CHAPTER

10

The Island, the Peninsula, and the Continent: Cuban American engagements with Africa

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In 1978, the Nigerian religious leader Ifá Yemí Elebuibon visited Miami for 42 days, having been invited by a Cuban American *babalao* (a priest in the Ifá religious tradition). Three years before, that Cuban American priest, José Miguel Gómez Barberas, had travelled to Elebuibon's Yoruba home town to obtain an *Olofin*, a precious ritual object that allowed him to legitimately initiate new *babalaos* and create his own ritual lineage. Gómez brought Elebuibon to Miami to make new *Olofins* for other Cuban American *babalaos*, and he would soon take three other Miami Cubans to Nigeria to be initiated. These transatlantic crossings were part of Gómez's efforts to break the dependency of Miami *babalaos* upon the *Olofins* produced by a powerful Havana-based *babalao*. To Gómez and other Miami Cubans, bypassing Cuba and going to Yorubaland enabled them to create an authoritative new line of religious descent and gave validity to their religious practices, imagined as authentically African.[1]

The same year in which Ifá Yemí visited Miami, other Cuban Americans were crossing the ocean to develop another sort of relationship with Africa. Nearly three hundred Cuban exiles, most of them veterans of the Bay of Pigs invasion, spent eight months of 1978 in war-torn Angola fighting the leftist government of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) alongside local anti-communist

guerrillas. This was a response to the heavy and growing military support of the MPLA by Cuba's socialist regime, and it gave the exiles the opportunity to engage directly with Cuban troops across the Atlantic. For several reasons this mission did not last long and Cuban Americans failed to be a major player in the Angolan war, but their endeavour indicates that Cuban exiles were then interested in Angola as a transatlantic space where they could confront the Cuban government and react to its widespread support for African leftist movements.[2]

One can only wonder what kind of relationship, if any, the Miami-based Cubans who met Ifá Yemí Elebuibon had with the Cuban Americans who fought in Angola. Yet, these snapshots from 1978 are quite revealing of broader and longer-lasting phenomena. In one case, Miami Cubans travelled to Angola as a way of opposing Cuban political leaders. In the other, a Nigerian priest travelled to Florida to help Miami Cubans break their dependency on a Cuban religious leader. These transatlantic movements illustrate two kinds of connections that Cuban Americans have had with Africa over several decades, each associated with one of two domains that modern Western thought likes to distinguish: the realm of 'politics' and the realm of 'culture'.[3] On the one hand, politically organised Cuban Americans have often engaged with African issues through a practice of reactive confrontation, taking positions contrary to those of the Cuban government and actively opposing its African allies. On the other hand, Cuban Americans have deepened and strengthened the Cuban tradition of searching in Africa for the original roots of several Cuban practices, especially in the religious sphere.

Both kinds of Cuban American engagement with Africa are based on a problematic relationship with Cuba, but, whereas in the first form Africa appears as a foreign ground on which the political struggle over Cuban sovereignty is reproduced, in the second form Africa is imagined as the original and authorising soil of Cuban cultural roots. To use Ferdinand de Saussure's classic terms, in the first case Africa appears in an associative relation to Cuba; in the second it has a syntagmatic relation to Cuba. In one case, the continent works as a political metaphor; in the other it works as a cultural metonym of the island.[4]

In this chapter I will focus mainly on the first kind of engagement – which, following John Borneman,[5] I call 'mirror-making' – and briefly and comparatively discuss the second kind of engagement – which I call 'root-searching'. A major complicating factor that I will also address here is race, since, when creating their own novel connections to Africa, US-based Cubans have had to deal with – in a rather uneasy way – Anglo-American racial representations and identifications. In order to approach these issues, I will examine more closely the military presence of Cuban exiles in Congo-Léopoldville in the 1960s, the relationship of Cuban Americans

with Angola in the 1970s and 1980s, and the reaction of Cuban Miamians to Nelson Mandela's visit to their city in 1990. I will conclude by suggesting that the 1974 performance of the iconic Cuban American singer Celia Cruz in Kinshasa reveals a different kind of relationship with Africa that goes beyond mirror-making and root-searching.

The United States might seem a strange place to think about Cubans' relationship to Africa. Some might point out that the Cuban population in the United States is considerably 'whiter' than that of the island, and observe correctly that Cuban Americans are more oriented towards the Americas than to any other world region.[6] However, this orientation to the Americas is also true of the island dwellers. The former argument relies on a spurious racialist association between 'Africanness' and 'blackness' that is challenged by both the Cuban and Cuban American experiences. In contrast, the demographic relevance of the Cuban American population is undeniable: around two million people of Cuban descent live in the United States; there is around one Cuban-born person living in that country to every ten people living on the island; and Miami is the second-largest Cuban metropolis anywhere in the world.[7]

Most importantly, Cuban Americans have played a fundamental geopolitical, ideological and economic role in the island, without which one can hardly understand socialist Cuba. Since 1959 the staunch opposition of organised Cuban exiles has been fundamental for the self-legitimation of the Cuban government as the bastion of national sovereignty against US imperialism and against those it calls the 'worms' (*gusanos*) or 'scum' (*escoria*) who left the island. And, ironically, growing remittances from the United States have been fundamental for Cuba's economic survival after the fall of the Soviet Union and the East European socialist bloc.[8] As this chapter will make clear, the engagements of Cuban Americans with Africa are an important part of the relationships between Cubans and the continent, and their study adds new complexity to the understanding of those relationships.

CUBANS VS CUBANS IN THE CONGO

The first sustained political involvement of Cuban Americans in Africa was also the most violent. Between 1962 and 1967, around one hundred Cuban exiles fought leftist rebels in Congo-Léopoldville (hereafter, 'the Congo') and provided military support for the governments of presidents Joseph Kasa-Vubu and Joseph-Désiré Mobutu.[9] Secretly hired and trained by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), those Cuban men fought on the ground as infantrymen, in boats on the waters of Lake Tanganyika,

and in military aeroplanes flying over vast areas of the Congo.[10] Their actions were concentrated mainly in 1964 and 1965, when they helped crush the leftist Simba rebellion and defeat remaining rebel concentrations – one of which included Cuban troops sent by Fidel Castro and personally led by Ernesto 'Che' Guevara. Only in June 1965 did the exiled Cubans know with certainty that they were combating compatriots from the island, but from the beginning they had joined this enterprise enthusiastically – as one of them said – 'to accomplish in another country the mission I had imposed upon myself of fighting communists' and 'to confront the enemies of my country anywhere in the world'.[11] To this day, these soldiers express great pride in having helped to curb the Cuban government's plans for Central Africa and, more broadly, to stop the expansion of socialism on the continent.

The CIA first invited Cuban veteran pilots from the Bay of Pigs invasion to assist the Congolese government in 1962, in the aftermath of Patrice Lumumba's assassination and towards the end of the Katanga secession crisis. As the Cuban American Frank Villafaña convincingly argues in his history of the exiles' involvement in the Congo conflicts, the United States sought both to prevent the expansion of leftist governments in Africa and divert Cuban exiles from making filibuster raids against Cuba.[12] At that point the main mission of the pilots was to intimidate the opponents of the Congolese government, especially the remaining active Lumumbist groups. The Cubans' flights over Léopoldville and the countryside were indeed so intimidating that the local military gave them the nickname of Makasi (meaning 'strong and powerful' in Lingala) – a name the exiles gladly adopted and even painted on their aircraft. The pilots went to the Congo on a rotating basis and stayed there for different lengths of time, but their overall mission lasted for five years. Operating from 13 airports scattered throughout the country, and shooting at enemy troops, trains, boats, bridges, roads and villages, the Makasi terrified the Congolese rebels and their supporters until 1967.

When the Simba rebellion began in 1964 and took over a great part of the Congo, the Makasi became more active, fierce and relevant to official repression. In September that year, 18 newly hired Cuban exiled infantrymen arrived to assist in the conflict and, together with the Makasi, they participated in the takeover of the city of Stanleyville (today's Kisangani), where the Simbas had proclaimed an alternative government and taken nearly 2000 foreigners as hostages. The Cuban exiles fought in this takeover – the famous Red Dragon Operation, orchestrated by Belgium and the United States – alongside Belgian paratroopers and white mercenaries from several European and African countries. This operation received much criticism from Third World leaders, including Fidel Castro, but it managed to rescue the hostages and reduce the rebellion to a few remaining centres.

The exiled Cuban infantry left the Congo in February 1965, but four months later suspicions were confirmed that troops from Cuba were assisting rebels on the Congolese side of Lake Tanganyika, from across which they received Tanzanian assistance. The CIA organised a new group of Cuban exiles to join the Makasi – this time a small navy of 16 men who used two boats to patrol and attack rebels on the lake. Now fully aware that they were confronting Cubans from the socialist island, the exiles were again successful, and after a few long battles they managed to turn what Che Guevara once called the 'beautiful dream' of a socialist Congo into just that: a dream.[13] The Cuban troops from the island – around 200 men – fled the Congo in November 1965, but the Cuban exile navy stayed there until March 1966. The Makasi air force was dismantled only the following year, after helping Mobutu crush a revolt by foreign mercenaries on whom he had relied for several years.

The invaluable interviews given to the Miami-based Cuban journalist Pedro Corzo by the exiles who fought in the Congo focus mainly on their military operations and are full of real-life adventures worthy of the most imaginative Cold War novels and films: naval battles and friendly fire in the middle of the night, pilots using rivers as their only guide for orientation and getting lost in the jungle. Still, these interviews provide us also with a glimpse of the views of these Cuban Americans about Africans, which are twofold. On the one hand, their impressions of the people with whom they interacted directly and regularly are mostly positive: these Congolese appear as friendly, supportive, peaceful, and mostly happy about the Cuban American presence, although not particularly interested in or aware of political issues. A quite impressive story is told by a pilot who was helped by Zande villagers after a crash landing. He was not harmed in the accident, but his American companion was severely wounded and stayed to be treated in the village while he and three Zande men walked and canoed for days in the search of medical help. According to this narrative, not only was the American pilot successfully rescued, but, years later, American scientists came all the way from Texas to investigate the plants the Africans had used to heal his wounds.[14]

On the other hand, the same testimonies provide an exoticising portrait of Africans with whom the interviewees did not interact directly or regularly. When talking about an abstract African, the veterans repeatedly turned to two classic tropes of the Western primitivistic imagination of Africa: magic and cannibalism. Rumours about the eating of human flesh seem to have created much anxiety among the exiles, for the only thing they admit having feared in the Congo was being devoured by jungle dwellers. A Makasi reminisces about his reaction when he was approached by some Africans after an unscheduled landing in the countryside: 'I remember those guys had very sharp teeth, which I did not like, and I liked

it even less when one of the mechanics that were accompanying us told me that we would be the food of those people.' This man ran away and obviously was not eaten. Another pilot explained their fear: 'some tribes in this region liked to take off the hearts and livers of their enemies and to eat them.' In contrast, when talking about the Africans' belief in war magic, the attitude of Cuban American veterans seems to have been not fright, but mostly condescension. They attribute that belief to superstition, ignorance and manipulation by ill-intentioned leaders: 'the witch of the tribe and the chief of the tribe were prepared by the communist instructors to tell the guerrillas that after drinking a magic beverage they could fight without fear of dying …, because the enemies' bullets would turn into water'.[15] The local belief in war magic was a widely popular topic among foreigners fighting in the Congo, and even inspired a special publication by the US Army on how to use it as a military strategy.[16] The Cuban Americans who went there were not immune from this fascination, which informed their primitivistic view of Africans.

However, Africa for the exiled Cubans was not a place to explore, but one in which to combat what they like to call 'international communism', a foreign territory in which to fight enemies that they could not fight at home. Some veterans describe theirs as a global humanitarian mission, or 'democratic internationalism', as one of them calls it in a clear response to the idea of 'socialist internationalism' deployed by the Cuban government. Another claims that he 'took part in the group of Cubans who went to the Congo to fight Castro-communism, this damned plague that scourges a great part of mankind, because we all have in our hearts the commitment to fight communism, because communism is the destruction of the world'. But all veterans recognise that this commitment stemmed from a nationalist attachment to their own country and the desire to attack Fidel Castro by defeating his overseas allies. More concretely, many veterans confess that they only went to the Congo because they were promised they would be given American support to invade Cuba – promises they bitterly denounce as outright lies. As the rumours of the presence of Cubans among the Congolese rebels grew, and especially after that presence was confirmed, the opportunity to fight troops from the island became a major motivation for these exiles to go to the Congo. A former Makasi states about his decision, 'at first I hesitated a little, but when I was told that Ernesto Guevara was in that country, my convictions gave me no choice'.[17]

And the Congo did see several direct confrontations between Cubans of the two sides. Frank Villafaña reports that as early as 1964, even before Guevara's troops reached the country, some Makasi pilots had a strange encounter with what they call 'communist Cubans'. Flying over the jungle, they spotted enemy troops on the ground and were ready to shoot at them, when someone in Cuban-accented

Spanish called them on the radio to say they should not attack those troops. Taken aback but confirming with other allies that the targets were not Cuban exiled infantrymen, they opened fire, after which 'the Cuban-accented voice [on the radio] said in Spanish: "Mercenaries, sons of bitches." We replied: "Asshole, stick up your head, and we'll take it off." There is no doubt these were Cuban soldiers, we believe stationed in Rwanda, who were making an incursion into Congo territory.'[18] The following year, an attack by Cuban exiles against a group of rebels confirmed that there were island troops in the Congo: one of the enemies they killed was carrying a diary and a passport that proved he had come from Cuba.[19] After that, several confrontations between the two Cuban sides happened on and around Lake Tanganyika, until the island troops left the Congo for good. Africa was the means for and the theatre of a combat among Cubans.

It is no surprise, thus, that the exiled veterans are one and all proud to have defeated their compatriot enemies on African soil and to have helped restrain Fidel Castro's plans for the expansion of socialism on the continent. A Makasi pilot puts it in more specific terms: 'we all had the desire to do something for our country and against communism. In reality we wanted to get revenge for what we had lived in the Bay of Pigs – in the end [it was] a revenge, if you want to call it that.'[20] Vengeful or not, the feeling of having inflicted a defeat upon the Cuban government animates current commemorations of these events in Miami – which include reunions of veterans, YouTube videos of exiles in the Congo, the production of a documentary, television reports, public talks by veterans, and even the interviews collected by Pedro Corzo that have made my analysis possible.[21] For decades the CIA's oath of secrecy kept most Miami Cubans in the dark about the events in the Congo, but they are now fully aware that the only significant military victory of exiled Cubans over their island adversaries took place in Africa.

MIRROR-MAKING IN ANGOLA

The conflict in the Congo was only the most dramatic and successful episode in a long-lasting pattern of engagement with Africa on the part of militant Cuban exiles in Miami. As is widely known, most of the politically organised Cuban migrants have adopted since 1959 an uncompromising and highly vocal oppositional standpoint regarding the Cuban regime, with the consequence that they have reacted to every international move of the adversary government by defending its foreign enemies and opposing its allies.[22] Most often this impetus has been directed towards Latin America, but for the three decades in which (as the other chapters of this

volume show) the Cuban regime was deeply involved in African affairs, Miami-based Cuban groups, organisations and journalists have enthusiastically turned their eyes to the continent – be it to oppose socialism in Mozambique, criticise the Ethiopian Revolution, or denounce the Cuban presence in Sierra Leone. This interest continues to this day, and goes beyond cases of direct Cuban intervention in African conflicts, as is indicated by the enthusiasm that the 2011 ousting and assassination of Muammar Gaddafi – a friend and ally of Fidel Castro – generated in Cuban Miami. For six decades now, Africa has received much attention in Miami's public culture thanks to the presence of the socialist regime on the continent.[23]

I call this Cuban American reactive pattern 'mirror-making', a term I borrow from anthropologist John Borneman's analysis of the Cold War relationship between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic – which is strikingly similar to the connections between the Cuban government and its exiled opponents. Borneman describes a mixture of conflict and mutual dependency, in which the two German states constantly responded to each other by taking opposite positions on various matters (currency reform, family planning, international alliances, and so on): 'in this process of mirror-making, the two states fabricated themselves as moieties in a dual organization'.[24] This German mirror-making was clearly asymmetric: most initiatives were taken by the Western side, while the poorer and smaller socialist state responded by taking the opposite direction. The Cuban mirror-making is also asymmetric, but here the political signs are inverted: most initiatives have been taken by the socialist state, and the organised exiles in Miami have responded vehemently against its actions and taken the opposite standpoint. And the asymmetry is much stronger here: instead of two states, as in the German case, the Cuban dual field opposes a highly militarised nation-state led by a charismatic leader to a myriad of small, weak and deeply divided migrant associations lacking any kind of centralised authority.[25] This asymmetry also prevailed in the engagement of the two Cuban sides with Africa.

In respect of the initiative for intervention, it may look as if the Congo case contradicts this point. The first exiles to go there were not aware that small isolated groups from the island were already operating in the country, and, by the time Fidel Castro sent a full-fledged guerrilla unit to support the Simbas, Cuban Americans had been there for three years. However, the exiles did not see their enterprise as specific to the Congo, but as a mission to Africa – a continent where they knew that the Cuban government had already been supporting leftist groups and governments in different capacities.[26] That is, it was the Cuban socialist regime that took the initiative to intervene in the continent as a whole. Moreover, the exiles knew there were Cuban troops in countries neighbouring the Congo and that Castro had close ties

with Julius Nyerere's Tanzania, and so since the beginning it was clear to them that combating socialism in Central Africa was a way of attacking the Cuban regime. As I have shown, this reactive stance intensified when the exiles became aware that they would be directly fighting 'communist Cubans' who were personally headed by one of their most hated enemies. The Congo war was thus the first effort of mirror-making in Africa on the part of Cuban exiles.

But the Cuban American intervention in the Congo was in fact an exception in another crucial regard: its success. Overall, the asymmetry of resources meant that the presence in Africa of the small, fragmented exile organisations was far more modest and far less successful than that of the centralised Cuban government. As Piero Gleijeses, Christine Hatzky and several chapters in this volume have described it, Cuba's official engagement with Africa has been prolonged, widespread and largely successful in its goals of supporting different leftist regimes and movements, and garnering sympathy and support for the Cuban leadership on the continent.[27] In contrast, the interventions by Cuban Americans have been modest, sporadic and – aside from the case of the Congo – of limited success.

This is most evident in the case of the Cuban American relationship with the African country where the Cuban government has been most active: Angola. It was Cuba's massive military and civilian support of the leftist MPLA that sparked the interest of Cuban exiles in the former Portuguese colony.[28] In the late 1970s, as the post-independence war escalated in that country and rumours about the Cuban government's intervention started circulating in Miami, some veterans of the Bay of Pigs started raising funds and recruiting exiles to fight the MPLA and its allied Cuban troops. One of the organisers of the Angola mission explains their motivation: 'this was the opportunity to be able to directly confront Castro's forces and hit the ambitions of international communism'.[29]

Allegedly with no support from the US government, but funded by donations from Cuban American individuals, businesses, and associations these exiles formed the Comando Militar 2506 – a name inspired by the Brigada 2506, the armed group that had tried to invade Cuba through the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, of which most of the newly recruited fighters had been members. They made contact with the two major organisations fighting the MPLA – the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and the bigger and stronger National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) – but for logistic reasons were unable to fight alongside the latter. According to Alvares Gimeno, the Comando asked for help from France, Britain and Israel, but all they obtained were some weapons from the French. Much more helpful were two Third World right-wing dictators, Anastasio

Somoza and Mobutu Sese Seko (the new name Joseph-Désiré Mobutu had given himself during his 'authenticity campaign'). The Nicaraguan president offered the Cuban exiles air transport and military installations to train for their mission, and Mobutu allowed them to reach Angola safely: they flew to Kinshasa (formerly Léopoldville), traversed Zaire (formerly the Congo) by land, and arrived in Angola by crossing the Congo River.

The first exiles to reach Angola signed a cooperation agreement with the leader of the FNLA, Holden Roberto, who occasionally visited the Cuban American camps. According to one of their leaders, around 280 Cuban exiles fought during eight months in Angola, each in two-month shifts. They commanded 300 Angolan troops and took part in several military operations, including an attack against Cuban troops in which six enemy aeroplanes were destroyed. However, their mission was not very successful, and they did not even get to the areas controlled by UNITA, as they had planned. The narratives of the former members of the Comando 2506 mission compiled by Pedro Corzo contrast starkly with those of the Congo veterans. They focus bitterly on problems such as language difficulties, food and water shortages, and even Holden Roberto's supposed lack of commitment to the war. Most importantly, they complain about the opposition they received from the US government, which they accuse of having interrupted the mission – in a way that the testimonies leave unclear. What is clear is that they returned to the United States with a strong sense of failure. If the Congo had given the exiles a sense of revenge for the Bay of Pigs fiasco, in Angola the Cuban government got its revenge for the Congo conflict.

Still, for several years Miami Cubans followed the war in Angola closely and anxiously from afar, protesting against Cuba's involvement in the conflict and cheering for FNLA and UNITA. In early 1979, shortly after Comando 2506 returned home, an issue of Miami's influential Cuban Catholic magazine, *Ideal*, published an interview with Angola's foremost anti-communist leader, UNITA's Jonas Savimbi. The cover of that issue (see Fig. 10.1) displayed big yellow letters declaring, 'Cuba and Angola: Two Peoples That Fight for Their Freedom', and a photograph of Savimbi with the Cuban American journalist that interviewed him, Tomás Regalado, who would later say that he contacted Savimbi hoping to help create 'a solid bridge between free Cubans and free Angolans'.[30] The correspondent of a major Cuban Miami radio station, Regalado covered for many years the wars in Mozambique and Angola and the anti-apartheid struggle – including the Soweto uprisings of 1976 – and would eventually enter formal politics, being elected mayor of the City of Miami in 2009. In this interview, given in Morocco, Savimbi repeatedly criticised the Cuban troops in Angola as imperialist aggressors who received privileges denied to most Angolans

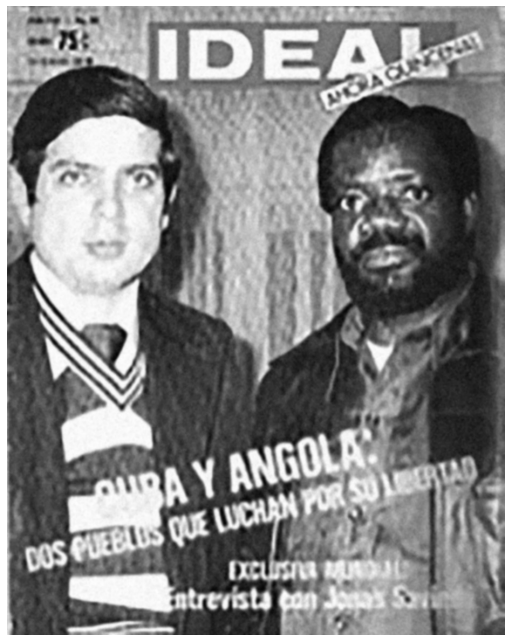

Figure 10.1: Cover of Miami's Cuban Catholic magazine *Ideal* showing Tomás Regalado, a Cuban American journalist and later mayor of the City of Miami, with UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi. Source: https://villagranadillo.blogspot.com/2010/04/jonas-savimbi-un-rebelde-con-causa-por.html

and who spread violence gratuitously and indiscriminately. This, according to him, made Angolans of all political persuasions hate Cubans. The generalised use of the term 'Cubans' without the qualifier 'communist' must have displeased many exiled readers, but Savimbi's statements also gave them some reassurance: Fidel Castro was the only person responsible for the violence and hate, and, if given assistance from abroad, UNITA could easily defeat his troops.[31]

These hopes proved elusive, of course, but, until the last Cuban soldiers left Angola in 1991, the Cuban exiled press kept a close eye on that country, criticising Cuba's 'imperialist' intervention, denouncing the deaths of Cuban soldiers, documenting the Cuban troops' supposed loss of morale, criticising American peace negotiations with the MPLA, and reporting on desertions of Cuban officials.[32] Particularly revealing is the case of Radio Martí – the radio station owned by the US government, created in 1985 by the Reagan administration to broadcast to Cuba and express political views opposed to the Cuban government. Immediately after its creation, the Cubans who ran Radio Martí started informing the islanders about happenings in Angola, and in its very first month of operation Radio Martí

broadcast a special six-part series about the country's civil war. The radio was keen on sending news that the Cuban government was slow and reluctant to share, especially about Cuban war casualties. The importance that the staff of Radio Martí gave to Africa was such that in 1987 they confronted the US federal government when it tried to prevent the station from sending reporters to Angola and Mozambique. The State Department was afraid that such activity would create problems for the US role in peace negotiations in those countries, but the Cuban leaders were adamant and protested against the restrictions on their journalistic activities. In a few weeks the problem was solved with a Cuban American victory over the State Department: the station was able to send its reporters to Africa and to keep informing islanders about the unfolding events on the continent.[33]

But fighters and journalists were not the only Miami-based Cubans to have been to Angola during the war. Also present was the Miami Medical Team, a Cuban American organisation of health professionals that promotes international solidarity with a conservative bent, providing medical aid mostly to refugees from leftist governments and to victims of natural disasters in right-wing-led countries. Thanks to Tomás Regalado's continuing friendly relationship with Jonas Savimbi, the Miami Medical Team was able to send humanitarian support to UNITA in 1987 and 1988, bringing them not only doctors and dentists, but also containers with medication, clinical equipment, and materials such as school desks and blackboards.[34] This short-lived intervention illustrates both the efforts that have taken Cuban Americans to Africa in opposition to the Cuban regime and the structural asymmetry of this mirror-making process. The Miami Medical Team is proud to have represented what it calls 'the Cuban people' in 24 countries (mostly in Latin America), but its actions obviously pale in comparison with the much longer and more effective medical and educational assistance that Cubans from the island have provided in Angola, the rest of Africa, and across the world.[35] Here again Angola clearly shows the asymmetry in the efforts of Cuban Americans to mirror the Cuban regime's presence in Africa – in humanitarian as well as in military actions.

MANDELA AND RACE IN MIAMI

However unsuccessful their adventures were in Angola, no engagement of Cuban exiles with Africa was as embarrassing in the long run as their demonstrations against the visit of Nelson Mandela to Miami in June 1990.[36] Unlike the events I discussed above, these protests have raised some scholarly attention from experts on Miami and the Cuban diaspora. For instance, two major books on those topics –

one by Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick and the other by Guillermo Grenier and Lisandro Pérez – have analysed the 1990 demonstrations in relation to Miami's and American ethnic politics.[37] Here, in contrast, I approach these protests as a political and moral defeat that dramatically revealed the predicaments of the Cuban American mirror-making vis-à-vis the Cuban government's involvement in Africa.

Four months after being released from prison, Nelson Mandela made a tour of eight American cities, and was given a nearly universal and enthusiastic hero's welcome in all of them – except for Miami. A week before his arrival in town, in an interview on American television, the anti-apartheid leader professed his friendship with Fidel Castro, Muammar Gaddafi and Yasser Arafat, and thanked and praised them for the support they had given him and the African National Congress for decades. Not surprisingly, Miami Cubans felt deeply offended by these comments and responded fiercely. By this time, Cuban Americans had become Greater Miami's politically and economically dominant ethnic group. As several analysts have shown,[38] they had entered formal American politics for at least a decade: thousands had obtained US citizenship, and several had been elected to political office. This gave them much power when reacting to Mandela's visit. The Cuban-controlled Miami City Commission rescinded the resolution that it had prepared in honour of Mandela, and refused to grant him any kind of welcome. The mayors of the City of Miami and four other municipalities in Miami-Dade County – all of them Cuban – issued a joint declaration that proclaimed, 'We, Cuban Americans, find it beyond reasonable comprehension that Mr. Nelson Mandela, a victim of oppression by his own government, not only fails to condemn the Cuban government for its human rights violations, but rather praises virtues of the tyrannical Castro regime.'[39]

This was basically the message of the hundreds of public statements and letters of protests issued by Cuban Miamians in those days: they complimented Mandela for his admirable history of struggle, but found it incompatible with his defence of Fidel Castro, which they abhorred. Most suggested that Mandela must have been very misinformed or confused about the Cuban regime, which a Cuban journalist called 'a political apartheid'. Popular reactions in Cuban Miami were less cautious and more furious. Some Cuban Americans called live Spanish-language radio programmes to say things such as 'Mandela, go home!' and 'Out with Mandela, we have enough communists here!' Some press reports mention even less politically correct reactions: many people called Mandela a terrorist; one man said Mandela 'did not learn anything in the last 27 years'; and some argued that apartheid was a lesser evil compared to the plight of black-ruled countries.[40]

Mandela went to Miami to deliver a speech at the convention of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) – a union that

had actively participated in the US campaign against apartheid. Cuban American associations called for demonstrations outside the Miami Beach Convention Center, where Mandela would give the speech, and 300 Cubans are estimated to have arrived, joined by some Israel-supporting Jews who were not pleased with Mandela's praise of Arafat. But ten times more people – mostly black – came to support Mandela, and the two groups were separated by fences placed by the police. On one side, people played drums, wore African-style clothing and T-shirts with Mandela's face, carried placards supporting him, and shouted his name enthusiastically. On the other, Cubans chanted 'Mandela, communist and terrorist, go back to Africa!' and displayed posters with sayings like 'Freedom from apartheid and communist tyranny' and 'Human rights for blacks and Cubans too'. The two groups made obscene gestures and yelled at each other. Some Mandela supporters shouted, 'Go back to Cuba,' and a short fight took place when a few blacks crossed the fences. All the time two aeroplanes flew over the crowd carrying enormous banners with the words, 'ANC – Mandela – partners in communism' and 'Kadafi [*sic*] Arafat and Castro are pigs'. Indicating that not all Cubans shared the predominant view, a third aeroplane sponsored by a Cuban American labour union flew a banner that read, 'Welcome Nelson Mandela – Cubans of Miami'. On the ground, only ten Cubans reportedly joined the Mandela supporters, whereas the former Black Panther activist Tony Bryant – who had spent eleven years in prison in Cuba – was on the Cuban side. Inside the Convention Center, before a euphoric audience, Mandela gave a speech that thanked his American supporters and asked for more international pressure against the South African government – but made no comment about the dispute going on outside.[41]

Most non-Cubans in Miami and beyond framed this confrontation as a racial question. They saw the protests against Mandela as a racist insult and, unsurprisingly, the outrage was strongest among black Miamians. A Mandela supporter outside the Convention Center wore a T-shirt that said, 'Racism is an illness and Miami is sick,' and a New York-based black man said, 'This is racism. I was born in Miami Beach and now I come back and I see nothing but racism.' Many black Miamians painfully remembered the relatively recent days of segregation in their city and most took the offence to Mandela personally. Several activists demanded that the City of Miami offer Mandela the key of the city and proclaim a Nelson Mandela Day, threatening an electoral backlash against city officials. An African American civil rights leader called the attack on Mandela 'a slap in the face' of Miami's blacks, because 'to reject Mandela is to reject us. He is our brother. If they say he's not welcome, they're saying we're not welcome, too.'[42]

As Marvin Dunn and Portes and Stepick show,[43] the relationship between Cubans and non-Cuban blacks in Miami had been problematic since the first waves of massive migration from the island to the city. For three decades Miami blacks had realised that these newcomers were quickly gaining power and privileges in their home town while they remained subordinated, impoverished and discriminated against. They had rioted three times in the 1980s because of tensions with Cubans and other Latinos, and the controversies around Mandela's visit culminated in a new riot one week afterwards. Several powerful black and civil rights associations successfully called for a black boycott of Greater Miami, which was nicknamed 'the quiet riot' and caused the area to lose millions of tourism dollars. The boycott only ended in 1993, after the mayor of the City of Miami had declared a Nelson Mandela Day and several political groups and associations negotiated a compromise. Still, only in 2003 did Alex Penelas, another Cuban American mayor, offer an official apology to Nelson Mandela for the snub the City of Miami had given him.[44]

The events of June 1990 say much about racial relations in the United States, but for my purposes here what matters is the clash they revealed between two ways of imagining Africa in Miami. By framing Africa mainly in an associative or metaphoric way, militant Miami Cubans got into serious trouble with neighbours who defined themselves by a syntagmatic or metonymic relationship to Africa. These neighbours called themselves African Americans precisely because they claimed a biological genealogical link with the continent – which made them see Mandela literally as their kin. In contrast, most organised Cuban exiles saw Africa not as a place of origin – cultural or racial – but as a place like any other where they could and should fight the Cuban government. Since 1959, politically mobilised Cubans based in Miami have been evaluating any political situation according to one foremost standard: the relationship of the events and characters in question to Fidel Castro's regime. Moreover, as Portes and Stepick argue, 'as the Cuban community gained political power it imposed a monolithic outlook on the city, often with little regard for the concerns and interests of other segments of the population.'[45] With this nearly exclusive focus, they ignored or overlooked the different meanings that Africa had for other Miamians, and thus became trapped in a typical US pattern of racial relations and imaginations, based on open antagonisms between clearly bounded groups claiming biological origins in different continents.

I agree with Portes and Stepick's point that, in Mandela's visit as in less visible cases, 'Cuban discrimination [in Miami] operated more by neglect than by deliberate action. Preoccupied with their own economic progress and with the political struggle with Castro, Cubans had little time for the complaints of Blacks.'[46] Their

attack on Mandela was not a demonstration of racial hate, but a fierce display of exclusive concern with one single political issue and of insensitivity towards the plight of other groups. This, of course, is not to deny the existence of racism in (overwhelmingly white) Cuban Miami.[47] Albeit seldom overtly expressed in public, racism has been rampant there, and its victims include black Cuban Americans. Alan Aja argues that white Cubans in Miami have imposed a 'white wall' onto their black compatriots, which drove many to move to the city's less Cuban areas and to other American cities.[48] However, scholars have shown that in Cuba too, despite the remarkable achievements of the first years of socialism, racial discrimination and inequalities have persisted since then and have deepened in the last three decades. There are several reasons for this, including the official silencing of the racial question, the exoticisation of Afro-Cuban culture, continuing racialised residential patterns, and racially unequal access to tourism jobs and remittances from abroad.[49]

What has indeed differentiated the leadership of the island and that of the exiles is the level to which they have linked racial issues to their engagements with Africa. Since 1959 the Cuban regime has rhetorically externalised racism by denouncing racism abroad – especially in the United States and South Africa – and expressing solidarity with the colonised and the exploited in Africa and the African diaspora.[50] This has meant framing some official interventions in Africa in racial terms. For allegedly military strategic reasons, nearly all Cuban guerrillas sent by the government to the Congo were black, and, according to a prominent (white) member of the mission, careful phenotypical criteria were applied to select 'the ones that looked more like Congolese'.[51] The Cuban troops sent to Angola had a more even racial distribution (50 per cent black), but were still disproportionally black.[52] Also, the name of the Cuban military intervention in Angola tried to create a transatlantic historical connection between the struggles of enslaved and colonised blacks: it was called Operation Carlota in honour of the slave who had started a rebellion in the Cuban province of Matanzas in 1843, roughly on the same date as the intervention was launched.[53] This connection was reaffirmed on the 40th anniversary of the beginning of the intervention in Angola, when the sugar mill where that slave rebellion had broken out became a museum with permanent exhibits on two topics: the history of slavery and Operation Carlota.[54] Because apartheid South Africa supported the opponents of the MPLA and was among Cuba's most powerful enemies on the continent,[55] the Cuban regime was able to portray its operation in Angola also as a struggle against, among other things, racial oppression – a belief that many non-Cubans still cherish, despite the obvious fact that it was mostly black people and organisations that Cubans combated in Angola and countries like Ethiopia and Somalia. And Fidel Castro was, among global leaders, one of the earliest and most

outspoken supporters of the anti-apartheid struggle – which again explicitly gave a racial character to the involvement of his regime with African issues.

In contrast, Cuban Americans rarely, if ever, framed their engagements with Africa as anti-racist, or in any racial terms. With the apparent exception of one single black man – Eulogio Amado Reyes Morales – only white Cuban exiles fought in Africa, which embarrassingly made of the battles among Cubans in the Congo a confrontation between white and black Cubans. In the testimonies compiled by Pedro Corzo, racial issues appear only in one anecdote, in which a Congolese woman proposed to Reyes once she realised he was a foreigner – a story that those who told it, including Reyes himself, found amusing.[56] Surprisingly, only occasionally did Cuban Miami journalists accuse Cuba's interventions in Africa of being racist, as in a 1991 piece according to which 'it was clear to a good part of [Cuba's] black population that Castro's strategy had become a racist mechanism … In one moment of the "African decade" practically all Cuban ambassadors in Africa were black; however, in the rest of the world, with the exception of the Caribbean, they were white. The troops sent to the continent were also disproportionally black. So were the dead.'[57]

The mirror-making character of Cuban exiles' political engagements with Africa has meant that their link to the continent was mainly a metaphoric one, in which Africa was the theatre of a global struggle against 'Castro-communism'. This colour-blind reactive pattern has contributed to the deterioration of relations between Cubans and African Americans in Miami, for the wounds of the dispute over Mandela's visit last to this day. This episode is painfully brought back to light in any moment of tension, as in the wave of police violence against blacks in the City of Miami in the 2010s – the worst since the 1980s. It is no small irony that this wave came about precisely during the municipal administration of one of the Cuban exiles most committed to African issues – Tomás Regalado. Miami's foremost black historian, Marvin Dunn, guarantees that 'there's not a racist bone in [Regalado's] body', but black discontent with his mayoral mandate suggests that exile leaders who were once committed to Africa as a political ground might not be equally committed to racial justice at home.[58]

Needless to say, this is certainly true of the Cuban regime as well. But, as Mark Sawyer notes about the 1970s and 1980s, 'the opening created [by Cuba's involvement in Africa] for domestic racial progress was not insignificant' and allowed for greater black participation in official positions, timid affirmative action initiatives, and the recording of ethnic data in the census.[59] As Sawyer himself shows, this opening did not last long, and since the 1990s racial disparities and discrimination in Cuba have only grown.[60] Still, the island's government was able, at least abroad, to present some

of its African interventions as partly an anti-racist odyssey. This, coupled with their demographic profile, left the exiles with no choice but to deracialise their reaction to those interventions and their engagement with Africa. Given the global hegemonic racialised imagination of Africa,[61] this situation put Cuban Americans in a considerably weaker moral position when trying to mirror their island compatriots in Africa. In this way, global racial imaginations complicated the predicament of asymmetry in Cuban American mirror-making.

BACK TO THE ROOTS AND BEYOND

Although politically mobilised Cuban exiles got into trouble for their colour-blind and exclusively metaphoric relationship to Africa, in other domains Miami Cubans also related to Africa in a syntagmatic way. Here the imagined historical genealogies were not biological – as in the case of African Americans – but mainly spiritual and cultural.[62] Even before the Cuban Revolution, the first Cuban adepts of Afro-Cuban religions who migrated to the United States had brought with them the Cuban tradition of africanía, that is, of locating in Africa the roots of their practices. But this only led to a real new connection with the continent in the 1970s, when Miguel Febles Padrón, a powerful Havana-based *babalao*, refused to provide the Miami-based *babalao* José Miguel Gómez Barberas with an *Olofin* – a ritual object required for the initiation of new *babalaos*. According to David Brown, 'Olofin may be read as the embodiment of accumulated spiritual and social investments, a kind of fetish or storehouse of "symbolic capital"', and since the 1950s Febles had 'gained for himself the power to select Olofin's recipients – most often those who could pay a premium price – and "block" the receiving of an Olofin from other sources, particularly those to whom he had already given an Olofin'.[63] Such control extended beyond Cuba itself, and by the 1970s dozens of *babalaos* had been initiated in Miami thanks to *Olofins* made by Miguel Febles Padrón. After being continuously prevented by Febles from receiving an *Olofin*, the émigré José Miguel Gómez Barberas, in an act of rebellion, asked for help from one of the greatest specialists in Afro-Cuban religions, the Cuban anthropologist Lydia Cabrera, also living in Miami then. In turn, Cabrera contacted another major specialist and agent in transatlantic Yoruba matters, the Franco-Brazilian Pierre Verger, then a professor at the University of Ile-Ife. Verger arranged contacts that not only allowed Gómez to receive the consecration he needed in Nigeria, in 1975, but ended up strengthening and multiplying the direct links between Miami and Yorubaland. In 1978 – as I anticipated in the opening of this chapter – Gómez

brought to Miami Ifá Yemí Elebuibon, the Nigerian *babalao* who gave him his *Olofin* and who then started initiating several other Cuban Miamians, both in Florida and in Nigeria.

My narrative of these events summarises those of two excellent books, David Brown's *Santería Enthroned* and Stephan Palmié's *The Cooking of History*. Here I follow especially Palmié's argument, according to which what Gómez did in Miami was 'to reactivate "Africa" as a viable chronotope of primordial authenticity and legitimacy'.[64] By creating a direct link between his new home and the continent, Gómez bypassed the island in its very tradition of africanía. He and his allies on both sides of the Atlantic forged Miami's own new africanía, producing, in Brown's words, 'a fresh rebirth of the African homeland in a second Diaspora, in suburban Miami'.[65] These practitioners of Afro-Cuban traditions in Miami were indeed leaders in a 'secondary religious diaspora', to use Alejandro Frigerio's helpful term.[66] But they were also innovatively creating a new *primary* metonymic connection to the homeland of the African diaspora, and claiming greater African religious authenticity.

This syntagmatic relationship was, of course, fundamentally different from the metaphoric relationship of the Miami Cubans who participated in the conflicts I have described previously. But in the case of cultural metonyms too, Cuban Americans have encountered tensions with Anglo-American racial patterns, for American blacks also brought Yoruba traditions from Cuba to the United States and later bypassed Cuba to claim direct Yoruba religious roots – and did so on their own terms. This was most clearly the case of the American Yoruba Movement, also known as the Yoruba Reversionist Movement. Created in the 1960s by a Detroit-born African American who was initiated into Ifá first in Cuba and later in Africa, this movement intended to create a Yoruba religion devoid of anything non-African and to make it the exclusive heritage of those who may claim a biological relationship to the continent.[67] The Yoruba Reversionists, therefore, have racialised the African traditions they first got to know in Cuba by reinterpreting them according to what Stephan Palmié has aptly described as 'a North American experience of racial corporatism', based on 'distinctively North American conceptions of the *necessary* coincidence between "Africanity" and "blackness"'.[68]

Such conceptions are fundamentally different from the africanía imagined by Cuban practitioners of Ifá on the island and in Miami, which supposes no necessary connection between African roots and blackness. Their religious practice is not seen as the exclusive prerogative of any specific group based on biological descent, for the Yoruba deities can and do interpellate people of any phenotype or genotype into their cult. In fact, white Cubans were key actors in the formation of the Afro-Cuban religious forms of *santería* and *abakuá*, and, according to

the Cuban phenotypical classification, José Miguel Gómez Barberas himself was white. As such, Cuban and Cuban American claims to African *cultural* authenticity are not necessarily claims to *racial* authenticity. As Stephan Palmié has carefully shown, the difference between the view of Cuban American Ifá practitioners and that of the racialised American Reversionist Movement has not prevented strategic alliances between the two groups, though it has caused conflicts between them and threatened the image of Cuban Americans as the legitimate keepers of Yoruba religious traditions in the United States.[69] Here again, Anglo-American conceptions of race somehow destabilised the engagements of Cuban Americans with the African continent.

But at least on one occasion Cuban Americans have taken advantage of US racialised views of Africa to create a new encounter with the continent. It was a memorable encounter, which went beyond patterns of both mirror-making and root-searching. The occasion was a three-day-long music festival held in 1974 in Kinshasa, in which great names of African and American music – like Miriam Makeba, B.B. King and James Brown – performed for an estimated 80,000 people. Conceived by the South African musician Hugh Masekela and the American musical producer Stewart Levine, Zaire '74 – as the event was called – was held in Kinshasa so as to coincide with a major fight that was then being sponsored by Mobutu, between African American boxers Muhammad Ali and George Foreman. The intertitles of the festival's official film, *Soul Power*, explain that the 'dream' of the organisers was to 'bring together the most renowned African-American and African musicians in their common homeland'. This view – clearly based on the idea of a connection between Africa and blackness, as described by Palmié – appears throughout the film in the voices of several Americans involved in the event. Muhammad Ali, for instance, articulated a discourse of racial solidarity and return to primordial origins, saying of Africa, 'this is our homeland, this is our civilization'. North American singer and songwriter Bill Withers expressed a similar view by explaining that 'what we are coming back here with is what we left here with, plus the influences that we picked up from living where we've lived for the last three, four hundred years'. Withers's use of the first person plural performatively reproduced the idea of a single racialised collective subject whose life spans both the centuries and the ocean.[70]

This American concern with racial origins is what allowed Kinshasa to see in person the greatest Cuban American artistic icon: Celia Cruz. Her performance with the famous New York salsa group Fania All-Stars was one of the biggest successes of Zaire '74. Two documentaries – *Soul Power* and *Fania All-Stars Live in Africa* – show a delighted crowd dancing in frenzy at the stadium while Celia

Cruz sings 'Guantanamera' and 'Quimbara'.[71] But this unique encounter of a Cuban American celebrity with Africa to a large extent uncoupled race and culture, and subverted the racialised views that underlay the holding of the festival. Given the wide variation of phenotypes among its members, the band with which Celia Cruz performed might as well have been called Fania All-Colours. Besides its Dominican founder, Johnny Pacheco, the group's mix included Cuban, Puerto Rican, Nuyorican and Jewish members of various phenotypes, most of whom had travelled and lived widely throughout the United States and the Caribbean. Like salsa itself – the dance music to which it helped give visibility and popularity in the 1970s – the Fania All-Stars presented a Caribbean hybridity that mixed elements of already hybrid styles and broke any possible association between biological and cultural heritages.

To better understand this point, we can use a little help from the founder of Afro-Cuban studies, Fernando Ortiz, who argued in 1940 that the most apt metaphor to describe Cuban culture was the *ajiaco*, a stew made of a wide variety of ingredients that never stops being cooked. For Ortiz, Cuban culture is 'a heterogeneous conglomerate of diverse races and cultures, of many meats and crops, that stir up, mix with each other, and disintegrate into one single social bubbling'.[72] One of the most valuable implications of Ortiz's metaphor is that, just as anyone can choose which ingredients to pick from the *ajiaco* to eat with its broth, any Cuban can choose what Cuban cultural elements he or she wants to enjoy and cherish. This is actually how Ortiz understood africanía: the conscious and affective attachment to the African components of the ajiaco. Most importantly, such a choice for him has nothing to do with supposed biological origins or appearances, for the very cooking of the ajiaco is a ceaseless process of exchange that dissociates its cultural elements from the human groups which brought them to the mix.

If one applies Ortiz's metaphor to other Caribbean islands, one sees that what Celia Cruz and Fania All-Stars offered Zairians was New York's own meta-ajiaco, an ajiaco made up of several ajiacos, where people of mixed origins brought together already-mixed cultural elements to the point of making cultural and racial boundaries disappear altogether. As Stephan Palmié puts it, 'once we choose the ajiaco as a metaphor circumscribing our perspective, the world of clearcut units is lost to us. Inside the *olla cubana* [Cuban pot], Africa, America and Europe can no longer be disentangled. There are, at best, unstable gradations by which one mutates into the other, and this process of refraction, decomposition, and its corresponding movement of recomposition and autopoiesis generates a potentially infinite series of possible perceptions of difference'.[73] The same can be said of the New York ajiaco being performed in Kinshasa: Cuban and African markers could be noted, felt, appreciated and praised there, but there was no more space for purity and clear

boundaries, cultural or racial – or even political, if one considers that the musical icon of the Cuban exile was then sharing the stage with musical icons of the anti-apartheid struggle. The city that a few years before had seen military aeroplanes flown by Cuban American pilots now watched a Cuban American woman not making mirrors, not looking for roots, but performing cosmopolitanism and bringing to Africa the salsa of the ajiaco.

NOTES

1 David Brown, *Santería Enthroned: Art, Ritual, and Innovation in an Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 92–7; and Stephan Palmié, *The Cooking of History: How Not to Study Afro-Cuban Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 68–72. Throughout this chapter, I use the term 'Miami' to refer to the metropolitan area of Miami, which I here consider coextensive with Miami-Dade County, composed of 34 municipalities and several unincorporated areas. When I use 'City of Miami' I am referring specifically to the municipality that bears this name, the most populous of these 34 municipalities.

2 Pedro Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo el castrocomunismo en África* (Miami: Instituto de la Memoria Histórica Cubana contra el Totalitarismo, 2014), 142–58; and René González Barrios, 'Girón: La lección,' *Iberoamericanskie Tetradi / Cuadernos Iberoamericanos* 4, no. 10 (2015): 27–34. Throughout this chapter, I use the term 'Cuban American' broadly to refer to Cubans and people of Cuban descent permanently living in the United States after 1959 – regardless of citizenship status, time of arrival, place of birth, or political involvement. I use the term 'exile' to refer to Cuban Americans who are actively opposed to the Cuban government, claim to live abroad for political reasons, and tend to reject the label of 'immigrants'. I made these terminological choices for the specific purposes of this chapter. For alternative uses and discussions of this terminology, compare María Cristina García, *Havana, USA: Cuban Exiles and Cuban Americans in South Florida, 1959–1994* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Guillermo Grenier and Lisandro Pérez, *The Legacy of Exile: Cubans in the United States* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003); Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection in Cuba's Revolution and Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Susan Eckstein, *The Immigrant Divide: How Cuban Americans Changed the US and Their Homeland* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

3 Of course, these realms are not really separate in practice. My distinction here is not a general analytical assumption, but a specific empirical observation: practices *imagined* by those involved as 'religious' and 'political' appear differently in the Cuban American engagements with Africa I analyse in this chapter. For illuminating analyses of the relationship between politics and Afro-Cuban religious practices, see Kali Argyriadis and Stefania Capone, '*Cubanía* et *santería*: Les enjeux politiques de la transnationalisation religieuse (La Havane – Miami),' *Civilisations* 51 (2004): 81–137; Kenneth Routon, *Hidden Powers of the State in the Cuban Imagination* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012).

4 Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (Peru, IL: Open Court, 1986).

5 John Borneman, *Belonging in the Two Berlins: Kin, State, Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17.

6 In the 2010 US census, 85.4 per cent of Cuban Americans declared themselves 'white' and 4.6 per cent of them declared themselves 'black'. In contrast, the 2012 Cuban census recorded on the island 64.5 per cent self-declared 'whites' and 9.3 per cent self-declared 'blacks'. (Sharon R. Ennis, Merarys Ríos-Vargas and Nora G. Albert, *The Hispanic Population 2010*, 2010 Census Briefs (Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau, 2011), 14; Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información, *Informe Nacional: Censo de población y viviendas: Cuba 2012* (Havana, 2014), 81.) In both sets of statistics, 'race' or 'colour' appears as a self-description.

7 According to the Pew Research Center, an estimated 1 986 000 people of Cuban descent lived in the United States in 2013, out of which an estimated 1 135 000 were born in Cuba (Gustavo López, *Hispanics of Cuban Origins in the United States: Statistical Profile* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, 2015), 1). According to the 2012 Cuban census, 11 167 325 people lived in Cuba in that year (Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información, *Informe nacional*, 69). The 2000 US census recorded that 525 841 people *born* in Cuba lived in Miami-Dade County in that year, whereas twelve years later Santiago de Cuba, the island's second-largest city, had a population of 506 037 (Miami-Dade County Department of Planning and Zoning, *Miami-Dade County Facts* (Miami, 2009), 26; Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información, *Informe nacional*, 111).

8 Marifeli Pérez-Stable, *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course and Legacy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Susan Eckstein, *Back from the Future: Cuba under Castro* (London: Routledge, 2003); Argyariadis and Capone, '*Cubanía* et *santería*'; Silvia Pedraza, *Political Disaffection*.

9 Kasa-Vubu was the president of the Republic of Congo between its independence in 1960 and 1965. Mobutu was the head of the army between 1961 and 1965, when he became the president through a coup d'état. He ruled the country in a ruthless one-party dictatorship until 1997. The country was officially renamed the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1965, the Republic of Zaire in 1971, and again the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1997.

10 Frank R. Villafaña, *Cold War in the Congo: The Confrontation of Cuban Military Forces, 1960–1967* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2012); Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*. These two books have provided nearly all the data I present here on the conflicts in the Congo. Villafaña is a Cuban-American engineer and public historian, and his book is a detailed historical account of the Cuban-American involvement in the Congo during in the 1960s. Corzo is an exiled Cuban journalist and activist, and his book is an invaluable compilation of personal testimonies given by Cuban exiles who fought in the Congo and in Angola.

11 'Para cumplir en otro país la misión que me había impuesto de luchar contra los comunistas'; 'confrontar los enemigos de mi país en cualquier parte del mundo.' Roberto Pichardo, quoted in Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*, 71. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

12 Villafaña, *Cold War in the Congo*, 33–51.

13 Ernesto Che Guevara, *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo* (Milan: Mondadori, 2005), 87.

14 Juan Carlos Perón, quoted in Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*, 130–2.

15 'Yo recuerdo que aquellos tipos tenían los dientes muy afilados, cosa que no me gustó y me gustó mucho menos cuando uno de los mecánicos que nos acompañaba me dijo que la comida de esa gente íbamos a ser nosotros.' Federico Flaquer, quoted in Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*, 118. 'Algunas [*sic*] tribus de esa región les gustaba sacarles el

corazón y el hígado a sus enemigos y comérselos.' Ignacio Rojas, *Cubanos combatiendo,* 93. 'El brujo de la tribu y el jefe de la tribu, [*sic*] eran preparados por los instructores comunistas para que le [*sic*] dijeran a los guerrilleros que después que bebieran un brebaje mágico ellos podían combatir sin miedo a morir …, porque las balas de los enemigos se convertirían en agua.' Generoso Bringas, *Cubanos combatiendo,* 65.

16 Villafaña, *Cold War in the Congo*, 84. In his Congo diaries, Guevara relates that he saw his African soldiers' adamant belief in war magic as a major strategic problem (*Pasajes*, 23–4).

17 'Internacionalismo democrático.' Félix Toledo, quoted in Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*, 68. 'Integré el grupo de cubanos que fue al Congo a luchar contra el castro comunismo [sic], contra esa plaga maldita que azota a gran parte de la humanidad, porque el compromiso de luchar contra el comunismo lo llevamos todos nosotros en nuestros corazones, porque el comunismo es la destrucción del mundo.' Generoso Bringas, *Cubanos combatiendo,* 59. 'Al principio vacilé un poco, pero cuando me dijeron que Ernesto Guevara estaba en ese país, mis convicciones no me dieron otra opción.' Armando Cantillo, *Cubanos combatiendo,* 95.

18 Reginaldo Blanco, quoted in Villafaña, *Cold War in the Congo*, 95 (translation in the original).

19 Villafaña, *Cold War in the Congo*, 146.

20 'Todos teníamos deseos de hacer algo por nuestro país y en contra del comunismo. En realidad queríamos vengarnos por lo que habíamos vivido en Bahía de Cochinos, en fin una revancha si le quieren llamar así.' Federico Flaquer, quoted in Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*, 115.

21 See, for instance, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEU401OdG1M; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZd3bBQxpKc;https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sOM9GHTiKbQ;https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5XhG8CEHu0;https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= dKSK3yOU7tA;https://www.facebook.com/asecretlegacy/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UMNxarY3eBE&t=5s; and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZd3bBQxpKc&spfreload=10(all accessed on 3 June 2017).

22 See García, *Havana, USA*; Grenier and Pérez, *Legacy of Exile*; João Felipe Gonçalves, 'The Hero's Many Bodies: Monuments, Nationalism, and Power in Havana and Miami,' PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2012; and Gonçalves, 'Martí versus Martí: Nacionalismo e hegemonia em Havana e Miami,' *Novos Estudos Cebrap* 102 (2014): 73–91.

23 For the concept of public culture, see Akhil Gupta, 'Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State,' *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 2 (1995): 375–402.

24 Borneman, *Belonging in the Two Berlins*, 17.

25 See García, *Havana, USA*; Grenier and Pérez, *Legacy of Exile*; Pedraza, *Political Disaffection*; Eckstein, *Immigrant Divide*.

26 See Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). See also the Introduction to this volume.

27 Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*; Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria, and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976–1991* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); and Christine Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola: South–South Cooperation and Transfer of Knowledge, 1976–1991* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015).

28 The unique importance of the Cuban presence in Angola is reflected in its recurrence as a topic in this volume (see chapters by Kiriakou and André, and Hatzky in this volume).

[29] 'Era la oportunidad de poder enfrentar directamente a las fuerzas castristas y golpear las ambiciones del comunismo internacional.' Miguel Alvares Gimeno, quoted in Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*, 115. My discussion of the Cuban-American military intervention in Angola is based mainly on the testimonies of its participants compiled by Pedro Corzo in this book.

[30] 'Un sólido puente entre cubanos libres y angoleños libres.' Tomás Regalado, 'Al doblar la esquina,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 11 August 1985.

[31] Jonas Savimbi, interview by Tomás Regalado, *Ideal* 8 (1979): 90.

[32] See, for instance, 'Donde mueren los cubanos,' editorial, *El Nuevo Herald*, 12 January 1983; 'La aventura africana de Castro,' editorial, *El Nuevo Herald*, 13 February 1983; Tomás Regalado, 'Angola: La otra versión,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 25 November 1984; Tomás Regalado, 'Al doblar la esquina'; Iván Román, 'Llegan a Miami 26 desertores cubanos,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 10 February 1991.

[33] Alfonso Chardy, 'Radio Martí impedirá que escondan la verdad,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 14 May 1984; Lourdes Meluza, 'Locutores de Miami dicen que su fuerza es la verdad,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 26 May 1985; Andrés Vigliucci, 'Un nuevo estilo de hablar a Cuba,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 26 May 1985; Lourdes Meluza, 'Radio Martí vence interferencia oficial para cubrir papel de Cuba en África,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 10 July 1987.

[34] Miami Medical Team Foundation, *Boletín* (Miami: Miami Medical Team Foundation, November 1990).

[35] Eckstein, *Back from the Future*; Hatzky, *Cubans in Angola*; chs. 4 and 5.

[36] Regarding the 1990 visit of Nelson Mandela to Algiers, see Alcaraz in this volume.

[37] Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 140–1, 176–8; Grenier and Pérez, *Legacy of Exile*, 79–80.

[38] See Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*; Grenier and Pérez, *Legacy of Exile*; Pedraza, *Political Disaffection*; Eckstein, *Immigrant Divide*.

[39] Quoted in Sandra Dibble and Carl Goldfarb, 'Suárez, 4 Others Denounce Mandela,' *Miami Herald*, 26 June 1990. See also Kimberly Crockett, 'Aumenta polémica por visita de Nelson Mandela a Miami,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 24 June 1990; Carl Goldfarb, 'Mandela Backers, Critics Brace for Momentous Visit,' *Miami Herald*, 28 June 1990.

[40] 'Castro gobierna mediante un apartheid político,' quoted in Andrés Hernández Allende, 'Mandela y sus amigos,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 26 June 1990. '¡Vete a Casa, Mandela!'; 'Fuera, Mandela, aquí tenemos suficientes comunistas,' quoted in Crockett, 'Aumenta polémica.' 'No aprendió nada en los últimos 27 años,' quoted in '¿Qué opina de Mandela?,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 28 June 1990. See also Goldfarb, 'Mandela Backers, Critics'; Ana E. Santiago, 'Grupos de exilio cubano envían cartas a Mandela,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 28 June 1990; 'Mensaje a Mandela,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 28 June 1990; and Ramón Mestre, 'Mandela entre la moral y la política,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 29 June 1990.

[41] Corzo, 'Exilio cubano prepara una protesta,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 26 June 1990; Kimberly Crockett and Elinor Burkett, 'Mandela's Arrival in Miami Low Key,' *Miami Herald*, 28 June 1990; Kimberly Crockett, Elinor Burkett and Karen Branch, 'Grass-Roots Welcome Counters Official Snubs,' *Miami Herald*, 29 June 1990; and Gladys Nieves and Iván Román, 'Expresiones de apoyo y rechazo recibieron al líder sudafricano,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 29 June 1990; Howard French, 'Mandela Travels to Miami amid Protests over Castro,' *New York Times*, 29 June 1990; Carl Goldfarb, 'Mandela's Visit Prompts Rerun of Old Ethnic Battles,' *Miami Herald*, 1 July 1990.

42 Goldfarb, 'Mandela's Visit Prompts Rerun of Old Ethnic Battles'; Nieves and Román, 'Expresiones de apoyo y rechazo'; Dibble and Goldfarb, 'Suárez, 4 Others'; Goldfarb, 'Blacks Reject Suárez's Olive Branch on Mandela,' *Miami Herald*, 27 June 1990; Carl Goldfarb and David Hancock, 'Presionan a la alcaldía líderes negros,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 27 June 1990; 'Refusal to Honor Mandela Outrages Blacks in Florida,' *Los Angeles Times*, 27 June 1990; and Charles White, 'Mandela Slap Is Self-Serving and Insensitive,' *Miami Herald*, 28 June 1990.

43 Marvin Dunn, *Black Miami in the Twentieth Century* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997); Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*.

44 Tony Pugh, 'A Biracial Blueprint for Change: Boycott Ends with Pact,' *Miami Herald*, 13 May 1993; Gail Epstein, 'Smith: Mandela Snub Convenient "Hook" for Boycott,' *Miami Herald*, 13 June 1993; Andrea Robinson, 'Mandela to Receive a Belated Apology,' *Miami Herald*, 8 July 2003; Jim DeFede, 'Penelas' Apology Too Little, Too Late,' *Miami Herald*, 15 July 2003; and Charles Rabin, 'Mandela Visit to Miami Beach Sparked Black Boycott, Caused Change,' *Miami Herald*, 5 December 2013.

45 Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, 138.

46 Portes and Stepick, *City on the Edge*, 199.

47 See note 6.

48 Alan A. Aja, *Miami's Forgotten Cubans: Race, Racialization, and the Miami Afro-Cuban Experience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

49 See, for instance, Alejandro de la Fuente, *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Mark Sawyer, *Racial Politics in Post-Revolutionary Cuba* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Pablo Rodríguez Ruiz et al., *Las relaciones raciales en Cuba* (Havana: Fundación Fernando Ortiz, 2010); and Kristina Wirtz, *Performing Afro-Cuba: Image, Voice, Spectacle in the Making of Race and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

50 See Fuente, *A Nation for All*; Eckstein, *Back from the Future*; and Sawyer, *Racial Politics*. See also Introduction, and the chapter by Tsafack in this volume.

51 Dariel Alarcón Ramírez (aka Benigno), quoted in Villafaña, *Cold War*, 124. This phenotypical selection was not devoid of ironies: it was a white Argentinian who commanded these troops, and the Simbas apparently refused to take orders from black Cubans (Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*, 145).

52 Jorge Domínguez, *Cuba: Order and Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 354.

53 See Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions*; Gabriel García Márquez, *Operación Carlota* (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1977). See also Introduction and the chapter by Hatzky in this volume.

54 Field visit by the author, January 2016; and Ventura de Jesús, 'El legado de Triunvirato,' *Granma*, 4 November 2015.

55 See Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions* and *Visions of Freedom*.

56 Corzo, *Cubanos combatiendo*, 66, 77.

57 'Era claro para un buen grupo de la población negra que la estrategia de Castro había derivado en un mecanismo racista . . . En un momento de la 'década africana' prácticamente todos los embajadores de Cuba en África eran negros; sin embargo, los asignados en el resto del mundo a excepción del Caribe eran blancos: Las tropas enviadas al continente eran desproporcionadamente negras; los muertos, también.' Eduardo Ulibarri, 'El derrumbe del afrocastrismo,' *El Nuevo Herald*, 7 June 1991.

58 Tim Elfrink, 'Recall Tomás Regalado,' *Miami New Times*, 28 July 2011.

59 Sawyer, *Racial Politics*, 61.
60 See Fuente, *A Nation for All*; and Rodríguez Ruiz et al., *Relaciones raciales*.
61 See Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) and V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
62 The same sort of claim is analysed, for Cubans based in the island, in the chapter by Argyriadis in this volume. I thank Kali Argyriadis deeply for her insightful and useful comments about this section of my chapter.
63 Brown, *Santería Enthroned*, 89.
64 Palmié, *Cooking of History*, 71.
65 Brown, *Santería Enthroned*, 94.
66 Alejandro Frigerio, 'Re-Africanization in Secondary Religious Diasporas: Constructing a World Religion,' *Civilisations* 51 (2004): 39–60.
67 Palmié, *Cooking of History*, 21, 114–15.
68 Palmié, *Cooking of History*, 64, emphasis in the original.
69 Palmié, *Cooking of History*, 133–4.
70 Jeff Levy-Hinte, *Soul Power* (New York: Antidote Films, 2008), film.
71 Levy-Hinte, *Soul Power*; Leon Gast, *The Fania All-Stars Live in Africa* (New York: Fania Records, 2012), DVD.
72 Fernando Ortiz, 'The Human Factors of Cubanidad,' trans. João Felipe Gonçalves and Gregory Duff Morton, *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4, no. 3 (2014): 462.
73 Palmié, *Cooking of History*, 101.

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