

There does seem to be a potential for richness and depth of experience of life at the Hermitage, but it is not reflected in this ethnography. Even the interviews in chapter 9 are sterile and unfocused. I admire the attempt to “study up,” but I would certainly have liked to see at least a few “thick descriptions” of some aspects of life at The Hermitage.

***Bridges to Cuba = Puentes a Cuba: Cuban-American Artists, Writers, and Scholars Explore Identity, Nationality, and Homeland.*** RUTH BEHAR, ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995. x + 421 pp.

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When reading *Bridges to Cuba*, I recalled two phrases. One comes from a Black American poem which asks, “What is Africa to me?” and the other phrase is the promise evoked at the end of the *Pass-over seder*, “Next year in Jerusalem.” Meanings of homeland and the possibility of return are repeated in laments, writings, performances, rituals, and expressions of loss, longing, inclusion, and exclusion that cross eras, borders, and oceans. These elements frame the diasporic position that needs to navigate the differences between conflicting locations. Seemingly irreconcilable differences—the end products of the Cold War between the United States and Cuba—separate the Cubans who live in and outside of that island. The bridge between two countries and two groups of Cubans spans a short distance of only 90 miles, and took 37 long years to build and maintain.

*Bridges to Cuba* is a collection of self-reflexive social science, poetry, prose, drama, and essays by 57 writers and scholars, as well as drawings, paintings, and performance art by 20 visual artists. All these contributors are members of the Cuban “*comunidad*.” The circumstances of why these contributors live either on one side of the bridge or the other is the core of the volume. But the response to and questioning of the maintenance of that bridge is the underlying current of the work. As Cubans born just before the revolution, these writers, scholars, and artists have all had their lives shaped by their personal locations pertaining to that military triumph that became a battlefield of ideological, economic, and familial warfare. The writers, scholars, and artists who came of age during the construction of the bridge shored by the U.S. embargo hope that this volume will be a way of helping festering wounds to heal. This triage operation demands and tests all human capabilities and requires exceptional skill, as witnessed by Ruth Behar’s extraordinary editorial crafting of this collection, and her personal dedication toward this goal of Cuban-community bridging. Nothing in this life is easy.

There are basically three ways to read *Bridges to Cuba*—as literature, as anthropology, and as testimony. A reading of the poetry, prose, drama, and literary essays provides a wonderful overview of some of the best of contemporary Cuban literature. Furthermore, since these writers are a part of the diasporic Cuban community, the end result highlights

the literary production coming out of the combined fields of U.S. Latino, Cuban, Caribbean, and Latin American literature.

The second way of reading *Bridges to Cuba* is through an understanding of Caribbean cultures and societies. Cuba’s prerevolutionary social formations are the genesis of the volume. Reading with anthropological lenses must consider 400 years of Spanish colonization, plantation economy, white supremacy, social inequality based on class and ethnicity, and neocolonial relations with the United States, just to name a few institutions and events for consideration. Carrying this history with them into an ideologically constructed exile, second-generation Cubans in the United States have additional histories to add to this Cuban identity. This addendum includes exile versus immigrant status, Latino second-class citizenship when phenotypically appropriate, Cuban enclave cultural experiences, assimilation and the assumption of other identities, and intergenerational conflict. As Maria de Los Angeles Torres (p. 34) remarks, Cubans on both sides of the bridge share a narrow vision of each other tempered by a 1959 perspective.

Finally, *Bridges to Cuba* can be read as a collective *testimonio* (testimonial). Modifying the genre a bit, this collective narration of a significant life experience provides a new model and a concrete form of solidarity between second-generation Cubans who seek a two-way bridge without Cold War ideological blindness impeding their way. By using a multidisciplinary approach, *Bridges to Cuba* challenges the standard presentation of Cubanness. It identifies with the community and is more concerned with the fate of the community at large than with the craft of any particular genre. From this collective *testimonio* emerges a very delicate discussion of the mundane and particular, the painful and lamentable, and a sense of Cubanness for all it is worth on both sides of the bridge.

The book is divided into three sections: Reconciliation/*Reconciliacion*, Rupture/*Ruptura*, and Remembering/*Recuerdos*. English and Spanish are used when a bilingual, diasporan reasoning is required. Genres of writing are dispersed throughout, so that subjects are grouped not by the format in which they appear, but by the content. Poetry is an important element in this volume because it is the most popular Cuban genre of writing. There are interviews with well-known writers, soul-searching accounts of ventures for completeness by second-generation Cubans traveling to the island of their birth and the aftermath of those sojourns, and Cubans who leave the island and return because life does not exist for them outside Cuba. Sexual metaphors characterize the U.S.-Cuban relationship. Socially constructed notions of manhood, femaleness, gay men, and muted lesbian identities are argued across the community even when the two sides bump into each other while watching a film or reading the headlines of *The Miami Herald*.

***Aboriginal Health in Canada: Historical, Cultural, and Epidemiological Perspectives.*** JAMES B. WALDRAM, D. ANN HERRING, and T. KUE YOUNG. Toronto: University of