

# AFTER EXILE

CUBAN DIASPORA, REVOLUTIONARY  
NOSTALGIA AND GLOBAL TOURISM

RUTH BEHAR

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18:30-20:00

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AFTER THE CUBAN REVOLUTION in 1959, the act of leaving the island was viewed as treason. Immigrants were called the "worms" of the Revolution by Fidel Castro. In turn, those who left considered themselves "exiles," who broke ties with the communist island while still fiercely holding on to their Cuban identity. Recently, the relationship between the Cuban diaspora and the island has grown more fluid. Cubans living abroad now play a major role in the economic and cultural life of the island, bringing a range of consumer goods, including Dolce and Gabbana T-shirts, and sending remittances that have spurred capitalist expansion even as the political system remains mostly unchanged. Tourism to the island has also made Cuba a "hot" destination. The desire to consume the romance of the revolution, as well as pre-revolutionary nostalgia, is practically a global fantasy. Drawing on ethnographic stories, I will offer a panorama of how the new Cuba looks and feels in the era after exile.

RUTH BEHAR was born in Havana, Cuba, and grew up in New York. She is the Victor Haim Perera Collegiate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Michigan. Among her honors, she is the recipient of a MacArthur "genius" Award, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, and a Distinguished Alumna Award from Wesleyan University. Ruth has worked as an ethnographer in Spain, Mexico, and Cuba, and is known for her humanistic approach to understanding identity, immigration, and the search for home in our global era. Her books include *The Presence of the Past in a Spanish Village*; *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*; *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*; and *An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish*



Cuba. She is co-editor of *Women Writing Culture*, editor of *Bridges to Cuba/Puentes a Cuba*, and co-editor of *The Portable Island: Cubans at Home in the World*. Her documentary, *Adio Kerida/Goodbye Dear Love: A Cuban Sephardic Journey*, has been shown in festivals around the world. As much a provocative scholar as a creative writer, Ruth is also known for her essays, poetry, and fiction. Her literary work can be found in *King David's Harp: Autobiographical Essays by Jewish Latin American Writers*; *Telling Stories: An Anthology for Writers*; *Burnt Sugar/Caña Quemada: Contemporary Cuban Poetry in English and Spanish*; and *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*. Her latest book, *Traveling Heavy: A Memoir in between Journeys*, will be out in April, 2013 with Duke University Press.

<http://www.dukeupress.edu/Catalog/ViewProduct.php?productid=50656>

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Lecture in English

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