjectification, calls for a different theory of self-formation. I take these last two verses, “too habanera to be newyorkina, / too newyorkina to be / —even to become— / anything else,” to be emblematic of the processes of hybrid subjectification at work in “hyphenated Americans” in general, and in US Cuban identity in particular. Thus, Casal poetically envisioned the very image of the self which years later Gilles Deleuze, borrowing form Foucault, theorized in the image of the pli or the fold:

The double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. It is not a doubling of the One, but a redoubling of the Other. It is not a reproduction of the Same, but a repetition of the different . . . it is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as the double of the other.

(1986, 98)

Furthermore, in order to conceive topographically the relation between those two patrias chicas, New York and La Habana, we must, in similar Deleuzian fashion, abandon our traditional notions of space/geography and resort to another kind of space, to a “topological space which establishes contact between the Outside and the Inside, the most distant, the most deep” (Deleuze 110).
Casal's doubleness of voice and self, her multiple projections, and rearticulation of self and other point toward still a further level on which the hybrid nature of the self is both bodily configured and discursively constructed. It should come as no surprise that the multiple folds of Casal's experiential self reverberate in her poem as a lack of a sense of loyalty to any one nation or patria. She was born in Cuba in a mulatto middle-class background and then moved to the United States; her “mix of African, Spanish and Chinese heritage epitomized the mosaic of Cuban culture” (Behar 407). She was lesbian although that did not stop her from building relations with Cubans on the island at a time when homosexuals were persecuted. As Leving Jacobson has pointed out, “her attention to questions of race permitted certain erasure of issues such as homophobia and censorship, taboo in Cuba's political climate of the 1970s” (41). While this is not the place to discuss this absence in Casal's scholarship, suffice it to say that I see it, like José Quiroga does, as strategic though problematic agency:

Problematic, disturbing, difficult agency—silencing itself at specific moments, gaining for itself spaces of freedom in the microcontext, appealing to the outside world when the inside universe is terribly unjust, and at times at the center of the national scenario.

(2014, 157)

I believe that it was “theory in the flesh,” her lived experiences as a result of that mix, which prompted her as a social scientist and as an activist to research and fight for the Latine populations in New York, the struggle of African Americans, and the Cubans that belonged to the “untriumphant exodus” (Prince 11). As an activist and a public intellectual, she believed in the intellectual's critical function, in their role to put everything into question. María Cristina Herrera and Leonel A. de la Cuesta in their introduction to Casal's anthology underscore:

the stubbornness with which she insists . . . in analyzing all aspects of a problem . . . ; her resistance to being carried away by simplistic and Manichean formulas that always have the virtue of being the most convenient ones to main “peace and order” in society.

(Casal, Itinerario 65)

As such, she played an instrumental role in the foundation of the two most important “exile” magazines that helped to establish the first bridges to Cuba and formed a generation of US Cuban critical intellectuals: Nueva Generación in the 1960s and Areito in the mid-1970s. Furthermore, as Iraida López and Laura Lomas demonstrate, through all her writings, “her proto-latinidad . . . anticipates the most recent anti-establishment, feminist and / or Afro-Latino discourses” (López 66).

My own self-construction and scholarly formation echo that of Casal’s. I was also born in Cuba but into a middle-class family that descended from
immigrants from Lebanon and the Canary Islands. Nine years after the Cuban Revolution, my family moved to Puerto Rico via Spain and then to the United States, to Miami-Cuba (see Chapter 1). Like Casal, I eventually became a university professor and transformed my own “Cuba-mania” into the stuff of my research endeavors. It was only after I left Miami that I discovered I was not racialized as white in the United States. Working in California with my Chicanas comadres, I assumed the identity of Latina, woman of color, and feminist. Like Lourdes Casal, I returned to Cuba in 1986 in search of “home” only to find that I, too, would never fully belong to only one “home.” To say that these experiences have shaped my life and influenced my research is an understatement. Most Latin Americans and Latines who, like Casal and myself, come from a long tradition of uprootedness conduct their lives trying to understand and work within processes related to hegemony and marginality, centers, and borders/peripheries. Our own lives depend on how well we occupy the political and discursive position of others. Our identity, in turn, depends on how effectively we undertake social, intellectual, and artistic projects. The nodes in these networks are always shifting and allow us to function within reticulated processes of identity formation.

The inclusion in this book of speaking “I” is an attempt to bring into theory and analysis the experiences that locate this hybrid first person singular and female. At the same time, their inclusion indicates their figuration, tropology, and performative construction. My “experiences” will sometimes take the form of anecdotes. As an anecdote, this experience has a referential hybrid-productive function. As Meaghan Morris has suggested,

[anecdotes] are oriented futuristically towards the construction of a precise, local, and social discursive context, of which the anecdote then functions as a myse en abyme. That is to say, anecdotes for me are not expressions of personal experience, but allegorical expositions of a model of the way the world can be said to be working. So anecdotes . . . must be functional in a given exchange.

In fact, the different experiential stories that appear throughout this book seek to create a discursive mise en abyme in order to resituate the theoretical in relation to specific social and political landscapes.

Precisely as figured in and by discourses, then, the inclusion of my own speaking “I” may be read as part of a search for “a feminist enunciative position which could articulate a discursive space to speak from” (Probyn 11). Additionally, articulating this discursive space also provides insights that would not otherwise be available. Elspeth Probyn’s feminist re-reading of both Foucault and Deleuze has allowed me to precisely theorize this “I” and its experiences within a theory of articulation that underscores not a sense of “belonging” but the historical and institutional conditions involved in its speaking (Probyn 28). These conditions, along with personal and collective relations, articulate with
media and other elements, such that at a given moment we are temporarily situated in a world of becoming. Probyn’s project sprang from a suspicion of the “autobiographical turn” in cultural theory. This concern prompted her to study the concept of experience to try to articulate it with that of the self. To do so, she separated, for the purposes of analysis, two registers of experience: the ontological and the epistemological. The ontological level of experience corresponds to the immediate experiential self, a self that “testifies to the gendered, sexual and racial facticity of being in the social” (Probyn 16). Simultaneously, however, at the epistemological level, “experience is recognized as more obviously discursive and can be used overtly to politicize the ontological” (Probyn 16). The tension resulting from the pull between the epistemological and ontological is highly productive in so far as it keeps the experiential/ontological self in check, so to say, by the discursive/epistemological use of experience which “locate[s] and problematize[s] the conditions that articulate individuated experiences” (Probyn 16).

Grada Kilomba and other Black feminist theorists have long underscored the importance of the personal as part of academic discourse and of the fact that we all write from a specific place. The difference is that as women of color, we write and theorize from the periphery and not from the center. As Kilomba has theorized, our stories are not just personal; they are also accounts of racism. Such experiences reveal the inadequacy of dominant scholarship in relating not only to marginalized subjects, but also to our experiences, discourses and theorizations. They mirror the historical, political, social and emotional realities of “race relations” within academic spaces and should therefore be articulated in both theory and methodology.

The present study of US Cuban theater and performance art was born out of the tensions between an individuated personal self and a discursive/institutional one. They are tensions that to date remain undertheorized in the US Cuban context. As a US Cuban woman studying Latin American and Latine cultures in US academic circles, finding a space from which to articulate a feminist of color, _cubana_ and Latina discursive position _no es fácil_ (it’s not easy) on institutional and intellectual grounds. Latin American cultures have been not only marginal to the curricular and research needs of North American academia, but there has been a tendency to overlap Latine culture in the United States with Latin American cultures. Additionally, until the late 1990s, US Cuban culture remained marginal to Chicano/Latino Studies given the critics’ preponderance to read it as a culture in exile rather than as a moment of US cultural production (see Chapter 1). Moreover, to focus on live theater and performance is to speak a theoretical language which, until the late 1990s, was practically foreign to many Latin American and Latine theater scholars who generally focused solely on the text as a literary document or artifact. Finally, to approach these
texts from a Latina feminist of color perspective means that I am theorizing from a place that is still peripheral to the centers of knowledge production.

I use the term culture here in the way that Néstor García Canclini has theorized culture to refer to “the production of phenomena that contribute, through symbolic representation or re-elaboration of material structures, to understand, reproduce, or transform the social system, in other words, all practices and institutions involved in the administration, renewal, and restructuring of meaning” (Transforming 10). Culture, in this sense, is not only tied to the ideal realm, the realm of values, ideas, and beliefs, it is connected to technology and economy as well. Processes of expressive representation are produced by material structures and mechanisms of social reproduction. Thus, any analysis of culture, in general, must proceed intersectionally and must consider the conjunction of the symbolic and the material. Marginality examines a particular version of this intersection and thus provides a model for future conjunctural studies.

Since Spanish is a gender-inflected language, there are various terms used to refer to Latinos in the United States in order to use gender-inclusive language, such as Latino/a, Latin@, Latinx, and Latine. Processes of naming make visible a historical revision that is not only genealogical but also account for the changes in what is named and in what one wants to make seen. Creating names (and the way to create them) is to bring to the scene certain controversies; in my case, it is the concern to create a gender-neutral term with the potential for “grammaticality” that Spanish gives (ending in a vowel is totally possible in Spanish). Thus, I have opted to use Latine over the others because I want to intervene in the US academy with a gender-neutral Spanish term that affords easiness of pronunciation; this is indeed the nomenclature commonly used in Spanish in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this book, Latino refers to the historically specific way in which the term was used in the 1990s and Latina highlights women who self-identify as such. Latinx is reserved to refer to artists or communities who are trans or gender nonconforming in the way that the term is deployed currently in this post-gender here and now.

Cuban-American literary production entered the Latine Studies canon in the late 1980s and has garnered critical attention since then. Despite its many contributions, book-length studies about Cuban-American literature are few when compared to Chicano Studies, Nuyorican Studies, and Latine Studies at large. Theater, with rare exceptions, is usually not included in these analyses, although it was one of the first art form of Cubans in both Miami and New York and, arguably, the one closest to post-1959 early exile communities. Marginality is the first critical book dedicated solely to US Cuban theatrical production thus remedying the lack of scholarly attention to such an important corpus of theater and performances. I have created an ensemble of selected plays, companies, and theater artists that I consider foundational to US Cuban theater. Some, like Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas, María Irene Fornés, Eduardo Machado, Repertorio Español, and Carmelita Tropicana, are well known in Latine theater circles; others like Magali Alabau, La Má’Téodora, Manuel Martín Jr., and
Alberto Sarraín are less so. Methodologically, I conduct a historiography of the two decades in which the plays were written and/or produced: the decade of “the Hispanic” (1980s) and the decade of “the Latino” (1990s). I analyze archival materials related to the artists’ theater-making practice and reconstruct the performances by reading not only the playscripts but also photographs, stage and costume designs, musical scores, documentary videos, theater reviews, my own notes, interviews with the artists, and other archival ephemera. The main argument of this book is that the concepts of exile, national identification, ethnicity, diaspora, and transnationalism are all insufficient to address US Cuban identity and performances. Furthermore, I contend that, studied as an ensemble, US Cuban theater and performance call into question foundational literary and sociological studies of Cuban-Americans as well as the historiographical teleology of both Cuban-American and Latine theaters. It proposes that this theatrical ensemble, contrary to other forms of Cuban-American cultural production, performs a concept of identity-in-difference that is hybrid and chaotic and that challenges and exceeds Cuban—on and off the island—Latine, and US norms.

US Cuban theater, el teatro usano-cubano, is one of three different modalities that coexist temporally and spatially within the theater and performance of Cuban diaspora: vernacular theater or teatro bufo, exile theater, and US Cuban theater. Vernacular theater is staged primarily in Miami. Characterized by its use of political satire and parody, it comes from the Cuban bufo or vernacular tradition. Exile theater, as Escarpanter and others have studied, consists of playwrights who come from different generations. The first one—the split generation—includes playwrights who were born mostly around the 1930s or before. Most of them were famous playwrights in Cuba or were part of the theatrical movements there. They continue to write mainly in Spanish, in the same style that they wrote in Cuba. The second one—the transterritorialized generation (escindida y trasterrada)—is composed of playwrights who were born around 1940s and left Cuba when they were very young or as adolescents, such as José Abreu Felippe (1947), Iván Acosta (1943), René Alomá (1947–1986), René Ariza (1940–1994), Miguel González Pando (1942–1998), Pedro Monge Rafuls (1943), Luis de la Paz (1956), and Héctor Santiago (1944). Besides these two generations studied by Escarpanter, I add a third one that I call revolutionary exiles. It is made up of playwrights, actors, and directors who left Cuba after 1989 and who belong to the so-called “velvet exile.” Many of them were born during the Revolution, were educated at the Instituto Superior de Arte and other art schools, and were protagonists of the stage renewal of the late 1980s and 1990s in Cuba. Most of them also worked with professional theater groups in Cuba. Common traits of their productions are the use of strong corporeal language, anti-realist directing and acting techniques, and a strong collective process of research and dramaturgy. Examples of these are Liliam Vega’s staging of Lila la mariposa with Teatro Ávante; the stagings of Yvonne López Arenal in Los Angeles first, and then in Miami with Akuara Teatro; the work of Alberto Sarraín with La Má’Teodora; performances of Teatro Obstáculo with
Victor Varela and Bárbara Barrientos; Eddy Díaz Souza’s work as playwright and director; and the performance multimedia work of Leandro Soto.12

US Cuban theater, as this book demonstrates, comprises a wide variety of plays, written in English, Spanish, and Spanglish, published and unpublished, staged and unproduced, in Miami as well as in other cities, mainly New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, and San Francisco. I became interested in US Cuban theater outside of the Miami area because it is a moment of cultural production that, like Casal’s poem, problematizes both the exile and Cuban-American paradigms. Those who advocate an understanding of Cuban identity as an exile mentality, unlike the identity of other Latines who immigrate for supposedly economic reasons, argue that this identity is characterized by a refusal to become part of the “American” immigrant history. The exile persists in seeing him/herself unproblematically as Cuban. The Cuban-American, on the other hand, is generally characterized by means of an assimilationist rhetoric. As a supporter of American middle-class values, the Cuban-American sees him/herself as part of the melting pot which constitutes contemporary US culture (see Chapter 1).

In contrast to both paradigms, the plays I analyze here propose a hybrid and intersectional model of identity, as hybrid as Casal’s and my own, which refutes simple and exclusive identification with either the culture of origin or “American” culture (see Chapter 1). They thus offer the possibility of reconfiguring in and as performance a collective Latine identity which takes into consideration issues of racism, sexism, heteronormativity, linguistic stratification, national identity, and ideological stances. This identity challenges and exceeds both Cuban and US norms. By investigating US Cuban theater, then, I theorize, via performance, ways in which we can intervene in and reformulate political and representational positioning within the context of hybrid cultural identities. Furthermore, I argue that US Cuban theater offers models to preview and predict alternative opportunities and experiences of Cubanity in the future.

The time frame of the performances included in this study spans the mid-1980s through the early 2000s. This specificity is crucial. These years were characterized by a highly contentious discussion about the role of the arts in the United States. It coincides with the so-called “Latino Boom” as well as with the “obscenity-censorship” controversy in the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the need “to go multicultural” by many theatrical institutions. It is also the period of three foundational projects in Latine theater which will be discussed throughout the book: Maria Irene Fornés’ direction of INTAR’s Hispanic Playwrights-in-Residence Laboratory in New York (1980–1991), Hispanic Playwrights Project at South Coast Repertory Theater in Costa Mesa, CA (1986–2004), and the Latino Theater Initiative at Center Theater Group’s Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles (1992–2005). The selection of plays that were produced during this period depended upon political, economic, and social factors as much as, if not more than, the “quality” of the plays themselves. As Teresa Marrero has argued, “[r]epertory and commercial theaters [as well as
non-commercial ones] walk the fine line between established hegemonic artistic taste (standards) and economic viability” (151). Thus, my choice of focusing on plays produced precisely during this period must consider the political, economic, and social spheres of both “mainstream” theatrical institutions and of “marginal” ones. Both depended upon grants from the NEA, as well as from private and corporate donors. Since many of these plays were not produced, some might argue that the sample is not representative and the choices are limited. I partly agree. However, the focus of Marginality is on texts that entered public discourse via commissions, developmental staged reading, workshop productions, world premieres, and translations.\(^{13}\)

As I have previously demonstrated (Manzor 2017), Latine theater historiographical teleology, based primarily on the Chicano theater movement, has three identifiable periods. The 1960s through the 1970s is the period of community-based theaters, which amid sociopolitical upheavals, existed outside of major funding agencies. The 1980s and 1990s correspond to a period of professionalization, when playwrights, that is, individuals, became more important than collectives. Some have argued that theater began to “sell out” to mainstream audiences in part due to funding from the NEA, the Ford Foundation, and other institutions. As a result, Latine theater became less “nationalistic” by the 1990s (Rossini 2008 and Rossini and Ybarra 2012). The beginning of the 21st century marks, finally, a period of “Latine arrival,” as exemplified by Nilo Cruz’s, Quiara Alegría Hudes’s, and Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Pulitzer Prizes, granted in 2003, 2012, and 2016, respectively. I have addressed the factual and historical inexactitudes of this periodization elsewhere. Nevertheless, it is important to underscore that the US Cuban theatrical productions I analyze were staged precisely during that second period of professionalization of Latine theater. Moreover, all the playwrights studied here have become important Latine theater representatives on contemporary US stages. However, their early work, which is the focus of this book, has gone largely understudied because of a lack of accessibility to research materials.

When I started working on this book, few of the playwrights or plays I study in Marginality had been published. In terms of Latine theater, only a handful of New York- and California-based playwrights were in print. I started collecting materials from playwrights and discovered a treasure of unpublished and unproduced plays. My move from UC-Irvine to the University of Miami allowed me to make this material available to a wider audience. In collaboration with the Cuban Heritage Collection at the University of Miami Richter Library, I started to develop an archive for this important theatrical corpus. Originally conceived as the Cuban/Latino Digital Theater Archive, I eventually designed the Cuban Theater Digital Archive (CTDA) to host these materials online and make them accessible to a wider audience. Working at the intersection of humanities and digital media, the CTDA’s purpose is threefold: it is a resource for teaching, learning, and research in Cuban and US Cuban theater and performance, as well as in related fields; a digital repository for important US Cuban theatrical materials as well as Cuban materials little known outside
the island; and a forum to foster scholarly communication in this field. CTDA has a special focus on theater produced by Cuban and US Cuban artists in the United States.

For some time, I abandoned this manuscript and focused my labor on CTDA’s development. As I have studied elsewhere (Manzor, Rymkus, and Ogihara 2013), researchers know that the fleeting nature of performance transforms research for historians and scholars of theater as live-art performance into a search. Patrice Pavis has suggested that theater research is, indeed, a search for a lost object: a non-locatable and inaccessible representation (1998, 4). Any writing/research on theater is partly a search for documentation that serves as a trace of that non-repeatable performance. Documents for theater re/search are composed of the researchers’ own notes of the spectacular text (representation) and published or unpublished texts. Other important elements are photographs, video recordings, sketches for costumes and stage design, program notes, directors’ notebooks, newspaper clippings, social media posts, and oral histories with audience memories. These ephemera are traces of the live representation, the missing object of the re/search, and, as José Esteban Muñoz has argued, they are

a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself. It does not rest on epistemological foundations but is instead interested in following traces, glimmers, residues, and specks of things [that] maintain… experiential politics and urgencies long after those experiences have been lived.

(1996, 10)

US Cuban and Latine theater artists, cultural institutions, and theater companies now recognize the need to create archives of their work. Documentation on US Cuban theater existed, but it was scattered in different personal collections until the creation of CTDA with the concurrent development of theater collections at the Cuban Heritage Collection. Limited resources were available at different institutions. However, the drive for many institutions traditionally has been to collect. With limited budgets, theater collections usually do not have finding aids and other organizational elements that accompany full processing, serve research, and provide the infrastructure necessary for digitization projects and broader access. Only in rare circumstances is there collaboration between librarians, archivists, theater faculty, and artists in the processing of theater collections. There is an ongoing need for the continued collaboration among four fundamental “actors” or cultural workers in the production of knowledge from within, for, and about US Cuban and Latine theaters: the artist/researcher, the researcher/artist, the artist and researcher working together, and the participating researcher (not an artist) who produces knowledge based on the theatrical event itself (Dubatti 2014).

The US Cuban plays I discuss are the products, then, of multiple intersecting factors. They re-enact this multiplicity by staging processes of subjectification,
of a hybrid self-in-progress or a subject-in-process, along a fluid model of “identity-in-difference” as developed by Norma Alarcón and other feminists of color, as a result of networks of proximity. This kind of subjectivity has been theorized most eloquently by Trinh T. Minh-ha in what she calls a “not you/like you” model. Trying to go beyond the ways in which both identity and difference are constructed in terms of essence (374), Trinh develops the subject position of what she calls “inappropriate other or same” who, “undercutting the inside/outside opposition . . . moves about with at least two gestures: that of affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference, and that of reminding ‘I am different’ while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at” (375). The mechanisms that construct a subject which is “Cubano/a, Latino/a, American” like you but different are precisely those of hybrid “identity-in-difference.” This hybrid subjectivity constantly underlines a “self-conscious flexibility of identity,” as Chela Sandoval has called it, which “allows us no single conceptualization of our position in society” (67). This flexibility of identity, like Deleuze’s image of the fold in which self and other constantly double each other, in turn, allows one to move beyond the category of otherness as an absolute difference from the self. US Cuban identities are precisely the locus where the self/other, inside/outside oppositions are undercut. Constantly reaffirming a “not you” and “like you” gesture allows us to locate points of “identity-in-difference,” that is, points of identities in the present that, as Norma Alarcón has suggested, allow us “to forge the needed solidarities against repression and oppression” (102) but which are not reductively assumed always to be the same.

In the plays and performances I study, hybridity also characterizes individual and collective identities at the level of plot, character construction, and the spectacular text, thus figuring in their formal mechanisms their hybrid situations and consciousness. It is also deployed in these playwrights’ and directors’ notions of art, invention, and construction. The trope of hybridity captures both the sense of deterritorialization which I have been addressing and underlines the need to continue with a project of invention and reinvention of the self. As I theorize in Chapter 1 and demonstrate throughout, this reinvention or reterritorialization of the political and cultural self is not based on a static concept of a national identity or culture in opposition to or separate from an “other” culture. On the contrary, it examines the possibilities of decentering both cultures through the insertion of the “other” into the national political body. The national political body, in this case, is multiple: a dispersed and still dispersing Cuba, a hegemonic United States, and the emergent Latine.

The title, Marginality Beyond Return, points toward this “identity-in-difference” as it captures the “at-oddness,” the “in-between” position which Casal captured poetically in her verses, which, in turn, embody for me the predicament of Cuban cultural identity in the United States. US Cubans carry within ourselves a marginality that makes us too Cuban to be “American,” yet also too “American” to be anything else. This is, indeed, a marginality immune to all return to our Cubas or to our Americas, immune to static processes of gender, sexual, ethnic, or national identification along essentialist lines.
I must clarify the use of a key term before proceeding: US Cuban, as opposed to Cuban-American. As can be expected, part of the problem lies in the word to the right of the hyphen.\(^\text{17}\) This word, as Gómez Peña has pointed out, refers to “this troubled continent accidentally called America” and “this troubled country mistakenly called America” (1989, 20). I have argued elsewhere that I reject the usage of the term “Cuban-American” because, in its inherent redundancy, it reproduces the cultural and political ideologies which have characterized the last two centuries of history in North and South America (see Manzor-Coats 1991). In the 19th century, the independ-ence of the Spanish colonies created a need for Europe to name and con-trast that part of the two Americas that was not Anglo-Saxon. Thus, all of us became Latin Americans and were forced to produce a literature and a culture to prove that we indeed were Latin Americans.\(^\text{18}\) This political and semantic move is not very different from the amalgamation and lumping together of Mexicans, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Nuyoricans, US Cubans, and other South and Central American “legal” and “illegal aliens” (undocumented migrants) under the term “Hispanic” enacted during the Reagan administration.\(^\text{19}\) In the 20th century, not only was Cuba, along with the rest of Latin America, transformed politically and economically into the backyard of the United States, the United States also subsumed linguistically the other Americas with the demonym American. In other words, the use of America as synonymous with the United States constitutes a rhetorical obliteration of “our America” which mirrors performatively its economic and political leveling. As sociolin-guist Jonathan Rosa has underscored,

[t]he possessive “America’s,” which invokes a territorial mandate in place since at least the 1823 Monroe Doctrine that claimed US neocolonial ownership of the Americas, must be distinguished from the plural Americas, which simultaneously invokes a foreclosed geopolitical order and a haunting of US sovereignty. These chronotopic figurations become highly consequential through their capacity to constitute the terms of legibi-lity and legitimacy of particular identities and populations in particular times and places.

(14)

By using US Cuban, I do not want to erase the violence inscribed in the hyphen of Cuban-American. As we construct a sense of self, we constantly straddle the hyphen which linguistically creates a non-existing equivalence between the terms on either side. Thus, we simultaneously have to unveil the imperial fiction to the right of the hyphen as well as underline the heteroge-neity and multiplicity which is not necessarily invoked by the term to the left. Eliminating the hyphen also underlines the need to re-map and re-configure the boundaries of US culture(s), both inside and outside academia, as well as the boundaries of Cuban culture(s) themselves. In other words, there is a need to re-map the internal and external geographies of “our Americas”
so that we may find a space and a place for these cultural “hyphenates” or hybrid subjects.

My analyses focus on the performative aspect of theater, that is, on the transformations from its written version to the staged, spectacular one. The genres of live theater and performance art (as opposed to scripts or drama) embody and figure precisely the places where the intersections between “live bodies” and cultural construction become visible and thus can be studied. As a performance, as a live process in relation to reception, theater presents a unique way to discuss questions of identity and identity formation as well as identity in relation to a given aesthetic or social project. My primary texts are mainly performances and my reading of them takes “the performative” as a critical and theoretical tool (see Chapter 1).

In choosing theater and performance as my “primary texts” of cultural analysis, I am not suggesting a one-to-one correspondence between theater and the hybrid subject or between theater and social change, between representation and the real. Theater appropriates mechanisms of cultural mediation which go beyond the stage. The transformation of Afro-Cuban and Afro-Caribbean religious imagery and the re-enactment of internal racism between different Latine communities (Chapter 3), or the desire to address the need for reconciliation (Chapter 5), for example, are all part and parcel of the “real” in the Latine social ensemble as well as the representation of that real in US Cuban theater ensemble. I use ensemble in three different but interconnected ways. The first use is related to the theatrical definition of ensemble, namely, the group of creators involved in a theatrical production, from playwright, directors, and actors to scenographers, choreographers, and designers. Second, an ensemble allows me to bring together a set of productions and to discuss them as a theatrical repertoire. Third, and most importantly, I adapt Randy Martin’s concept of ensemble and deploy it in ways theoretically similar to the contemporary use of assemblage, that is, theories of social structure adapted to theatrical production, consumption, and dissemination, including the physical spaces, locations, and networks of artists and critics important to the analysis of theatrical production, reception, and critical analysis. While Diana Taylor’s theorizations of the archive and the repertoire inform my analyses, I privilege Martin’s use of ensemble because he developed it during the time frame of my analyses, a decade before Manuel DeLanda’s A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity. Although Martin’s focus was socialist ensembles in Cuba and Nicaragua, it allows me to decode the entanglement of public and private actors related to theatrical productions in various sociohistorical settings. Theater, however, is a cultural production that displays its own organizational ensemble as a style of metarepresentation, as a representation about representation. If indeed, as Butler points out, “the real is positioned both before and after its representation; and representation becomes a moment of the reproduction and consolidation of the real” (1990b, 106), then live performance, as I have stated previously, must be seen as metarepresentation. For metarepresentation, as a device, allows us to see and read how representation functions both within theater and within a sociohistorical context. Theater, then, provides the space for “seeing” processes of social change.
And talking about theater provides us the space to address those processes in a keenly theoretical fashion. The audience is conceptually central to any study of live theater. Each performance generates an audience “as a momentarily gathered collectivity” (Martin 27). A performance, like any text, creates a space for an implied audience. And yet, the “real” audience as a gathered collectivity and the implied audience do not always coincide. Throughout the readings, I have tried to decode that audience by underscoring the performances’ double function. On the one hand, I have studied the observational/participational role of a “real” audience in relation to specific performance as a textualized performance in and of itself (see, for example, the discussion in Chapter 4 of the Anglo lesbian audience and the straight Latina audience in Tropicana’s performances). On the other hand, I have also theorized the audience as an “unstable absent presence” (see Martin, Blau 1990) by reading into the spaces implied for it in the various texts (for example, in the discussion of audience and language in Chapter 1). Thus, I am not only interested in theorizing how certain audiences read specific texts but also in describing the relations of that audience within social structures and how those structures have shaped and situated my own position as a seeing and speaking critic.

My analysis of live performance also inserts theater into the broader context of other mediascapes and reads theory in relation to other ideoscapes, mainly that of popular music. Music is deployed as an integral part of most of the performances. The titles and starting point of most of my chapters are also borrowed from popular music because for Cubans and Latines in the United States, popular music functions as one of many cultural markers of Cuban or Latine consciousness. It thus becomes a medium of “symbolic cultural communication” (Padilla 44). It is also used to embody, in a performative sense, specific sociohistorical realities. As José Esteban Muñoz has suggested, music drafts “an affective schematic particular to the emotional emergence and becoming of a citizen–subject who will not ‘feel’ American in the way in which the protocols of official affective citizenship demand” (2000, 78). In this sense, Alexandra Vázquez’s theoretical construct of “listening in detail” has enriched my reading of the use of music in these plays and it is foundational to the ways in which I analyze the entanglements of music, race, and culture.

*Marginality Beyond Return*, then, is the study of contemporary US Cuban theatrical production as a performance of the multiple “in-betweens” of identity–in-difference. These multiple “in-betweens” produce “inappropriate others” whose subjectivities fail to conform to the US and Cuban norms of cultural intelligibility and thus challenge the coherence of those norms (see Chapter 1). While most of these “in-betweens” are at work at the same time—Cuban versus US norms of masculinity and femininity, of whiteness and Blackness, of heteronormativity and queerness—I will address them separately, for the sake of analysis, in individual chapters. As hybrid performances, the travels through these “in-betweens” in the productions studied question the very norms which restrict and guide the production of “inappropriate/d others.” The first...
Introduction

Chapter 1, “Uno. ‘Mister Don’t Touch the Banana’: Transculturation, Networks of Proximity, and US Cuban Theater,” presents an introduction to the history and cultural production of Cubans in the United States. The chapter presents a different/critical chronology of Cuban migration to the United States, primarily to Miami. Although Miami as a city and site for US Cuban theater projects did not figure prominently during the 1980s and 1990s, Miami exile culture haunts some of the artists studied and, in the 21st century, Miami becomes the site for these artists’ transnational connections with Cuban theater on the island (Chapter 5). Informed by Cold War history, it presents and critiques the Cuban success narrative and debunks the exceptionalism of this narrative. It continues with an analysis of anthropological theories of transculturation contrasting it to the ways in which multiculturalism was deployed in the United States during “the decade of the Hispanic” in the 1980s and “the decade of the Latino” in the 1990s. It is within these cultural and academic debates that the US Cuban playwrights studied in this book started to develop their work and that regional and community theaters began to produce them. The playwrights and productions studied entered the mainstream as Latino artists but their work, like that of other Latino writers during the 1980s and 1990s, performed critical multiculturalism that worked against the homogenizing and commodifying tendencies of the period. The productions performed a critique of Cuban and American exceptionalism present at the time in Cuban and Cuban-American Studies and American Studies, respectively. The chapter ends by theorizing US Cuban identity as hybrid and chaotic. It borrows from cultural studies’ appropriation of scientific theories of chaos and fractals as well as network theory. It reviews and critiques the literature that uses static approaches to identity formation while it redeploy both the “exile” and “ethnic” categories outside of essentialist and nationalist paradigms.

Chapter 2, “Dos. ‘Momento renacentista’: US Cubans and Latinx-Off-Off-Broadway,” focuses on the role US Cubans and Puerto Ricans played in Off-Off-Broadway. This chapter grounds the book historically and places the artists I consider foundational to US Cuban theater—Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas, Eduardo Machado, and Carmelita Tropicana—in relation to María Irene Fornés and the 1960s and 1970s productions that set a precedent for their work. I analyze the work of María Irene Fornés and two US Cuban theater artists whose involvement in the Off-Off-Broadway movement has gone largely unnoticed: Magali Alabau, Manuel Martín Jr. Although Fornés is seen as a progenitor of the Off-Off-Broadway movement, no one has analyzed her first play, La viuda. I present how the processes of hybridity and transculturation studied in the previous chapter were at work in their theatrical productions. Furthermore, I demonstrate how their retooling of themes and aesthetics coming from non-US traditions, namely Latin American and European avant-garde theaters, were key to their theatrical processes. However, it was that very aesthetics and the use of Spanish language that remained unreadable to English-language theatre critics who pushed their work away from Off-Off-Broadway to the then nascent Spanish or Hispanic theater. I begin the chapter with an analysis of María
Irene Fornés’ La viuda (The Widow). I analyze La viuda relating it to other works from Fornés’ Off-Off-Broadway period, namely, Tango Palace and Promenade, to prove that La viuda already contains many of the theatrical techniques and language used by Fornés in her later work. I suggest that this play’s lack of critical attention is representative of the marginalization of Spanish-language plays in that period. The second half of the chapter is devoted to Manuel Martín Jr.’s early work as actor, director, and playwright to demonstrate how he, alongside actress Magali Alabau, latinized Off-Off-Broadway. The main objectives of this chapter are to bring back three key US Cuban theater artists, to put them into dialogue within the networks of their Puerto Rican and Anglo Off-Off-Broadway contemporaries—Roberto Rodríguez Suárez, Tom Eyen, Leonard Melfi, Candy Darling, and Ellen Stewart—and to demonstrate how they shaped what I term Latine Off-Off-Broadway. Although these experimental theater pieces might not relate directly to Latine identity politics nor are they solely part of Latine community-based activism, I argue that it is the haunting of ghosts from the past that endow these early works with an undeniable Cubanity, in José Esteban Muñoz’s use of the term. Because that Cubanity was performed from a Cuban/Latin American perspective, the plays remained unreadable as Off-Off-Broadway plays.

Chapter 3, “Tres. ‘¡Ay mama Inés!’: Gender, Ethnicity, Blackness, and Racism,” analyzes how US Cuban theater has practically overlooked the racial underpinnings of national identity constructs in Cuba. It begins with a reading of Manuel Martín Jr.’s Rita and Bessie in New York, one of two plays that addresses intersectionally ethnicity, race, and sexuality. I theorize the staging of transcultural processes of subject formation against the backdrop of a dominant culture’s persistent racialization and “objectification.” Focusing on the intersections, the “in-betweens” of gender and Blackness in Cuba and the United States, of differing models of femininity along class, racial, and national boundaries, and of sexuality, I explore how configurations of identity as “identity-in-difference” are constructed and represented in and through this performance. I end the chapter with Jorge Ignacio Cortiñas’ Maleta Mulata in San Francisco. The play presents a critique of Cuban-American’s de-racial imagining as it stages the transcultural experiences of younger US Cubans who have lived with other racialized Latines. Affects and memory are crucial to the construction of character in this play and of the audience as a social body. Focusing on the development of these characters on stage, on their affective relationships, and on the networks of Latine artists within which this play was developed, I argue that this play artfully and performatively constructs a politics of memory based on a contrapuntal articulation of affect, race, and desire that allow us to imagine very different Cuban and Usonian futures. Finally, this chapter demonstrates the heretofore unrecognized pioneering gestures of US Cuban theater in both American and Cuban Studies. In 1988, when Rita and Bessie was produced, scholarship about the queer divas of the Blues and the queering of the Harlem Renaissance was nascent. Manuel Martín Jr. participated in that early recuperation of Black women artists to underscore
their independence, including freedom in the realm of sexuality. Furthermore, these plays’ staging of racialized constructions of Blacks and of the performative markers of Blackness in Cuba and US Cuba antedate academic scholarship on this issue. Thus, this chapter underscores the primacy of performance over academic theorization on these topics.

Chapter 4, “Cuatro. ‘La vida en rosa’: Carmelita Tropicana’s Performative Excess,” focuses specifically on US Cuban performance art. It looks at how the body is used in feminist performance as both means and repository of a split historical and personal memory of the US Cuban woman. The chapter begins with an analysis of the construction of Carmelita Tropicana’s performing persona through theories of tropicalization. I then read Memorias de la Revolución / Memories of the Revolution (1986) focusing on the use of humor or choteo, “ethnic camp” or picuercia, and gestic moments. Picuercia in its Cuban version consists of a scandalous mixture of objects and forms which are utilized as cultural signs; it is synonymous with bad taste—bad taste, of course, in relation to Eurocentric aesthetic codes. I analyze how the gestic moments in the performance inscribe a racialized sexual fantasy within a lesbian dynamic of desire. By studying the play’s critical reception, I argue that to read the complexity and ambiguity of these gestic moments, we need to address the entanglements of sexuality, racialization processes, and geopolitics. The play de-essentialized and racialized the “lesbian spectatorial community” before critical writings on the subject.

The second half of the chapter focuses on With What Ass Does the Cockroach Sit? / ¿Con Qué Culo Se Sienta la cucaracha? (2004). This one-woman play rewrites the Spanish folktale of La Cucarachita Martina, the cockroach that eventually marries the mouse Pérez, and uses as a backdrop the Elián González international conflict (1999–2000) and Cuban exile politics. Tropicana performs a whole array of animals, parodies hardline political positions in Cuba and in Miami, and highlights the importance of affective relationships. My reading of this queer political fable and of the queer cabaret Memorias interconnects the arguments that have been presented separately in the previous chapters focusing on the intersections of gender and ethnicity, of sexuality and national identity, and of sexuality and geopolitics in specific New York spaces, places, and times. Moreover, it situates those performances historically and artistically as precursors of the cross-Cuban performances discussed in the last chapter.

Chapter 5, “Cinco. ‘Todos por lo mismo’: From Bridges to Greater Cuba,” looks at the ways in which Cuban and US Cuban theaters form part of and respond to a plurality emanating from sociohistorical displacement and cultural discontinuities. I analyze several festivals and plays, including Repertorio Español’s production of Eduardo Machado’s Revoltillo in Miami and Cuba—the first US Cuban production performed on the island—the First International Monologue/Performance Festival which brought to Miami twenty-seven theater artists residing on the island, and Alberto Sarrain’s Miami–La Habana coproduction of Abelardo Estorino’s Parece blanca in Cuba. By studying plays across the spectrum of Cuban diaspora theater (exile and US Cuban theaters), I offer models to study Cuban theater produced on and off the island as a product of cultural dispersion.
The staged encounters in this last chapter, however, move the discussion of the “national” and the “ethnic” in Cuba and the United States to a transnational perspective. I suggest the need to study Cuban theater on and off the island as a product of and within this cultural dispersion. This chapter closes the book with a reading which performatively operates as an intellectual and discursive encounter between our dramaturgies. It also engages Transnational Latine Studies as it argues for a theater of Greater Cuba, a non-geographical cultural space that moves us away from the traditional island/exile dichotomy. In this future-focused chapter, I demonstrate the power of theater and performance over diplomacy and political science and explore how theater offers a productive and innovative take on where US–Cuba relations could go in the future.

Notes

1 See Casal, El caso, Cuban, Palabras; Herrera and de la Cuesta; López; and Prohías and Casal 1974.
2 For an analysis of the Antonio Maceo brigade see Behar; Casal, “Ganar”; Jesús Díaz and Pérez-Tolón.
3 De-Costa Willis’ reading of the poem underscores Cuba as la patria: “the geographic space and symbolic place of her identity is Cuba” (200).
4 For a reading of this poem as “Casal’s most daring inscription of lesbian desire in her literary production,” see Negrón-Muntaner and Martínez-San Miguel.
5 “la testarudez con que insiste … en analizar todos los aspectos de un problema …; su resistencia a dejarse llevar por fórmulas simplistas y maniqueas, que siempre tienen la virtud de ser las más convenientes para mantener “la paz y el orden” en la sociedad.”
6 For an analysis of the importance of Areti, although he does not mention Lourdes Casal, see de la Campa 81–94. All translations in this book are my own, unless otherwise noted.
7 “proto-latinidad … se adelanta al discurso contestatario, feminista y/o afrolatino de más reciente factura.” See also Lomas.
8 Stuart Hall, on the other hand, has also theorized culture to mean both “the actual, grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific historical society” and “the contradictory forms of ‘common sense’ which have taken root and helped to shape popular life” (26). García Canclini’s conceptualization of culture goes beyond Hall’s formulation in so far as it also accounts for the conscious politicization of culture based on the strategic use of cultural symbols by a specific group. In this sense, García Canclini’s approach is similar to what David Laitin in Hegemony and Culture calls the two faces of culture.
9 I thank Ricardo Braccho and Elena Grau Lleveria for this formulation.
10 Usano is a Spanish variation of Usonian, a term used by William Nericcio to playfully refer to citizens of the United States. It is also a linguistic play on the word gusano (worm), a pejorative term used in Cuba to refer to Cuban exiles.
12 For more information, see Escarpanter; Manzor, “Más allá,” Sánchez-Grey Alba, and Cuban Theater Digital Archive. There is also a more recent generation of artists who
left Cuba in the new millennium and whom we could call novísimos, as they tend to be known in Cuba. However, these artists are not part of this study.

13 The questions of what plays never make it to the stage and why not are extremely important, but they lie within the confines of another project. For an excellent analysis of this situation in Southern California see Marrero.

14 I have elaborated on all of these points in Manzor, “Archiving” and Manzor et al. However, this important engaged scholarship tends to go largely unnoticed within US academia and rarely is taken into account in tenure and promotion cases.

15 These theoretical constructs will be discussed further in Chapter 1.

16 My analysis of the use of the hyphen is completely different from Pérez Firmat. I address my disagreement with his “Cuban-American way” in Chapter 3.

17 The literature on Latin American identity is extensive; suffice it to mention Ardao, Campra. As a matter of fact, the literature on the Quinto Centenario demonstrated that Latin Americans were still pondering over issues of identity. See, for example, Nuestra América.

18 This amalgamation is noted any time a Latine artist or cultural critic invokes the term Latine. We constantly underscore that we use the term Latine, despite its many pitfalls, because it is a name that has not been directly imposed upon us by Anglo hegemony. Sandoval and Román, for example, state that “‘Latino’ emerged as a category for self identification to agitate the imposed US Government census term ‘Hispanic’” (7). Chon Noriega also underscores that “the fact that Hispanic emerges as a US census category suggests the difficult play between race and ethnicity, as the government seeks institutional control through homogenization (“Hispanic”), and social movements undertake radical change through the formation of a collective identity (“Latino”)” (46). Also see the excellent essays by Flores and Yudice, and F. Padilla.

19 As Herbert Blau has suggested, “theater is theory, or a shadow of it . . . In the act of seeing, there is already theory” (114). José Esteban Muñoz throughout his work also argued for “the theory-making power of performance” (Disidentifications 30).

20 I use Cubanity, like Muñoz, to distance myself from the use of Cubanness prevalent in Cuban and Cuban American Studies. See Chapters 1 and 3.

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