

HAVANA THROUGH THE LENS: MEMORY AND EXILE IN ABELARDO MORELL'S CAMERA OBSCURA PHOTOGRAPHS

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The exile knows his place, and that place is the imagination.¹

Cuban-American poet, Ricardo Pau-Llosa

Salman Rushdie begins "Imaginary Homelands," his essay on diasporic memory, loss, and writing, by evoking an old black and white photograph of his childhood home in Bombay. "The photograph," he says, "reminds me that it's my present that is foreign, and that the *past* is home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the mists of lost time."² Rushdie speculates that he and individuals like himself, living in exile from their homeland, "will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions," these fictions taking the form of imaginary homelands in the space of that loss.³ Rushdie's imaginary homelands, his so-called "Indias of the mind," are made manifest in his novel, *Midnight's Children*, a work in which his imagined city of Bombay is cobbled together out of the incomplete shards and fragments of his memory. Rushdie speaks specifically to the cultural production of diasporic Indian writers, but his ideas on loss and memory are useful conceptual tools for thinking through the aesthetic representations of other diasporic groups, as well as the implications of the past on the present in conceptions of home. Like Rushdie working through the space of his exile from India in literary representations of Bombay, contemporary Cuban American photographer, Abelardo Morell explores his own exile from Cuba in his camera obscura photographs of the city of Havana. Part of a long-term series of photographs in which the artist replicates the centuries-old camera obscura optical system, Morell's images of Havana were taken on a 2002 trip to Cuba, his first visit since leaving in 1962 at the age of fourteen.⁴ Morell's photographs create a vision of Havana that is mediated both literally, through lens of his camera, and figuratively, through the symbolic lens of his dislocation and exile from Cuba. Morell's camera obscura photographs visually represent the space of exile as the overlap of the past and the present, and investigate the implications of memory and the loss of exile in contemporary art photography.

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The abrupt visual juxtaposition of interior and exterior spaces in the camera obscura photographs create an image of Havana that is at once intimate and strange, simultaneously concealing and exposing the disparate spaces. Morell's extended camera obscura series, created from 1990 to the present, consists of over fifty images taken in numerous cities around the world, including New York, London, Paris, and Venice. I focus here on the silver gelatin prints taken of Havana, its suburbs, and the surrounding western province of Pinar del Río. In the camera obscura photographs, upside-down, almost ghostly images of the public spaces of Havana—boulevards, parks, towers, high-rise buildings, and monuments—are layered over interior spaces, private rooms often featuring deeply personal but simultaneously anonymous objects like framed portraits, open books, souvenirs, and unmade beds. Although the juxtaposed images of interior and exterior are, in reality, contemporaneous, they represent the intersection between the past and present in the images, or, to employ Rushdie's terms, Morell's photographic fiction, that is, his "Havana of the mind." The camera obscura—the Latin term meaning dark room or chamber—is a technology in which light passes through a small hole or lens and an image is projected, inverted, on the surface or opposite wall. While the camera obscura apparatus can be reduced to the size of a shoebox or smaller, Morell converts an entire room into a "dark chamber." Morell creates the camera obscura photographs by making hotel rooms and other anonymous indoor spaces completely dark and then directing a small, concentrated amount of sunlight in through, "a simple pinhole through the masking on a window—or, in a couple of virtuosic photographs, [a hole] in a cardboard box."⁵ Through this tiny opening, Morell projects a detailed image of the cityscape outside onto the walls and surfaces of the room. He then takes a photograph of the resulting phenomenon—the exterior visually juxtaposed with the interior—using a large format film camera. Morell captures these images doubly mediated through the lenses of both the camera obscura and his modern film camera. While the effects of the camera obscura apparatus are the natural product of light and optics, the projected images appear magical and unreal, like ghostly, glowing apparitions from the past, hovering upside down on the walls and surfaces of a room. The formal qualities of light created by the camera obscura images infuse Morell's photographs with the sense of dreamy ephemerality: a fleeting, glimpsed vision of a memory imbued with the diffuse light of dislocation and loss.

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Morell's initial experiments with a camera obscura were a means to indulge his artistic interest in optical effects and photographic vision. However, the technique of converting an entire room into a camera obscura became a strategy through which Morell could investigate deeper issues about the relationship between photography and representation in his work.⁶ As Morell has acknowledged, the camera obscura becomes more than, "just a device for projection onto a blank slate, but part of an encounter between inside and outside." It becomes a way of conceptually and visually connecting the obscured, personal spaces of memory and the actual public spaces of the present.⁷ Morell's employment of the camera obscura technique has deeper consequences than merely making unique and evocative photographs; the images he creates have implications on his position as an artist in exile, as well as the more universal condition of exile in modernity. Many visual studies scholars position the camera obscura as the indisputable antecedent to modern photographic technologies because of the similar structural elements and the ability to produce verisimilar images of the world, the camera having the perceived advantage of fixing the image to film. But art historian, Jonathan Crary argues that the camera obscura does not fit so neatly into the teleology of the camera. More than just producing an imaged replica of the world, the camera obscura creates an entirely different viewing environment that enables a mediated, if disembodied, means of looking.⁸ From the vantage of the camera obscura, Morell performs what Crary describes as the, "operation of individuation," in which the observer seeks to isolate or obscure himself in the space of the apparatus from the world beyond the lens.⁹ This isolated vantage point within the apparatus of the camera obscura suggests a reading of these photographs not just as visual representations of Morell's individual dislocation and memory, but also as a metaphor for the exilic condition of modernity more generally. The recurring juxtaposition of interior and exterior spaces in his photographs, however, interrupts the isolated vantage point inside the camera obscura and automatically re-implicates Morell, as well as the spectator, in the bustling scenes of the contemporary Havana that exists outside of the darkened chamber.

Like the other camera obscura photographs in his series, Morell's black and white image of a western suburb of Havana laid over a cluttered hotel room, titled, *El Vedado, Havana, Looking Northwest* (2002), initially inspires a sense of disorientation (Figure 5). The juxtaposition of the interior and

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exterior views suggests that the photograph is a fiction, fashioned out of the memories of the past and the realities of the present. The lower third of the image depicts a hotel room filled with recognizable objects: a closed ironing board set against the dark door, an armchair with a plaid patterned fabric, a pair of framed pictures on the wall, and a low, wooden cabinet with decorative glass bottles including a studio portrait of a glamorous looking blonde woman arranged along the top. The upper two-thirds of the photograph, however, present an inverted urban scene, dense with a combination of modern high rise structures and old fashioned stucco buildings with deep verandas receding toward a distant horizon. The transposed image of Havana is projected on the walls and ceiling of the room—it is clear, distinct and detailed, and yet also transparent and ethereal. The city scene appears to flow down the bare, screen-like walls and over the framed pictures, the upper half of the door and ironing board, barely overlapping the upper edge of the portrait photograph. The repeated, overlapping shapes further emphasize the visual disorientation and the implied connection between the two spaces caused by the abrupt juxtaposition of the interior space of the room and the exterior space of the urban landscape of Havana. The two disparate sections of the photograph intersect along the central horizontal axis of the image. The vertical, rectangular shape of the dark wood door, bisected by the horizon line of the projected image, mimics the repeated shapes of the upside-down high-rise buildings. Similarly the regularly spaced square holes in the underside of the ironing board visually replicate the multiple windows that mark the edifices of the buildings in the projected image. These formal elements visually connect the private, interior world of the room and the public, exterior space of the city. The viewer's inability to immediately distinguish between the separate interior and exterior spaces represented in the photograph ruptures the similarly presumed distinction between the past and the present, creating a strong sense of what cultural theorist, Homi Bhabha terms, "the unhomely," furthering the notion of the photographic space as fictional, as an imagined "Havana of the mind" cobbled together out of visual fragments of memory.

The Unhomely in Havana

Bhabha's concept of the unhomely is a crucial theoretical instrument to conceptualize the temporal flux of interstitial spaces depicted in Morell's camera obscura photographs of Havana. Unhomeliness, according to Bhabha is, "the condition of extra-territorial and cultural initiations,"

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and is situated interstitially as an overlap of the public and the private spheres, rather than as a hard boundary between those seemingly discrete spaces.¹⁰ The unhomey further provides for the, “articulation of cultural differences,” as experienced in exile. It is an aspect of literal homelessness, as well as geographic, cultural, linguistic, and political dislocation, such as experienced by one living, even for many years, with the memory rather than the experience of one’s homeland.¹¹ The unhomey state, as envisaged in Morell’s camera obscura photographs, is an emotional and an intellectual experience; it encompasses longing, disorientation, empowerment, struggle and loss, as well as recovery from the position of dislocation.



FIGURE 5. Abelardo Morell, *El Vedado, Havana, Looking Northwest* (2002), silver gelatin print. © Abelardo Morell / Courtesy Bonni Benrubi Gallery, NYC.

Visually merging the idealized past of memory and the harsh realities of the present, Morell’s photographs of Havana present us with a black-and-white vision of Bhabha’s unhomey space. The fragments of memory and the persistent loss of exile and dislocation surface constantly in the camera obscura images. Despite Morell’s use of an antique technology, he avoids

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unproductively romanticizing the past or homogenizing the cultural complexity of the present through his deliberate juxtaposition of interior and exterior spaces. In his photographs of Havana, Morell refuses to gloss over or mask the tragic, creeping decay of Havana's buildings and infrastructure since Fidel Castro's assumption of power in January 1959. For example, in the camera obscura photograph, *La Giraldilla de La Habana in Room With Broken Wall* (2002), Morell layers an idealized vision of Havana's historical past over the jarring reality of the present, thus visually rendering Bhabha's unhomely state (Figure 6). La Giraldilla, the cast metal statue of a woman holding a stylized cross and a tree branch, sits on top of the watchtower of the *Castillo de la Real Fuerza* (the Castle of the Royal Force), the fortress structure that occupies the right third of the photograph. The statue, whose image is also featured on the label of the popular Havana Club rum, is a ubiquitous symbol for the city of Havana. Further, the *Real Fuerza* fortress, built in the sixteenth century, is a potent and centrally located reminder of Cuba's prosperous yet conflicted colonial past. In Morell's photograph, the flat, bare wall of an empty room serves as a nearly unblemished screen for the projected image of the inverted fortress and the tiny La Giraldilla, as the structure is bisected by the flowing canal and the hilly suburbs of Havana across the harbor. The watchtower hovers between the dark, evenly spaced horizontal frames created by the upside-down image of the fortress wall above and the floor of the room below, connecting the exterior space of Old Havana with the interior space of the room. As the fortress wall retreats at a diagonal behind the watchtower, however, the reality of the crumbling, jagged doorway disrupts the idealized vision of the past and abruptly interjects the ruined interior space of the present into the evocative, picturesque, though inverted, exterior view. Reiterated by its own rough shadow, the uneven, torn looking doorway, recedes into a narrow, murky tiled space. The otherwise clearly projected image of the *Castillo de la Real Fuerza*, the narrow harbor canal, and the trees of the *Plaza de Armas* is lost in the shadowy darkness and busy visual geometry of the decaying room. Despite the shock in the sudden exposure of the destroyed space of the present, the vertically positioned, obelisk-shaped watchtower and the back wall of the tiled room mirror each other and further link the inside and outside, and thus the past and the present, in the image.

It is impossible to see the fictional spaces of Morell's "Havanas of the mind," as either locked in a romantic, pre-Revolutionary period or as the

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final achievement of the model communist state. Although Morell was an adolescent when his family left Cuba, he was certainly old enough to remember the city as it had been prior to Castro's Revolution and almost fifty years of communist rule. Morell has remarked that the camera obscura technique allows him, "to contemplate new realities under the half-light of things remembered," and to literally align his childhood memories of Havana with the city's present condition.¹² Literature scholar, Bonnie Costello notes that Morell is visually describing, "the fragility and exposure of the personal world in this dilapidated communist state," in the *La Giraldilla de La Habana* photograph.¹³ I believe, however, that this photograph is about more than the present state of disrepair that haunts Cuba's historical architecture and infrastructure. Instead, as memories of the idealized past and the realities of its political present visually coalesce through Morell's lens, the camera obscura photographs serve to collapse the distinction between the past and the present, and thereby, the difference between public and private, fully embodying neither temporal space and existing instead in the ambiguous space of the unhomely.

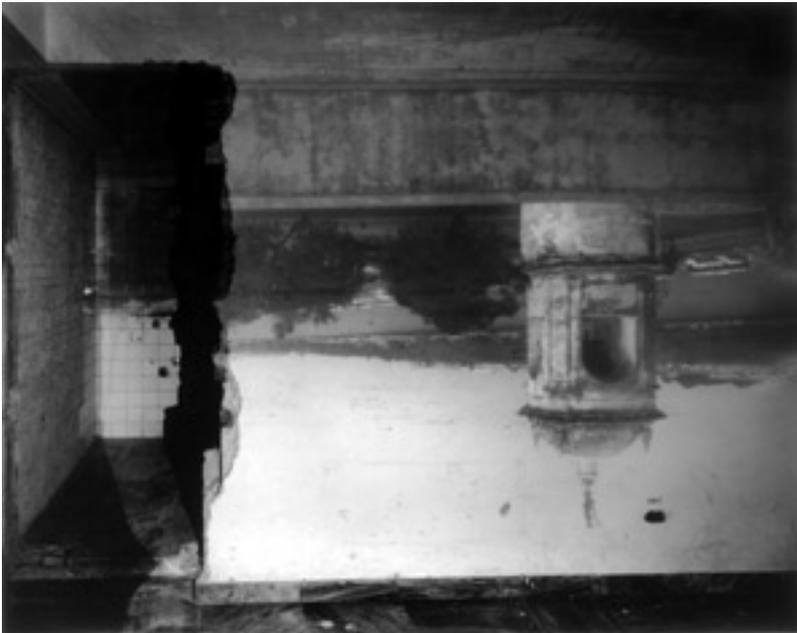


FIGURE 6. Abelardo Morell, *La Giraldilla de La Habana in Room With Broken Wall* (2002), silver gelatin print. © Abelardo Morell / Courtesy Bonni Benrubi Gallery, NYC.

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Representing Exile

Although Bhabha's theorization of the unhomely allows for a consideration of the photographs as fictional visions of Havana, it does not fully address the complex issues of exile that are implicated in them. Thus, I will mobilize conceptions of identity in exile to push against the limits of Bhabha's theorization. Setting aside issues of his legal citizenship and immigrant status, which usually reveal little about the phenomenological experiences of exile and migration, Morell's identity as both a Cuban and an American informs his photographic work and complicates his simple categorization as an immigrant from Cuba. For this project, I position Morell as living in exile, necessitating the mobilization and extension of an extensive scholarly dialogue about the politics and definitions of exile in general, and Cuban exile, in particular. According to literature scholar, Nico Israel, exile is a, "way of describing the predicament of displacement," yet embodied in the etymology of the term are the contradictory senses of the individual both being forced out of a place and leaving as an expression of free will.¹⁴ Although it is often difficult to distinguish clearly and absolutely between political and economic motivations for migration, the first waves of Cuban emigrants to the U.S. after the Revolution in January 1959 moved abroad primarily for political reasons.¹⁵ For Cubans who fled the Revolutionary government in the years immediately following Fidel Castro's rise to power, including Morell's family, who left in 1962, the stance of political exile carries within it the burden of having made the choice to abandon the homeland and the painful feeling of compelled banishment.

Morell's experiences are further distinguished by the unique circumstance of the Cuban exile in the United States. Cuban American cultural studies scholar, Gustavo Pérez Firmat suggests that the Cuban American's "life on the hyphen" is ultimately shaped by the negotiation of two "contradictory imperatives" of culture and identity within the space of exile: tradition and translation.¹⁶ Playing with the terms in both Spanish and English, Pérez Firmat conceives of tradition, rooted in the Spanish term *traer*—to bring—as a system of cultural "convergence and continuity," the essence of the home culture brought to the space of exile. On the other hand, *traducir*—to translate—insinuates, "linguistic or cultural displacement [that] necessarily entails some mutilation of the original," or a distinctive, degenerative, and noticeable change in culture and language.¹⁷ Pushing against the conceptual borders of Bhabha's theory and its culturally indeterminate notion of the

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unhomely, Pérez Firmat's specific articulation of Cuban Americanness suggests that identity in exile is polyvalent and encompasses individuality, conciliation, and fluidity over temporal and geographic distances. Therefore, Morell's position as an exile, and as a Cuban American, extends the conceptual framework to include a more culturally specific and individual notion of the unhomely in an interpretation of his camera obscura photographs.

"Once an exile, always an exile," Pérez Firmat declares, "but it doesn't follow that once an exile, *only* an exile."¹⁸ In extending Bhabha's conception of the unhomely with a more complex and culturally specific notion of exile, I suggest a means to avoid essentializing Morell as an exiled Cuban artist living in the United States, whose work speaks directly or solely to the negotiation of a singular Cuban identity through his aesthetic representations of Havana. Identity in the space of exile requires the constant negotiation and renegotiation of multiple histories and a spectrum of selves. Morell himself has made conflicting statements about his status as an exile and its impact on his work. He has replied to inquiries about why his photographic work does not more directly address his exile from Cuba with the seemingly dismissive response, "Because I am more interested in life."¹⁹ In contradiction, he has also referred to his dislocation from Cuba as, "still stirring at the bottom of much of what I do in art now. Somehow the conflicts of cultures, languages and places that I felt...gave me a sense of exhilaration, a feeling that things out there were wild and surreal."²⁰ While it may appear that Morell is being intentionally evasive on the subject of his dislocation from Cuba, embedded in his statements is much more than a mere repudiation or celebration of his status as an artist in exile. Morell sees his exile from Cuba as a critical part of his art and his identity, but the way in which he playfully twists the situation of *exile* into the feeling of *exhilaration* suggests that his sense of the unhomely encompasses a range of creative articulations within the space of exile. Morell's camera obscura photographs of Havana, and his statements about his status as an artist in exile, further a conception of exile as a multifaceted space of complexity and conflict, but also as a space of intense creativity, as well as deep pleasure and excitement.

The multiple articulations of exile employed here in the discussion of Morell and his camera obscura photographs circulate around the conception of the exile as an individual, yet none of the images of Havana feature a visual representation of this exiled individual. Put bluntly, there are no

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people in the photographs at all. This is due, in part, to the impossibility of remaining immobile for the eight to ten hour film exposure required for the photographs. Beyond the physical impracticality, the lack of individuals in the camera obscura photographs speaks more directly to the concept of the unhomely within the space of exile by insinuating, but not revealing, the exiled individuals negotiating within it. The photograph, *Valley of Viñales from Hotel Room, Pinar del Río, Cuba* (2002) exemplifies the suggestion of the exile in Morell's fictional Havana without the actual representation of one (Figure 7). In this photograph, the upside-down image of the hilly, rolling landscape around Havana, viewed from the deep porch in the foreground, is laid over the black screen of the walls, ceiling, and curtained windows of a hotel room. The corner of the room is crammed with furniture: a double bed with a sinuous wooden headboard, a console table littered with a vase of flowers, full water glasses, and a transparent bottle, and a low bedside table with a small lamp and telephone. The landscape, vertically bisected by the corner where two walls meet, overlaps the top two-thirds of the room while the crests of the hills in the distance brush the upper part of the headboard. The image of Pinar del Río is just barely punctured by the top of the lamp and the bottle of water. The lamp, with its slender body and umbrella-shaped shade, mimics the palm trees in the middle ground of the landscape image, and the doubled arches of the headboard repeat the shape of the hills in the background. The large bottle and the clear glasses on the console table cast transparent reflections on the camera obscura projection of the sky above the hills, further juxtaposing the images of the outside and inside. As in the majority of Morell's camera obscura photographs, the overlap of the exterior and the interior spaces visually connects them and ruptures the presumed distinction between public and private, causing a momentary disorientation in the viewer and amplifying the experience of the unhomely.

In the *Valley of Viñales from Hotel Room* photograph, the suggestion of the absent individual also contributes to the notion of the unhomely space and the implications of memory and loss within it. In addition to the projected image of the exterior space onto the interior space, the narrative created by the insinuated presence of an individual emphasizes the juxtaposition of the public and private. Because many of Morell's camera obscura photographs are taken in hotel rooms or rented rooms, they frequently feature beds. Beds usually carry the heavy burden of connoting eroticism and sexuality.²¹ In this image, however, the half unmade, empty double bed strongly evokes

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the absence of the individual who had recently slept there. The inverted lounge chair in the exterior space that hovers directly above the bed also suggests the individual: chairs are often interpreted as, “markers for people and invitations to enter the space, to rest, to consider...[and] they define the individual’s most localized space.”²² The empty lounge chair refers directly to the exile’s contemplation of memory and loss as perceived within the tropical Cuban landscape. The Havana Club rum container on the console table, with the slogan, *El ron de Cuba* (The Rum of Cuba) printed across the bottom and the emblematic image of La Giraldilla, reiterate the cultural specificity of exile from Cuba, but without the presence of a particular individual—exile is not bound to single iteration of identity and it remains open to interpretation and variation. Finally, the anonymous hotel room featured in the photograph is representative of the space of the unhomely, implied by the sense of homelessness. Hotel rooms are simultaneously private and public, spaces through which individuals circulate temporarily, leaving traces of their presence. They are also anonymous spaces, allowing for the articulation of the individual experience of exile. In suggesting the individual in the representations of the unhomely spaces of his photographs, Morell rejects the notion of a singular, essentialized exilic identity and furthers his camera obscura photographs as a vision of his imagined, “Havana of the mind.”

Exile Beyond Havana

Morell’s camera obscura photographs of locations beyond Cuba, however, disrupt and complicate a tidy reading of the images of Havana as speaking directly to his memory and the loss of his original home in exile. Morell has printed and published only five camera obscura images of the city of Havana; the majority of the photographs in the series feature either his present home in a Boston suburb, or European cities across the Atlantic Ocean. These camera obscura photographs represent similarly unhomely spaces for Morell, despite the distant remove from Havana. For example, *Houses Across the Street in Our Bedroom, Quincy, MA* (1991), reveals the intimate, personal space of Morell’s bedroom. The photograph features a double bed with a simple wooden headboard, the covers slightly disheveled, and the pillows rumpled, like the anonymous beds in the Havana hotel rooms. The wall above the bed is overlaid with an inverted image of tidy East Coast suburban homes, neatly painted white and gray, and framed by tall trees and their spreading, deciduous canopies. Like the images of

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FIGURE 7. Abelardo Morell, *Valley of Viñales from Hotel Room, Pinar del Río, Cuba* (2002), silver gelatin print. © Abelardo Morell / Courtesy Bonni Benrubi Gallery, NYC.

Havana, a diffuse light created by the camera obscura technique imbues the photograph with a sense of the ephemeral, evoking the dreams of the recently departed sleeper. The image of the exterior scene extends down the wall and over the bed, creating again the strong juxtaposition of public and private spaces. In *Houses Across the Street*, the repetition of forms in the vertical trees, the bedside lamp and the bedposts link the two spaces visually and the blank white wall creates a screen for the projected exterior image. Unlike the photographs of Havana, which are littered with visual referents to the city and Cuban culture and history, there is little beyond the title to mark it as a specific location in a Northeastern suburb in the United States. Small details like the indentations on the pillows lend a sense of intimacy but the photograph lacks the deep resonance of memory and loss found in the images of Havana. Morell signals that this is indeed a home space, though a home found in exile. However, if we understand the camera obscura photographs—even those that do not refer to Havana—as visual representations of the exilic space, then perhaps the words of another writer also speak to the generalized unhomeliness of Morell's camera obscura

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photographs as a series. Living in a significantly different kind of exilic space than Salman Rushdie, nineteenth-century American poet, Emily Dickinson taps into the notion of exile as negotiating between conceptions of memory and home, writing: “We deem we dream/ And that dissolves the days/ Through which existence strays/ Homeless at home.”²³

Photographs like *The Tower Bridge in the Tower Hotel, London, England* (2001), on the other hand, taken neither in Morell’s current home in the United States nor in his original home of Havana, employ the same visual strategies (Figure 8). The projected image of the exterior, featuring the historic London Bridge, is juxtaposed with the interior of another anonymous yet strikingly modern and austere hotel room. The visual connection between the inner and outer spaces is again suggested by the projection of one on top of the other, yet in this case, the area of overlap is minimal and the spaces are therefore more distinct from each other. In addition, rather than forming a visual link connecting the public and private spaces on the level memory, the two projected towers of the bridge, with their sharp, pointy turrets, loom threateningly over the vacant pillows, which bear obvious indentations suggesting recent occupation by a pair of sleeping guests. The implied violence of the scene created by the dagger-like towers hovering over the vulnerable pillows differs from the more contemplative renderings of Havana from hotel rooms, in which the city- and landscapes flow more peacefully over the interiors and objects. The clarity of focus, sharp contrast of tones, and relatively minimal décor in *The Tower Bridge* photograph also eliminate the sense of the ephemeral in the image, created by the juxtaposition of memories of the past and the realities of the present. Despite the remove from Havana or his current home in exile, Morell’s photograph of London represents a similarly unhomey space through the camera obscura projection.

One way to approach these images in relation to Morell’s photographs of Havana is to again reconsider the definition of exile and its relation to a single or unique home space. Peréz Firmat’s conception of exile, or “life on the hyphen,” necessarily supports both the stability and the disruption of the home culture as part of a multifaceted articulation of exilic identity. Referring to the perhaps peculiar pleasures of exile, Edward Said notes that, “seeing the ‘entire world as a foreign land,’” as the exile does, “makes possible

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[an] originality of vision,” which, though fraught with anxiety, offers immense creative potential.²⁴ Although deeply imbued with emotional loss, for both Pérez Firmat and Said exile is also a space of creativity that allows for plural or polyvalent understandings of home, cultural identity, and memory. The photographs of Havana, which suggest both the fragmentary nature of the past and the foreign nature of the present to the artist, are Morell’s imagined homeland, his fictional, photographic, “Havana of the mind.” Morell’s camera obscura photographs visually represent the unhomely space of exile as the encounter between the interior and exterior spaces of Havana, yet they also reveal the overlap between the fragmented nature of the past and the frequently foreign nature of the present as mediated through the camera’s lens. In this light, Morell’s camera obscura photographs present more than just a vision of the unhomely or an imagined homeland; they also suggest that, in the geographic, intellectual, and psychological spaces of exile, both everywhere and nowhere are home.



FIGURE 8. Abelardo Morell, *The Tower Bridge in the Tower Hotel, London, England* (2001), silver gelatin print. © Abelardo Morell / Courtesy Bonni Benrubi Gallery, NYC.

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NOTES:

¹ Ricardo Pau-Llosa, "Identity and Variations: Cuban Visual Thinking in Exile Since 1959," in *Outside Cuba/Fuera de Cuba: Contemporary Cuban Visual Artists*, eds. Ileana Fuentes-Pérez, Graciella Cruz-Taura, and Ricardo Pau-Llosa (New Brunswick: Office of Hispanic Arts, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, 1988), 41, quoted in Gustavo Pérez Firmat, *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 10.

² Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism, 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1992), 9. Emphasis mine.

³ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴ Abelardo Morell, "Cuba from a Dark Room," in *Cuba on the Verge: An Island in Transition*, ed. Terry McCoy (Boston & London: Bullfinch Press, 2003), 85.

⁵ Luc Sante, "Introduction," in *Camera Obscura* (Boston & London: Bullfinch Press, 2004), 8.

⁶ Abelardo Morell, "Afterword," in *Camera Obscura* (Boston & London: Bullfinch Press, 2004), 104-5.

⁷ Bonnie Costello, "Outside In and Upside Down: The Art of Abelardo Morell," *The Yale Review* 96, no. 3 (July 2008): 3.

⁸ Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York & London: Routledge, 2004), 9-10.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹² Morell, "Cuba from a Dark Room," 85.

¹³ Costello, 10.

¹⁴ Nico Israel, *Outlandish: Writing between Exile and Diaspora* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 1-3.

¹⁵ Robert L. Bach, "The Cuban Exodus: Political and Economic Motivations," in *The Caribbean Exodus*, ed. Barry B. Levine (New York: Praeger, 1987), 112. The "golden exiles," as Bach refers to the first waves of migrants from Cuba after the Revolution, were typically, but not exclusively, educated middle- or upper-class Cubans who feared political retribution as well as the redistribution of their assets under the new communist system.

¹⁶ Pérez Firmat, 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11. Emphasis original.

¹⁹ Remarks by Professor John McKee in introduction for Abelardo Morell, Bowdoin College Commencement Ceremony, 24 May 2007, available at http://www.abelardomorell.net/pdf/J.McKee_97.pdf (accessed December 10, 2008).

²⁰ Remarks by Abelardo Morell upon acceptance of an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts,

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Bowdoin College Commencement Ceremony, 24 May 2007, available at http://www.abelardomorell.net/pdf/A.Morell_97.pdf (accessed December 10, 2008).

²¹ Costello, 7-8.

²² *Ibid.*, 9.

²³ Emily Dickinson, "To the bright east she flies (1573)," in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1924/1960), 652-653.

²⁴ Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 186.