CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

Introduction

Unfinished Histories

VICKY UNRUH AND JACQUELINE LOSS

There is something monumental in conceiving and carrying out a nation-based literary history, at the very least in the size and scope of the endeavor. But aspirations toward comprehensiveness or definitiveness can generate an aura of presumption, even hubris in such an enterprise. We have actively sought to avoid these pitfalls, recognizing the always unfinished, dynamic quality of literary and cultural histories as they are told and retold across time and from different locations. Once etymologically linked to a burial place, the word "monument" is now more broadly understood as a material remembrance of some kind or a site of remembering. In that sense, this book is more a living performance of collective and diversely located remembering than a fixed monument to a literary patrimony. As attested by the twenty-first-century tearing down of monuments, for example of statues commemorating Confederate figures from the United States Civil War, memory is not, to quote Chilean cultural theorist Nelly Richard, "a repository of definitively completed historical meanings that remembrance recovers simply by looking backward." Rather, she continues, "the formulation of memory undergoes an incessant dispute among different conceptualizations of *what* and *how* to remember," and viable acts of remembering must "move the past beyond the simple revelation of facts to a complex process of critical understanding" (175–176; emphasis in original). Thus, while offering an abundance of key information about Cuba's rich and complex literary history, our contributing authors, writing from different locations and relationships to Cuba, also offer their own twenty-first-century critical understandings of that history.

An antimonumentalizing impulse, then, shapes this book. But if approached reflectively, monuments do have elucidating stories to tell us about Cuba's literary and cultural history. Richard, after all, wrote these

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

thoughts about the critical process of cultural remembering in order to consider actual physical sites of remembrance of the human rights violations of the Pinochet era. Similarly, monuments to Cuba's literary-intellectual history can stimulate critical reflections and encourage us to unpack that history's contested reverberations in different historical moments and locations. They can also bring into view the diverse claimants to that history's legacies. Monuments offer compelling evidence that cultural memory – like literature – travels. For example, a statue of the institution's namesake at Humboldt University in Berlin displays a dedication in Spanish: "To the Second Discoverer of Cuba / The University of Havana 1939." In recognition of his contributions to writers' imaginings of their own country, this moniker for Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) was first coined by José de la Luz y Caballero (1800–1862), a nineteenth-century Cuban philosopher who, with Humboldt, created Cuba's first observatory. In 1930, moreover, Cuban anthropologist and cultural theorist Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969), whose research on Afro-Cuban culture deeply marked twentieth-century Cuban literature's conceptions of race, reiterated Luz y Caballero's moniker in an introduction to a Cuban edition of Humboldt's *Political Essay on the Island of Cuba* (1825–1826), in which Humboldt had addressed Cuban slavery. Echoing the complex, migrating history of the German naturalist and explorer and his legacy for Cuba's cultural history, a bust of Humboldt is found at the visitor's center of the 275-square-mile Alejandro de Humboldt National Park, located on Eastern Cuba's north coast in Holguín and Guantánamo provinces. A UNESCO Natural World Heritage site since 2001, the park website describes it as the best-conserved remnant of forested mountain ecosystems in the Caribbean, a regional identification that has also marked Cuban literary and cultural history.

More familiar than the Humboldt monuments, perhaps, is Anna Vaughn Hyatt Huffington's bronze equestrian statue of José Martí (1853–1895), dedicated in 1965 at New York City's Central Park South and Avenue of the Americas. With a pedestal donated by the Cuban government, this gift to the people of New York celebrates, in the moment of his demise, a fallen hero of Cuban independence from Spain and the precursor of Cuban poetic *modernismo* and of this turn-of-the-twentieth-century literary movement throughout Spanish America. Before returning to Cuba to join the 1895 battle that took his life, Martí, like other nineteenth-century Cuban writers and intellectuals, wrote much of his most important work while living in exile in New York or in several countries in Latin America and working toward Cuban independence. This cause not only located key moments of Cuban

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

cultural history in the US, but also intertwined closely with contentious narratives among nineteenth-century Cuba's intelligentsia about the role of race and enslavement in the aspiring nation's future and in an emerging sense of *cubanía* or Cubanness. Moreover, the placement of Martí's Central Park statue in a small plaza near those of Simón Bolívar (Venezuela) and José de San Martín (Argentina) inserts Cuba into Latin American nation-formation movements that had culminated decades before Cuba's. The connections also place Cuba into literary-cultural debates of the twentieth and twenty-first century on the viability of the concept of Latin Americanism as an identity construct. Cuba's contributions to those debates are central, as in such landmark essays as Martí's 1891 "Nuestra América" ["Our America"] (2002), Alejo Carpentier's "De lo real maravilloso americano" (1949) ["On the Marvelous Real in America"] (1995) or poet, essayist, and fiction writer José Lezama Lima's *La expresión americana* (1957).

Physical monuments to Martí, of course, abound in Cuba itself, including two well-known Havana sites: the pedestaled marble statue by José Vilalta Saavedra, dedicated in 1905 in the Parque Central to replace the colonial-era statue of Spain's Isabel II, and the gargantuan monument to Martí, conceived and executed largely during the Cuban republican era and located in Plaza de la Revolución. Traveling under the wire of the brief, Obama-era détente, through negotiations by Havana historian Eusebio Leal and Cuba's Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes with the city of New York and the Bronx Museum, and with funding from cultural institutions and private individuals, a bronze replica of the original Central Park equestrian Martí statue arrived in Havana in October 2017, the same month that Donald Trump expelled much of Cuba's Embassy staff from the US. The replica, which attests to the power of artistic bridges across ideological divides greater than the distance from New York to Havana, stands in the garden facing the former presidential palace of Cuba's republican era, later the Museo de la Revolución. But the replica also evokes the conflicts surrounding its own pilgrimage and underlying debates about the ownership of Cuba's cultural history. On the one hand, using funds donated by Cuban Americans from around the US, the Central Park Conservancy brought the original Martí statue under its wing in 1992. On the other, Cuban artists living in New York, including performance activist Tania Bruguera (1968–) and painter and photographer Geandy Pavón (1974–) questioned the 2017 gift of the two-and-a-half-million-dollar replica in a period of extreme economic duress among island-based Cuban artists. Cuban American interdisciplinary artist and performer Coco Fusco (1960–) further questioned the extent to which the Bronx Museum was so invested in

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

Cuba to the detriment of artists from many other places living in that borough.

Over time, Martí monuments have appeared in numerous other locations, including Berlin, Mexico City, Caracas, Los Angeles, and, of course, Miami and Tampa. Emilio Bejel's illuminating 2012 book, *José Martí: Images of Memory and Mourning*, unpacks Martí iconography in monuments, paintings, drawings, and film. But in the context of a literary history like this one, the multilayered, sometimes contested acts of public remembrance marking Martí monuments also tell us something important about how literary culture itself travels. Thus, wide-ranging representations of Martí are reenergized by the cultural dynamics of new historical moments. But at the same time, these new representations coexist with palimpsests of the past, to draw on José Quiroga's pathbreaking metaphor in his 2005 book, *Cuban Palimpsests*, which he used to characterize literary-artistic culture in the post-Soviet period. An early example of the dynamics of recast remembrance that embody, to reiterate Richard's words, the "incessant dispute" of "*what* and *how* to remember" (176), are the literary-biographical essays crafted by writers of the second republican generation of the 1920s and 1930s that first portrayed Martí as their intellectual progenitor, including Jorge Mañach's *Martí, El Apóstol* (1933), still regarded by some as the best biography of Martí. The 1959 revolution's conception of Martí as its originary hero reinforced this republican consecration. Other creative recastings include the satirical take on the bureaucratic monumentalizing constituted by the mechanically reproduced Martí statues of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's 1966 comedic film *La muerte de un burócrata* [Death of a Bureaucrat], in which the statue-maker is consumed by the machine he has invented for the job; the 2010 fictionalized biopic *José Martí: El ojo del canario* [José Martí: The Eye of the Canary], directed by Fernando Pérez, that demythologizes the monumental Martí into a more human-scaled figure to showcase his artistic and intellectual roots; and the 2015 film *Héroe de culto* [Cult Hero], a documentary short on the continuing mass-production of Martí busts, now made of plastic, directed by Ernesto Sánchez Valdés.

Cuban monuments to key figures in its nineteenth-century literary-cultural history also include, among others, poet and novelist Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814–1873), Afro-Cuban Romantic poet Gabriel de la Concepción Valdés (1809–1844), known as Plácido, and journalist, poet, and novelist Cirilo Villaverde (1812–1894), author of the renowned realist novel *Cecilia Valdés o La Loma del Ángel* (1839, 1882) [*Cecilia Valdés or El Ángel Hill*] (2005), often regarded as the foundational fiction of Cuban identity. As an

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

activist advocate for Cuban independence, Villaverde, like Martí, spent many years in New York where he completed and published the novel's longer, definitive version. Since 1946 a sculptured bust of Villaverde by José Manuel Fidalgo Rodríguez has watched over Plaza del Ángel in Old Havana, a key location in his novel's plot. But in Villaverde's case, attesting to the power of fiction, his novel's protagonist, Cecilia, has been the more dynamic time-space traveler. The light-skinned, secret daughter of a slave-owning white man and a Black mother whose aspirations to upward mobility result in tragedy, Cecilia is often cast as an icon of a complex *cubanía* and as the embodiment of the shifting hierarchical interplay of race, social class, gender, and sexuality marking that construct. She has been subject to multiple acts of artistic reincarnation that exhibit increasing, affective familiarity. Thus, in 2014 a life-sized, street-level statue of Cecilia by Erig Rebull appeared in Old Havana's Plaza del Ángel, where Cubans or tourists pose by her side for selfies. Although located in the same space as Villaverde's monument, the life-like Cecilia somehow upstages her creator, whose staid sculptured bust, more evocative of a traditional memorial, sits in a less accessible niche above the small plaza.

The first of Cecilia's literary reappearances came in the 1891 novel *Sofía*, by Afro-Cuban journalist and fiction writer Martín Morúa Delgado, a strong critic of Villaverde's portrayal of Black Cuban life as romanticized and whose own novel offers a grimmer picture of racism and abuse suffered by its heroine. But her reappearance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have been prolific. These critical remembrances include Gonzalo Roig's *zarzuela* [operetta], which debuted in 1932 amidst heated inquiries into race and *cubanía* undertaken by the second republican generation and has been continuously performed into the twenty-first century in Cuba, Miami, and New York; Humberto Solás's 1982 film *Cecilia*, a complex, postrevolutionary interpretation that contextualizes the long-mythologized characters more explicitly in Cuba's economic and political history and in Afro-Cuban religious practices; the 1987 parodic, postmodern novel *La Loma del Ángel* [*Graveyard of the Angels*], which holds a fictionalized Villaverde to account for his work, written in New York by Cuba's most renowned exile from the 1980 Mariel exodus, Reinaldo Arenas; Abelardo Estorino's 1994 play *Parece Blanca* [She Looks White], also performed in New York, Miami, and Cuba, in which the iconic characters dismantle and question their fate in Villaverde's original book, monumentalized on stage as a central prop on a lectern; Gerardo Chijona's 1999 film *Un paraíso bajo las estrellas* [A Paradise Under the Stars], whose Cecilia character, renamed Sissy, dances at the Tropicana

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

during the post-Soviet era's burst of tourism; and Norge Espinosa's 2001 farcical puppet play *La virgencita de bronce* [The Little Bronze Virgin], a parody that hyperbolizes the stereotyping link between race and eroticism inscribed in Cecilia. Although exiled Cuban playwright Abilio Estévez (1954–), living in Mallorca since the early twenty-first century, has affirmed that the centenarian protagonist he characterizes as *mulata* in his 1994 monologue *Santa Cecilia* is not based on Villaverde's iconic figure, numerous critics and directors have interpreted her that way. In this vein, the 2005 Havana production by Grupo Teatro El Público directed by Carlos Díaz queered the Cecilia character's embodiment of *mulata* sexuality in a stunning crossover performance by Osvaldo Doimeadios. In 1998, and again in 2022, sculptor and installation artist Juana Valdés, who self-identifies as Afro-Cuban, exhibited her multimedia sculpture "My Inheritance (Las Chancletas de Cecilia Valdés)." The piece's sculpted, open-backed sandals are accompanied by framed quotations from Arenas's rewriting of the novel that depict Cecilia wandering Havana's streets in her *chancletas*. This work underscores Cecilia's mobility and agency and claims her legacy for Black Cuban American experience.[1]

The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature, organized into five chronological parts and an epilogue, addresses one of the richest literary legacies of the Americas. Such a chronology befits a literary history. But these tales of material and literary monuments to Humboldt, Martí, and Cecilia Valdés enjoin us to nuance that chronology. These stories also tell us that Cuba's literary-cultural history is layered by metamorphosing reiterations and remembrances. These tales, moreover, bring to light four threads that weave through this book, complicating a straightforward chronology and encouraging critical reflections on the ties between any given literary event and its past and its reverberations into the future. These thematic concepts underlying the book's design and the critical conversations unfolding among the volume's contributors include (1) that international networks and exchanges have marked Cuban literature and intellectual life – from its emergence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; to the island's twentieth- and twenty-first-century status as a dynamic literary crossroads with writers and intellectuals from Europe, Latin America, and the US interacting in Cuba's cultural experiments of the 1920s to the 1950s; to the 1960s epoch of postrevolutionary creative fervor and the inventive literary projects of the postutopian years leading up to and following the end of the Cold War; (2)

1 See Lisenby on Cecilia's sexual commodification in post-Soviet Cuban tourism and Civantos on her embodiment of agency under duress, mobility, and migration.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

that Cuban literature and intellectual thought have played a key role in the concepts of and debates about cultural specificity and exceptionality marking the literary history of Latin America and the Caribbean region as a whole; (3) that deep-seated, often contentious imaginings of race, always inflected by complexities of gender and social class, have marked the themes, forms, and language of Cuban literature throughout its history; and (4) that travel and movement – voluntary, exploratory, enslaved, migratory, or exilic – have always marked Cuban literary culture. This includes the nineteenth-century writers crafting an imagined literary-artistic *cubanía* or Cubanness, as often from the temporary safe havens in the US or other Latin American countries as on the island; the departures and returns of mid-twentieth-century writers who challenged artistic and cultural norms and dodged persecution by repressive governments; and the serial waves of exile and return that followed the 1959 revolution and the post-Cold War era and that challenge categories of nation-based cultural identities and literatures through such concepts as "Greater Cuba" or "Global Cuba."

History, Cuban, Literature, Translation

Our tales of the complex acts of remembrance embodied in monuments also lay bare the challenges inscribed in this book's title for an intellectual project conceived and written in the third decade of the twenty-first century, when each of the title's key words remain – more than ever – contested categories: "history," "Cuban," and "literature." The fact that a book written in English about a literary tradition created largely in Spanish uses concepts and terminology requiring complex maneuvers of both linguistic and cultural translation adds to those challenges. In the moment of this book's appearance, ideas about what constitutes both "literary history" and the modifier "Cuban" depend on the time, place, and subject position from which they are used. These are theoretical-critical givens in the twenty-first century's third decade. Thus, chapters throughout the book illuminate cultural conversations about these categories in their own historical moments, but often refiltered through the lens of critical conversations transformed not only by the cultural studies turn of the second half of the twentieth century, but also by gender and queer theory; changing concepts of the postcolonial and decolonial; and scholarly turns toward regional, archipelagic, and transnational networks that undermine boundaries of the national.

But where does such a history begin and end? Although there is an unavoidable arbitrary quality to them, such choices do have some degree

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

of internal logic rooted in the scholarly conversations of the period in which they are written. Cuba's colonial period – from Columbus's 1492 arrival and the creation of the first Spanish settlement in 1511 in Baracoa by Diego Velázquez de Cuellar, to independence from Spain in 1898 – lasted decades longer than those of most Latin American countries. The printing press did not arrive in Cuba until 1720, almost two hundred years after its arrival in the Viceroyalty of New Spain – Mexico – and nearly a hundred and fifty years after its arrival in the Viceroyalty of Lima. Not organized by the large administrative and evangelizing entities common to the region, Cuba did not experience the kind of early expansive "lettered city" linked by Angel Rama with early colonial Spanish America. The island's initial strategic importance as a Spanish colony derived rather from its geographic location as a potential commercial gateway to the Americas and as a military fortification against other colonizing European nations and pirates eager for that access. This book's story of Cuba's literary history, then, begins roughly with the advent of print culture in work written on or about the island, a decision guided in part by Ambrosio Fornet's pioneering 1994 study of the book in Cuba, *El libro en Cuba: Siglos XVIII y XIX*. But we also recognize that, in the context of this volume's inclusion of performance culture beginning in the nineteenth century and of music in the twentieth, we might have begun with the lasting traces in Cuban dance of the performative, ceremonial *areitos* of the island's pre-Colombian indigenous people, who were largely decimated early on and the remnants of whose material culture have drawn recent scholarly attention from cultural anthropologists.[2] Instead, in Part I, "Literature in the Early Colony," we begin in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with essays on *Espejo de paciencia* [Mirror of Patience] (1608, 1838) by Silvestre de Balboa (1563–1649?), debated since the nineteenth century as Cuban literature's possible foundational work, and on the Enlightenment thought of José Martín Félix de Arrate (1701–1765), an early advocate of Cuban exceptionalism.

Locating this history's ending was perhaps even more challenging than finding its beginning. Following Parts II to IV – on "Cuban Literature's Long

2 As Roberto González Echevarría points out in *Cuban Fiestas*, however, much of the available contemporaneous information on the *areitos* rests on the assiduous recovery work of twentieth-century literary-cultural scholar Juan José Arrom of material originally recorded by the Catalan, Jeronymite friar Ramón Pané in his *Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los indios* (c. 1498) [*An Account of the Antiquities of the Indians*] (1999). This is a lost manuscript whose retrieval in accounts by Spanish and European humanists has undergone multiple translations and "accidents in transmission" (González Echevarría 33).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

Nineteenth Century," "Literary and Intellectual Culture in the Twentieth-Century Republic," and "The Revolution's Literary-Cultural Initiatives and Their Early Discontents," the book's final section, Part V – "Cuba and Its Diasporas into the New Millennium" – takes this history into the twenty-first century's third decade. This is followed by an epilogue essay that circles back to trace the serial metamorphoses undergone by the reiterating trope of *insularismo*, from the early twentieth century into the present of the book's writing. If only time offers perspective on the actual enduring impact of literary-cultural phenomena, the decision of what to include in Part V required a degree of predictive judgment that, in fact, weaves through the volume from the start. The insistent fact that this volume is a history has meant attempting to regard it from a temporal distance. As a capacious Part V attests, it is not that there is an avoidance of the present, but rather that the present needs to be dissolved to another place within the vast history that already spans four hundred years. In that way, one of the greatest challenges has been not to overvalue the present in the story this book is telling, even while immersing readers in the high level of invention and creative activity in Cuba and its diasporas that has marked the younger generations of the post-1989 era.

These challenges of determining a beginning and an end yield the unavoidable recognition that all histories are unfinished in their own moment, that history is always and relentlessly being made and unmade. The book's opening essay, by Raúl Marrero-Fente, "Silvestre de Balboa's *Espejo de paciencia* and the Unfinished Foundational Story of Cuban Literature," already signals this inevitable incompleteness, as scholars have debated the ostensibly lost manuscript's foundation status from the early nineteenth century, when it was "discovered," into the twenty-first century. One envisions a history such as this one to be complete, but this book privileges the fact that it, itself, is "unfinished" and a "story." This recognition, in turn, points to the corollary set of choices about what to include. More than once, one of us has awakened in the middle of the night to the sensation of wanting to ensure that the whole library is here. It is not, and we remind one another that it cannot be.

But even if we could not include every item from that imagined Cuba-based Borgesian archive, more important has been our commitment to include a full range of the diverse theoretical, critical, and ideological perspectives that, in the contexts particularly of Cuba's postrevolutionary period, mark the stories of Cuban literary history that are being told, from different geographical locations, in the twenty-first century. Our decision to seek some coauthored chapters arose from this desire, for example the essay

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
978-1-009-16834-2 — The Cambridge History of Cuban Literature
Vicky Unruh, Jacqueline Loss
Excerpt
More Information

"Critique and Decentralization in Cuban Film after 1989," coauthored by Ann Marie Stock and Dean Luis Reyes, and "Twenty-First-Century Cuban Film and Diaspora" by Dunja Fehimović and Zaira Zarza. Some of the topics introduced by the first of these essays are picked up again in the second. But each of these four authors offers distinct perspectives informed by their own very different relationships to or experiences of Cuba and by their personal and intellectual formations. At times, this below-the-surface dialogue – exemplified in these chapters and many others throughout the book – feels like an expansive and enriching dialogic project in a manner that one envisions not only for Cuba's future, but also for the US reckoning with that future. Contextualized by such remarkable historical work as Ada Ferrer's Pulitzer-winning *Cuba: An American History* (2021), which illuminates the inextricable, enduring ties among the peoples of two nations, it is also a project in which we, neither of us Cuban and both positioned in the US, are invested. Not surprisingly, at other points in the book, the tensions between different modes of assessing Cuban history and its literature, and especially the cultural policies of the twenty-first-century Cuban revolutionary state, lead to an implicit debate that is at times unequivocally disharmonious, even within a single essay. And yet, a good part of our investment in undertaking this project has been seeing and teasing out the rich potential of such discords. Such periodic critical disharmony is consistent, moreover, with our commitment to diversity and inclusivity of viewpoints, and with our goal to do justice to the dynamism, complexity, and creativity of Cuba's literary-cultural history.

Perhaps the most challenging term in the book's title is the word "Cuban," charged with encompassing shifting genealogies, geographies, and communities that put the goal of a nation-based history to the test. The already mentioned, ostensibly foundational work of Cuban literature, *Espejo de paciencia*, which narrates the 1604 kidnapping and freeing of a Spanish prelate, then Bishop of Cuba, by French pirates, already poses the question of what makes a literary-cultural phenomenon "Cuban," as highlighted by Marrero-Fente's exploration of the work's long-debated *cubanía* in Chapter 1. If one were to base *cubanía* on the fraught concept of a national language, one might well ask what Chapter 3, by Daylet Domínguez, about Humboldt, a German naturalist and his work originally written in French, is doing in a book about Cuban literature; similarly, why include Chapter 5, by Roberto Ignacio Díaz, on Mercedes Merlin (1789–1852), who wrote her work entirely in French, after adopting Paris as her intellectual home. If one were to base Cubanness exclusively on matters of citizenship or birthright, similar questions might

© in this web service Cambridge University Press & Assessment www.cambridge.org