



## Complex Queries: Exploring Second Generation Cuban-American Identity in ‘Her Mother’s House’

Naya Quintana

### Abstract

In current studies about the Cuban exilic condition in the United States, arguably one of the most influential monographs that touches on the topic is Gustavo Perez Firmat’s *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way*. In this text, Firmat argues that there are distinctions between different generations of Cubans, the younger generation being ‘Cuban-bred Americans’ as opposed to being ‘American-born Cubans’.<sup>1</sup> In his perspective, it is this second generation of Cubans that are incapable of engaging with or understanding the shift between Cuban culture and American culture that he refers to as ‘biculturation’.<sup>2</sup> While many of the key contentions that Pérez Firmat makes throughout this monograph have heavily influenced developing conversations about Cuban-American identity, I argue that they neglect to acknowledge the tangible internal struggles between what Perez Firmat refers to as ‘*cuban-no*’ and ‘*american-no*’ for second generation Cubans born in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, I analyse distinct examples of the second-generation Cuban-American condition in existing fiction from Ana Menéndez. The short story that I focus on is ‘Her Mother’s House’ from *In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd* (2001). This short story is close-read using Firmat’s concepts of ‘transculturation’ and ‘biculturation’, the theories of the New Mestiza from Gloria Anzaldúa, Antonio Benítez-Rojo’s ideas from ‘The Repeating Island’, and other relevant theorists.

**Keywords:** Cuban-American, transculturation, biculturation, cultural identity, borderless identity



Across various academic disciplines, Cuban-American identity is a topic that has proven to be both difficult and complex to navigate. Within the fields of cultural and postcolonial studies, scholars have struggled to properly articulate the intricacies that ultimately culminate in the Cuban-American condition. One scholar whose work has made major changes in this field of study is Gustavo Pérez Firmat with his monograph *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way*. This scholarly text defines and establishes some core principles that lie at the heart of understanding Cuban-American identity. However, I argue that it is limited in scope. By limiting his definition of 'Cuban-American' to solely the '1.5 generation', Firmat neglects the in-betweenness of 2nd and 1st generation Cubans living in the United States. Literature can help fill some of the gaps in Firmat's argument, as literary narratives can potentially illustrate different experiences and perspectives of *Cubanidad* in America.

In my study, I touch upon the cultural and personal struggles faced by 1st generation Cuban-Americans by analysing Ana Menéndez's 'Her Mother's House', a short story which is a part of her larger collection *In Cuba I Was A German Shepherd*. I begin by outlining some of Pérez Firmat's key contentions regarding Cuban-American identity. Subsequently, I delve into some historical context behind the Cuban diaspora in the United States, as well as some theories from Antonio Benítez-Rojo's 'The Repeating Island'. I then relate this historical and theoretical context to Ana Menéndez's 'Her Mother's House', followed by several close-readings of the short story. These close readings are analysed using Gloria Anzaldúa concept of the New Mestiza, Eliana Rivero's idea of the 'hovering stance', and some contradictory arguments Pérez Firmat makes himself. I ultimately argue that while many of the points Pérez Firmat makes are valuable in understanding the ambiguity of the Cuban-American condition, it is applicable to generations *beyond* the one-and-a-halfers that he so vehemently focuses on. Borderlines are simply ineffective in discussions regarding any generation of Cuban-American identity, as any usage of such would be undermining the nebulosity inherent in its diasporic conception.

## Diving into Life on the Hyphen

Gustavo Pérez Firmat's *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* is an immensely influential scholarly monograph that has helped alleviate some of the confusion typical of conversations attempting to define and understand Cuban-American identity. Published in 1994, this text touches on a wide range of cultural phenomena that has amalgamated in the creation of the 'Cuban-America' that we know of today. In describing 'life on the hyphen' like a seesaw, Pérez Firmat argues that Cuban-Americans engage with a concept that he calls 'biculturation'. For Pérez Firmat,

[...] 'biculturation designates not only contact of cultures; in addition, it describes a situation where the two cultures achieve a balance that makes it difficult to determine which is the dominant and which is the subordinate culture.'<sup>4</sup>

In his view, biculturation is a positive ability that Cuban-Americans have at their disposal, one that allows them to essentially shift between Cuban culture and American culture; English and Spanish; foreigner and resident. This emphasizes the ambiguous nature of the Cuban-American subject, which is beneficial in painting a larger picture about this specific diasporic identity and history.

However, there is one flaw that is worth noting in Pérez Firmat's theorisation of Cuban-American identity, and it is that he limits the unique ability of 'biculturation' to only the '1.5 generation'—the generation of Cubans that are too young to be considered fully Cuban and too old to be considered fully American. According to Pérez Firmat, "the 1.5 generation is 'marginal' to both its native and its adopted cultures" while also being "marginal to *neither* culture," and that

[...] 'the 1.5 generation is unique in that, unlike their younger and older compatriots, he or she may actually find it possible to circulate within and through both the old and the new cultures.'<sup>5</sup>

For Pérez Firmat, it is only this 1.5 generation that is capable of being both and neither; the 1st and 2nd generations are limited in that they cannot enjoy the luxury of in-betweenness in this way.



Unfortunately, this assertion is one that I argue to be fundamentally flawed. First and foremost, the marginal positionality that he ascribes to the 1.5 generation of Cuban-Americans can be easily applicable to experiences of both its younger and older generations. In analysing these applications, it would be appropriate to highlight some of the existing literature on the matter that illustrates the struggles of ambiguity and confusion experienced by those that lie outside the narrow constrictions of the 1.5 generation that Pérez Firmat describes.

### **The Cuban-American's Historically Diasporic Displacement**

To begin to understand the Cuban-American, we must first delve into the oppressive history from which she was born. In 1511, the Spanish created the first European settlements in Cuba after its initial “discovery” by Christopher Columbus in 1492.<sup>6</sup> Their arrival on the island was followed by the forced labour of its natives through the *encomienda* system under which many natives were worked to the point of illness and societal collapse.<sup>7</sup> Following the reduction of the native population, Spanish colonial rule prevailed over the course of the next three centuries after their initial occupation of the island. Cuba's importance to the Spanish empire was only fully realized with the fall of their main sugar-producing colony – Haiti.<sup>8</sup> These developments, coupled with the growth of the United States as an influential world power, resulted in an influx of African slave labour, creating a boom in Cuba's black population by 1825.<sup>9</sup> What ensued were some of the most grotesque human cruelties known to-date with the abuse that took place in the cultivation of sugar and coffee. The newfound wealth and attention that Cuba received as a result of their transformation into a sugar-producing hub made it loyal to Spain, even as other colonies sought independence from the colonial giant. This history as a slave colony, although it has long since passed, still permeates through the island and its inhabitants.

The loyalty that Spain enjoyed from Cuba began to wane toward the end of the nineteenth century. According to the Library of Congress, some factors that contributed to this shift include, “Creole rivalry with Spaniards for the governing of the island, increased Spanish despotism and taxation, and the growth of Cuban nationalism.”<sup>10</sup> As a result, Spain and Cuba were caught in a ten-year-long war from 1868 to 1878. The battle was not fruitful for Cuba. Thus, the highly



revered leader of the independence movement, José Martí, launched another effort towards Cuban independence that lasted from 1895 to 1898 until he was killed.<sup>11</sup> At the time, Spain and the United States were experiencing conflicts over the island's economic potential and the anticipated construction of the Panama Canal, so the latter joined the war in 1898; a victory in favor the United States and Cuban independence soon followed that December with the Treaty of Paris.<sup>12</sup>

In the five years that followed the Spanish-American War, the United States continued to occupy Cuba, and continued military control until 1921, hindering its growth and independence from foreign powers. Following the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado y Morales from 1925–1933, poverty as a result of the global depression, and increased control of the nation by foreign powers, revolutionary efforts began to take place among young Cuban intellectuals.<sup>13</sup> Organised revolts against Machado's regime ultimately forced him to resign in 1933, resulting in the rise of Sergeant Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar in 1940, who overthrew the subsequent regimes that followed.<sup>14</sup> Batista's control of the island nation turned into yet another unfavorable dictatorship that polarised society and negatively impacted many of Cuba's core institutions.

Following a successful revolutionary attack against Batista, Fidel Castro seized power in 1959, and with him he brought communist ideologies. This sparked tensions between Cuba and the United States, resulting in an embargo on the island and an alliance with the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962.<sup>15</sup> Cuba heavily depended on the Soviet Union for support, not only because they shared similar ideologies and political interests, but also because of their economic support. This created problems with the fall of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, resulting in what was known as the Special Period.<sup>16</sup> With the Special Period came numerous rationing and austerity systems, as well as stricter embargos enforced by the United States. This crippled the Cuban economy and overall quality of life for its citizens, resulting in a rapid decline of food, labour, services, and faith in the revolution.<sup>17</sup>

Painted in a utopian light, the revolution virtually destroyed the rich landscape that Cuba once was. Cubans struggled to maintain their alliances with communist ideologies as survival



prospects became grim throughout the nation, with food in short supply and ration systems restricting the needs of Cuban citizens. These catastrophic changes to the archipelago resulted in the mass emigration of thousands of Cuban immigrants. Starting with the rise of Fidel Castro, the first wave of immigrants consisted of those associated with the Batista regime who arrived to the United States by airplanes between 1962 and 1973.<sup>18</sup> The second wave took place in 1980 as the Cuban government was pressured into allowing those who were dissatisfied with the revolution's stunted progress to seek refuge from economic hardship on the Mariel Boatlifts.<sup>19</sup> Finally, the third wave—arguably the most desperate of all the immigration attempts—involved *balseros* who approached American shores in makeshift rafts during the Special Period of the 1990s.<sup>20</sup>

This group of emigres would construct makeshift rafts, often setting sail with no food, water, or shelter from the sun. For the *balseros* who did not perish at sea, they were faced with discrimination as immigrants, as well as pressure to assimilate and contribute to a society that did not seek to include them. Language barriers and government policies made it difficult for Cubans to survive in the United States. This long and arduous genesis of the Cuban-American is what lies in the background of the much larger issue of her identity.

The historical context between Cuba and other national entities illustrates a past built largely from diasporic experiences. From the forced displacement of the native Taino people in Cuba by the Spanish, to the mass kidnapping of African slaves, to the flood of immigrants escaping communist rule, Cuban-American identity/s stem from a long oppressive history of diaspora. This can create some difficulties in piecing together the larger puzzle that is Cuban-American identity. Antonio Benítez-Rojo explores this issue in 'The Repeating Island', where he claims that studies of Caribbean life are fraught with confusion due to:

[...] its fragmentation; its instability; its reciprocal isolation; its uprootedness; its cultural heterogeneity; its lack of historiography and historical continuity; its contingency and impermanence; its syncretism, etc.<sup>21</sup>



Benítez-Rojo delves into these issues at length throughout this text, ultimately building the argument that Caribbean culture is less “terrestrial” as it is “aquatic” in the way it avoids categorization and restrictions of temporality.<sup>22</sup>

Benítez-Rojo even goes as far as to analyse some specific elements within Cuban culture, particularly a religious cult known as La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre. In a drawn out, sinuous historical and cultural analysis of the religious following, Benítez-Rojo identifies its complex connections with African deities, European saints, aboriginal belief systems, and other religions from different civilizations.<sup>23</sup> This is just one specific example among countless others that easily illustrates the complex interconnectedness between diasporic cultures that reflect the ‘aquatic’ Caribbean that Benítez-Rojo describes. This observation, coupled with Cuba’s complex history of immigration to the United States, conveys the instability that is intrinsic to Cuban-American identity. While history and theory are both useful in creating a foundation from which we can begin to understand the plight of Cuban-Americans navigating their already complicated identities, it still does not address the issues between different generations. That is a gap that I believe Cuban-American literature can fill.

As Carlota Caulfield notes in her 2002 publication titled ‘Cuban Literature and Culture: Critical Junctures,’ there has been an increased interest in Cuban literature. Literary scholars, cultural enthusiasts, and academics have engaged in debates over why this new spark of interest in Cuban literature has come about in recent years. Caulfield notes that some believe that this is a result of new media focused on Cuba, while others believe that it is a result of the heightened awareness of the Caribbean with the emergence of theoretical publications from scholars such as Edouard Glissant and Antonio Benítez-Rojo.<sup>24</sup> Caulfield proceeds to delve into the surge of Cuban publications until the publication of her article in 2002. Some authors that she mentions include Ruth Behar, Juan Lehors, Alejo Carpentier, Achy Obejas, Oscar Hijuelos, Cristina Garcia, and Roberto Fernandez, among many others.<sup>25</sup> The cluster of authors she mentions all cover themes of hybridity, exile, immigration, race, culture, and gender in their unique literary works. Since the publication of this article, many other works of Cuban literature have been published, including those of Ana Menéndez.



Born to Cuban exiles in Los Angeles, Ana Menéndez began her career as a journalist in 1991. Throughout her career she has gone abroad and written about Cuba, Haiti, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and India, and also won numerous prizes for her publications.<sup>26</sup> She is also the author of novels, including *Loving Che* (2004), *The Last War* (2009), and *Adios, Happy Homeland* (2011).<sup>27</sup> All of these texts touch upon the Cuban exilic experience in the United States, revolving around themes of flight, adaptation, and culture. These are all themes that are prevalent across the experiences of Cubans living in the United States from every generation, making Ana Menéndez's work a rich source of study in our analysis of second-generation Cuban-American identity.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Generation Cuban-American Biculturation in Ana Menéndez's 'Her Mother's House'**

While Ana Menéndez's work delves into a myriad of different Cuban-American experiences, the short story that is especially beneficial to our discussion is 'Her Mother's House', which is a part of a collection of short stories entitled *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd*. In this story, we are introduced to Lisette, a journalist who was born in Miami two years after the revolution to Cuban parents, who fled the cruel regimes of Fidel Castro and Fulgencio Batista.<sup>28</sup> The premise of this short story is that Lisette is travelling to Cuba under the guise of a unique reporting opportunity, when in reality she is searching for the house that her mother has described to her throughout her life. The motives for this secret return to her family's origins suggest an urge to ameliorate some internal conflicts that have come about due to her being a Cuban-American. For the purposes of this analysis, 'Her Mother's House' is a perfect, as the main character is clearly established as a 1st generation Cuban-American.

Beginning with the scene in which Lisette breaks the news to her mother that she is returning to Cuba, we can already begin to catch a glimpse at her underlying motives. Here, the text states:

She wasn't going to explain to her mother things she could barely explain to herself. How every story needed a beginning. How her past had come to seem like a blank page, waiting for the truth to darken it.<sup>29</sup>

In this statement, there is already an evident internal struggle that Lisette is trying to alleviate through this trip to Cuba when she says "she could barely explain" these things to herself.





Furthermore, in saying that “every story needed a beginning” it is implied that Lisette’s is yet to begin hers due to her positionality as a Cuban-American. Since her past does not begin in Cuba, it is almost as if it is incomplete in her mind. This is emphasised when she compares her past to “a blank page” that can only be “darken[ed]” by “the truth”. Stories are written in dark ink, so it is implied that the truth—in this case, the ink—can only fill the “blank page” of her past by reconnecting with her Cuban roots.

As the text continues, we find Lisette navigating her way about the foreign landscape that is her parents’ birthplace. In this unfamiliar territory, Lisette faces a series of events that illustrate her ambiguous position as a Cuban-American. For example, at one point in her search, Lisette comes across a man on horseback who gives her directions. In their interaction, “The man took off his hat and nodded, as if unsure he would be understood. It had happened to her in Havana and Lisette had been vaguely hurt that no one recognised her as Cuban.”<sup>30</sup>

The fact that it had already happened to her in other cities on the island shows that it is not just an isolated mistake, but it seems as though most of the natives Lisette comes across do not recognise her as one of their own. This evidently has a negative impact on Lisette, given that she felt “vaguely hurt” after the incident. This implies that she considers a big part of herself to be Cuban due to her heritage and upbringing. Not being acknowledged as a Cuban understandably hurts her, further suggesting an internal struggle at play. Lisette’s identification with her Cuban roots can imply even greater internal struggles back in America, where she likely feels like an outsider just as much as she does now in Cuba. This assumption can be drawn from the motives that spurred her to search for her mother’s house in the first place. In order to understand scenes like this one, it is beneficial to look at Gloria Anzaldúa’s work, specifically ‘La conciencia de la Mestiza’ in *Borderlands: The New Mestiza*. Here, she says, “cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, a war.”<sup>31</sup>

This view actually mirrors some of the key points that Pérez Firmat makes in his text when he states, “Having two cultures, you belong wholly to neither one. You are both, you are neither:



*cuba-no/america-no*.<sup>32</sup> It is evident that in this scene and others to come, we see Lisette face the same struggles of the Mestiza and “*cuba-no/america-no*” proposed by both theorists. Assuming that her identification with her Cubanidad makes her feel like an outsider in America, Lisette is faced with the same estrangement in Cuba; she is neither American enough nor Cuban enough to claim a fixed identity. While Pérez Firmat might argue this is something only a 1.5 generation Cuban-American understands, it is clear that Lisette experiences the same thing as a 1st generation Cuban-American.

Towards the fag end of the short-story, Lisette finally sees the house that her mother had described all her life; however, she discovers that it looks nothing like how she pictured it. It is far more aged and dilapidated than what her mother described and the stark contrast between the idea and her reality almost causes her to faint.<sup>33</sup> This scene is powerful in the way it illustrates the emotional and mental confusion that arises for the 1st generation Cuban-American while confronting the ‘real’ Cuba. Pérez Firmat actually touches on this in brief, saying:

Like other second-generation immigrants, they [the 1st generation] maintain a connection to their parents’ homeland, but it is a bond forged by my experiences rather than their own. For my children, Cuba is an enduring, perhaps endearing, fiction.<sup>34</sup>

While this statement is rich, Pérez Firmat does not delve into how this fictional Cuba can impact the ways in which 1st generation Cuban-Americans struggle with their identity like Lisette does in this scene. Her mother’s house was painted in such a light that that image became Lisette’s reality of Cuba. Having it shattered right in front of her eyes, we witness a new internal struggle taking place in Lisette as the home upon which she has based her reality is completely altered.

The scenes that follow continue to convey Lisette’s complicated Cuban-American identity, specifically when she’s sitting at the table and talking to the people who are taking care of the house. One of them, Matún, looks at the other, Lisidro, and says “We’re just here taking care of the house. If you ever wanted to return—,” to which “Lisette [shakes] her head. ‘First time,’ she began. ‘What I mean is, if this is my first time here, how could I return?’”<sup>35</sup> This exchange between Matún and Lisette is especially crucial in understanding her liminal position as a Cuban-American. Although she was not born in Cuba, she is spoken to as if she was when Matún says



“if you ever wanted to return”. While Lisette acknowledges that she was not born in Cuba in her response, she is viewed differently by these watchful housekeepers. It can be interpreted that although Lisette was not physically born in Cuba, her heart was there from the start. Touching back on Pérez Firmat’s statement, we see Lisette ‘maintain a connection’ to her parent’s homeland, one that speaks of her deep internal ties with Cuba despite being born in the United States. This indicates a struggle for Lisette; although she was born in the United States, her roots in Cuba make her identity shift between cultures.

Overall, Ana Menéndez’s ‘Her Mother’s House’ is an extremely influential text that helps in understanding the complex identity issues present in the lives of 1st generation Cuban-Americans. In the final analysis, it is apparent that much of the experiences of the ‘1.5 generation’ are actually applicable to 1st generation Cuban-Americans as well. These similarities speak on the broader issue that is the conception of Cuban-American identity/s. Pérez Firmat sums it up perfectly in his text when he says that, “like other borders, those of Cuban-America are makeshift and movable”.<sup>36</sup> However, Anzaldúa’s comments in this respect is the most significant, as:

The work of mestiza consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended.<sup>37</sup>

Duality is something that is simply not suited for the Cuban-American subject; her history rooted in diaspora and fragmentation make it difficult to restrict the Cuban-American to specific experiences and expectations of being. Menéndez touches on related ideas in ‘Traveling with My Selves,’ when she talks about “world travellers” and their abilities to traverse between different “worlds and experiences within those worlds”.<sup>38</sup> In Menéndez’s view, “...rigidity also suffocates culture,”<sup>39</sup> which I believe to be a truth in the case of Cuban-American identity.

While Pérez Firmat’s conception of Cuban-American identity is accurate in the sense that it is constantly moving and allows for a beneficial fluidity between cultures, I believe that his ideas should be expanded to include both younger and older generations of Cuban-Americans. Furthermore, I do not think it is reasonable to describe Cuban-American identity as a seesaw.



Rather, I propose that in future conversations about Cuban-American identity/s, we adopt Eliana Rivero's view in her piece 'In Two or More (Dis)Places: Articulating a Marginal Experience of the Cuban Diaspora'. In this text, Rivero describes Cuban-Americans as a 'borderline' people, one that redefines borders in the way that:

Some Cuban-Americans are ideological Islands, some others live as continental add-ons, yet others inhabit peninsulas of their own, connected to the mainland by functional roads yet mostly out there by themselves, tenuously holding on.<sup>40</sup>

In this perspective, Cuban-Americans naturally embody this liminal entity, one that is not necessarily "straddling on a line or a hyphen", but is hovering, "not poised or grounded on any particular point of reference but simultaneously being configured and rotated around several different pivots".<sup>41</sup> This point of view is far more accurate in describing the way in which Cuban-American identities navigate their different cultures. It is not so much a struggle between identities as it is a willful floating between different aspects of one's self in different cultures and spaces. I feel that this better conforms to the 'aquatic' nature of diasporic communities that Benítez-Rojo describes while also fitting the turbulent history that lies at the Cuban-American's core. Borders, boundaries, and definitions have no use in trying to mold the Cuban-American, for her identity is one that defies categorisation and resists limitation.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Gustavo Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 29.

<sup>2</sup>Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen*, 5-6.

<sup>3</sup>Pérez Firmat, 7.

<sup>4</sup>Pérez Firmat, 6.

<sup>5</sup>Pérez Firmat, 4.

<sup>6</sup> 'Cuba A Brief History,' *The New Internationalist*, 1998, <https://newint.org/features/1998/05/05/history#:~:text=In%201542%20the%20encomienda%20system,population%20had%20been%20wiped%20out.&text=The%20first%20African%20slaves%20were,culture%20>

<sup>7</sup> 'Cuba A Brief History,' *The New Internationalist*.



<sup>8</sup> 'History of Cuba,' *The Library of Congress*, 2021, <https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/History/Cuba-history.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> 'Cuba A Brief History.'

<sup>10</sup> 'History of Cuba,' *The Library of Congress*.

<sup>11</sup> 'History of Cuba.'

<sup>12</sup> 'History of Cuba.'

<sup>13</sup> 'History of Cuba.'

<sup>14</sup> 'History of Cuba.'

<sup>15</sup> 'History of Cuba.'

<sup>16</sup> Mauricio Castro, "Revolutionary Ideology and the Special Period in Cuban History," In *Reviews in American History*, (Project Muse, 2018), 156.

<sup>17</sup> Castro, "Revolutionary Ideology and the Special Period in Cuban History," 156.

<sup>18</sup> *Crossing the Straits*. <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/puerto-rican-cuban/crossing-the-straits/>.

<sup>19</sup> *Crossing the Straits*.

<sup>20</sup> *Crossing the Straits*.

<sup>21</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, 'The Repeating Island (1992),' In *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Michael Ryan and Julie Rivkin, (Malden, Massachusetts: Wiley, 1998), 978.

<sup>22</sup> Benítez-Rojo, 'The Repeating Island (1992),' 986.

<sup>23</sup> Benítez-Rojo, 987-989.

<sup>24</sup> Carlota Caulfield. "Cuban Literature and Culture: Critical Junctures." In *Latin American Research Review*, (2002), 231, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1512525>.

<sup>25</sup> Caulfield. "Cuban Literature and Culture: Critical Junctures," 231-246.

<sup>26</sup> Ana Menéndez, *About*, (n.d.), <http://www.anamenendezonline.com/about.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> Menéndez, *About*.

<sup>28</sup> Ana Menéndez, "Her Mother's House," In *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd*, (New York: Grove Press 2001), 205-206.

<sup>29</sup> Menéndez, "Her Mother's House," 210.

<sup>30</sup> Menéndez, "Her Mother's House," 212-213.

<sup>31</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness," In *Borderlands: The New Mestiza*, (San Francisco, California: Aunt Lute Books, 1978), 78.

<sup>32</sup> Pérez Firmat, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Menéndez, "Traveling with My Selves," 218-220.

<sup>34</sup> Pérez Firmat, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Menéndez, "Her Mother's House," 222.

<sup>36</sup> Pérez Firmat, 15.

<sup>37</sup> Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de la Mestiza," 80.

<sup>38</sup> Menéndez, "Traveling with My Selves," 201.

<sup>39</sup> Menéndez, "Traveling with My Selves," 203.

<sup>40</sup> Eliana Rivero, "In Two Or More (Dis)Places," In *Cuba: Idea of a Nation Displaced*, ed. Andrea O. Herrera, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 196.

<sup>41</sup> Rivero, "In Two Or More (Dis)Places," 206.



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