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TRANSLATING CUBA

LITERATURE, MUSIC, FILM, POLITICS

Robert S. Lesman



Translating Cuba

Cuban culture has long been available to English speakers via translation. This study examines the complex ways in which English renderings of Cuban texts from various domains—poetry, science fiction, political and military writing, music, film—have represented, reshaped, or amended original texts. Taking in a broad corpus, it becomes clear that the mental image an Anglophone audience has formed of Cuban culture since 1959 depends heavily on the decisions of translators. At times, a clear ideological agenda drives moves like strengthening the denunciatory tone of a song or excising passages from a political text. At other moments, translators' indifference to the importance of certain facets of a work, such as a film's onscreen text or the lyrics sung on a musical performance, impoverishes the English speaker's experience of the rich weave of self-expression in the original Spanish. In addition to the dynamics at work in the choices translators make at the level of the text itself, this study attends to how paratexts like prefaces, footnotes, liner notes, and promotional copy shape the audience's experience of the text.

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Literature, Music, Film, Politics

Robert S. Lesman

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1 Introduction

Cuban cultural and political texts have been translated and presented to English speakers in a variety of ways since 1959. Examining translations in the domains of poetry, science fiction, political writing, music, and film, we find that Cuban cultural and intellectual production is usually presented with a clearly defined agenda. In many cases, this agenda is political: to celebrate communism or to oppose it, to expand awareness of the experience of exile, to bring women's writing and women's issues out of the shadows, or to encourage a multicultural mindset within the domestic context.¹ Jeremy Munday notes how the Cuban Revolution not only led to greater interest in literary and political works from Cuba and Latin America at large, but also "led to an intensification of the ideological context surrounding translation" (54). Though the Cuban Revolution became a subject of intense interest and debate throughout the English-speaking world, for geographical and historical reasons, the U.S. was the epicenter of this activity. Describing the Cold War sense of urgency among intellectuals in the United States' cultural hub, Rafael Rojas asserts, "it was imperative for New York intellectuals and politicians to take a public stance on Cuban communism at the time, insofar as the very identity of the United States in a bipolar world was at stake" (6). Rojas analyzes how the stance adopted by many of these intellectuals was one that idealized Cuban socialism (7). Similarly, for the British New Left in the early 1960s the Cuban Revolution represented a humanistic, non-bureaucratic form of socialism opposed to both Stalinism and "the limitations of representative democracy" (Artaraz 97), while the end of the decade saw British student activists using Cuban Revolution hero Ernesto "Che" Guevara as a symbol and inspiration (Artaraz 101). Beyond the U.S. and the U.K., we will see translations with clearly pro-Revolutionary intent originating in Jamaica and Australia. Opposition to the Revolution manifests itself most keenly in translations meant to support the U.S. military's Cold War struggle against communism. Other renderings we will examine are offered to an English-speaking audience with a troubled ambivalence about the direction Cuban communism takes after its seemingly idealistic early years. The intellectuals behind these publications were previously

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more enthusiastically committed. Nonetheless, we will see that not all translations of Cuban works respond to the Revolution. In some cases, the objective of a given presentation of Cuban culture is to advance the understanding of a certain philosophy or of the artistic possibilities of a particular genre, rather than make a point about Cuban politics. Here the work is taken up for reasons other than its Cubanness, and at times editors and translators work to flout simplistic idealizations or demonizations of Cuban society.

Cuban works are presented in English through two distinct but inter-related textual channels: the translation itself and its editorial packaging. This duality corresponds to that of text and paratext, to use the language formulated by Gérard Genette. Both translations and the texts that surround them, such as prefaces and footnotes, activate an agenda underlying the English-language presentation of a given Cuban work, though they do so in different ways. Translations evidence ideological assumptions implicitly, while their paratexts tend to lay out their agendas explicitly.

Translation as Rewriting

Translation theorist André Lefevere's three central concepts of patronage, poetics, and ideology are indispensable for separating out the issues at play when a translator enters into the disputed space between the creation and reception of an original work within its own context on the one hand, and the modification of that work for reception by an Anglophone audience on the other. Though Lefevere designs his system with literature in mind, it can be applied to translations operating in the other domains we will consider in this study: political writing, music, and film. For Lefevere, patronage, poetics, and ideology mold both the writing of original texts and their translations. Translations are shaped by the assumptions built into a receiving cultural context that exert pressures on the translator. A crucial insight here is that the cultural and ideological controls the translator operates under when translating to English are those of the Anglophone context imagined to be the target for the marketing and sale of the translation, rather than the context that shaped the creation of the original.

Lefevere explains that patronage is the sphere of "the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature"; in this sphere, the key actor can be an individual or an institution (12). The most immediately visible force of translation patronage is the publisher, including, for the purposes of the present project, record labels and film distributors. Standing behind the publisher is often another force, such as a government, a political organization, or an academic institution. If patronage determines what gets published and even what gets written in the first place, poetics for Lefevere exerts

pressure on how texts get written. A poetics consists of both “devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols” and “a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole” (20). While the first aspect of this dual concept of poetics represents the expressive techniques that characterize the text itself, the latter determines how that text inserts itself into a broader culture. Again, though literature is the reference context for these ideas, how translators deal with central devices and motifs in musical lyrics, film subtitles, and political writing will be a fundamental question as well. What Lefevere calls “poetics” will then be expanded to include communicative techniques applied in the translation of political writing, and to how a subtitler manipulates language within the time and space constraints of their medium.

Ideology circulates through the controlling mechanisms of patronage and poetics. Systems of patronage, whether they are closely tied to public political power or not, typically facilitate the propagation of texts that ultimately say the right things about who should have power and what channels they should use to exert it. This fusion of ideology and patronage produces some of the predictable situations we will encounter in this study: communist governments facilitate the translation and publication of pro-communist texts; organizations committed to an ethic of multiculturalism translate and publish texts deemed rich in cultural particularity, or an editor committed to the philosophy of Bakhtin chooses poems that exemplify that way of thinking. Nonetheless, ideology can also influence strategic rewritings of texts that express conflicting views, a fact we will see, for example, in anti-communist presentations of the writings of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. When patrons circulate texts that say the opposite of what they believe to be true, there is always a vigorous application of such material as prefaces and footnotes to make it clear to the reader that the work’s content is to be opposed. In this way, a translation is intended as a weapon that turns against its original bearer.

Ideology motivates the decisions of powerful actors within patronage systems, such as publishers, editors, record labels, or film distribution companies, while also influencing poetics, or how translators work with language itself. For Lefevere, poetics “is closely tied to ideological influences from outside the sphere of poetics as such, and generated by ideological forces in the environment of the literary system” (20). Vivid examples of this influence will be seen in oppositional presentations of Che Guevara’s texts, where his writing style is pared down in such a way that its affective valence is neutralized, or where the political content of Cuban songs is amplified through translation while their metaphorical subtlety is obscured. In cases where the publisher, record label, or film distribution company’s central motive is commercial, ideology is still present as an influencing factor; when works with clear political messages are translated and distributed in English, behind the scenes there is a decision that there

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is an Anglophone audience whose ideological orientation will make them receptive. In the case of an oppositional translation, it has been calculated that there is a public interested in understanding the work of the enemy to gain a tactical advantage over them.

Lefevere's conceptual system takes us beyond the etymological sense of the word "translation"—which is also perhaps its commonsense acceptation—as the carrying of a text's content unchanged across a permeable boundary between languages and cultures. Instead, translation is rewriting, a fact evident at multiple levels. Language systems do not express ideas using the same signifying apparatuses. The cultural context from which language systems are inextricable can differ greatly. Acceptable ways of being creative with language are variable cultural and ideological conventions. The historical and political context in which a text's arguments about society are made can be vastly different from the world inhabited by the receiver of the translation. And, importantly, the intent behind releasing an original work into circulation in its original context can differ greatly from the agenda of a translation. Building on Lefevere's work, José Santaemilia makes the case for describing translation as manipulation:

The idea of "manipulation" is inherent to the phenomenon of "translation." Both *manipulare* and *translatare* share a common lexical ground: an (artful) adaptation, change, transformation, transmission—to suit one's purpose or advantage. In some sense, the two terms are quasi synonyms, which are also associated with transgression, perversion or subversion. In spite of its widespread critical presence, "fidelity" is a rather useless term, since all texts are both faithful and unfaithful—faithful to some interests and unfaithful to others.

(1)

All translations intervene and act upon the original text. Direct, word-for-word renderings fail to reproduce either sense or style in the target language. Even attempts at non-action, at carrying across a word or phrase untranslated, are in the end acts of translation, given that the word or phrase is now foreign in its new linguistic context, where it will fail to link up with other components of the text to execute the same signifying function it did in the original. Santaemilia's use of the term "manipulation" denotes conscious action. Nonetheless, translations often reveal unconscious ideological assumptions and reinforce or contest the politics of the receiving culture through choices that seem haphazard.

Developing the principle of the translation's inevitable entanglement in its own cultural, social, and political context, Lawrence Venuti formulates a concept of the domestic that draws on the power relations implied in the verb "to domesticate":

The source text, then, is not so much communicated as domesticated or, more precisely, assimilated to receiving intelligibilities and interests through an inscription. This inscription begins with the very choice of a text for translation, always a very selective, densely motivated choice, and continues in the development of discursive strategies to translate it, always a choice of certain receiving discourses over others. Hence the inscription is totalizing, even if never total, never seamless or final. It can be said to operate in every word of the translated text long before that text is further processed by readers, made to bear other meanings and to serve other interests in the receiving situation.

(“Translation, Community, Utopia” 11)

An original text cannot be carried across directly so that it expresses itself as it did to its original audience. Instead, the translation is forced to engage in a dual gesture, signaling cultural phenomena encoded in the original through communicative tools available in the receiving linguistic and cultural context. It is no surprise, then, to encounter a prevalence of translations that purport to offer a window onto Cuba while simultaneously aiming to do concrete ideological work within a given Anglophone context, whether that work be increasing respect for cultural diversity, advancing socialism, dismantling U.S. neo imperialism, or combatting communist guerrillas in Latin America and beyond. Furthermore, as we look at how Cuba gets translated for the sake of explicitly or implicitly defined domestic interests, we see the impacts of distinct stages in the process Venuti outlines. Text choice implies text rejection; this fact is vividly evident, for example, in poetry anthologies where the vast oeuvre of a writer ends up represented by a single poem. Once the text has been chosen, actual language use in the translation is inevitably informed by judgments about what is acceptable, aesthetically pleasing, or politically comfortable for the English-speaking audience the translation openly or covertly imagines for itself. In the subtitling of Tomás Gutiérrez Alea’s film *Fresa y chocolate* (Strawberry and Chocolate), for example, different video releases make distinct choices in how to subtitle the homophobic slur *maricón*, the effect being alternately a focus on the virulence of homophobia in Cuba or a softening of the insult, as if to spare the viewer discomfort. Finally, we will witness the tension Venuti notes between attempts made by translators to produce a total or totalizing recreation of the original and that ambition’s ultimate futility. Retranslation provides one example; as we will see, an early translation of Che Guevara’s writings becomes influential, but not final, in that successive translators work to adjust it so that it serves new agendas at new moments in the history of the Cold War and of that conflict’s reverberations into the twenty-first century.² Another manifestation of the non-seamlessness of translations can be found where the translator’s discursive choices undercut the

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broader project's explicitly stated goals. What Sharon Deane-Cox calls "the intricate knot of translation choices—considered, perfunctory, circumspect, constrained, idiosyncratic, changeable, innovative, hasty, ill-advised and so on" (189) rarely coalesce in perfect alignment with the political or philosophical agenda that motivates publication. Translation is too complex a process to be fully incorporated and controlled.

Translation Paratexts

Translations rarely appear alone. They are usually surrounded, to varying degrees, by other communicative elements whose function is to shape how the audience receives them. Though the agenda of a project can be inferred from a close reading of the translation itself, that agenda is often explicitly laid out in these pieces of textual packaging.³ What we are referring to here is what Gérard Genette calls "paratext," which he defines as

verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations ... [that] surround [the text] and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption.

(1)

Translations of literary texts and essays are the result of the recreation of a printed text in the form of a new printed text. In the case of the examples studied here, they arrive in the reader's hands in the form of a traditional book or e-book, surrounded to varying degrees by other texts that exert pressures on the reader's interpretation, the most common being titles, intertitles, prefaces, translators' introductions, footnotes, and appendices. Translations of song lyrics represent a distinct format since they involve a transmutation from both text and sound (checking the vocal performance against a text of the original song lyrics) or from sound to text (via the transcription that must take place first if a text of the original lyrics is not available). Lyric translations work only in relation to the verbal component of the music, while their accompanying notes take up the task of explaining non-verbal musical elements. Both lyric translations and other paratexts can appear in LP liner notes, CD booklets, or in different configurations online. The translation, rather than being a wholistic recreation of the music (which would be only constituted by a new recording of the music with lyrics sung in English), functions as part of a paratext, where the recording itself is the main text. Translated song lyrics help explain, but do not rewrite, the musical performance. For their part, film subtitles are similar to lyric translations. They also tend to involve a transmutation from sound to text when they translate

dialogue, narration, or other forms of speech like an overheard radio report. Nonetheless, subtitles at times work from text to text, a function that will be crucial to our study. In this case, words that appear onscreen in the original film, whether they are opening credits (extradiegetic text added from outside the filmic world) or a sign that a character glances at (diageitic text appearing within the filmic world). Finally, like song lyrics, subtitles recreate the original work only partially, functioning like paratexts in relation to the original. Other paratexts can work alongside the subtitles to shape viewers' interpretation of the film, like still images, printed summaries, and laudatory quotes from critics. As we will see, more resource-intensive presentations, such as the Criterion Collection's online streaming platform, employ a richer variety of paratexts, often in video format, aimed at advancing a given interpretive frame for a film through interviews, director biographies, and lectures by film scholars. In contrast to other forms of translation, very rarely does the viewer have access to a paratextual discussion of the subtitles themselves, leaving the viewer to infer agendas. As we will see, subtitling choices often appear haphazard, and the most evident motivation behind a subtitler's decisions are the time and space limitations of the translation medium itself: two lines of text that appear briefly on a screen. This at times excessive concern with concision can lead to omissions that significantly alter the expressive effect of a film. The imperious necessity to be concise is thoroughly unique to subtitles in contrast to the other translation modalities we will examine, all of which produce text on the page of a book, album booklet, or online document and can choose to be as terse or expansive as the translator chooses, within the limits of genre norms. As we will see, concision shapes translation decisions in these domains as a stylistic expectation rather than a technical imperative.

Genette asserts that paratexts are not truly separate components laid alongside the main text, but rather "a zone not only of transition but also of transaction: a privileged place for a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public" (2). Transactions occur in this zone in the sense that the paratext comments on the text, which in turn either cedes to or resists its interpretive pressures. Transactions also occur between the author of the paratext (who is not always the translator themselves) and reader. Paratexts announce and encourage an interpretive experience that the reader may or may not have. Kathryn Batchelor observes this duality of meaning-making movements as attributable to the paratext's "blurry borders, both inward-facing (towards the text) and outward-facing (towards the broader context)" (17). Genette's analysis applies explicitly to the publication of literary books, but his concepts can be applied, with adaptations, to other media formats. He divides paratext into peritext (what appears directly surrounding the main text) (16) and epitext (what appears outside the covers of the book, in the world of the critical or promotional conversation about it) (351). We will see contrasts

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between the more forceful influence a peritext tends to attempt, as is the case with an anthology of stories meant to be employed in the classroom, and the more removed position of the epitext like a publisher's website or online reviews. The reader is more directly confronted by peritext but must usually make an active search for epitext. No matter to what degree and from what distance, paratexts dissolve the illusion of the central text's integrity and independence. Publishers, record labels, and film distributors use both, in differing combinations, not only to sell their product, but also to encourage certain interpretive conclusions. Paratexts have a significant impact on how original texts are interpreted, but have an arguably larger impact on translations, given the reader's increased need for cultural, linguistic, and historical orientation before entering into an interpretive dialogue with the work. In this study paratextual apparatuses, in both their presence and their absence, at times will receive as much attention as the English renderings of the main text itself.

Genette's terminology and typology are of great utility despite two stumbling blocks. First, for Genette the paratext is limited to that which receives the explicit or implicit approval of the author (2), a stipulation that unnecessarily hampers his own concept. Very frequently, the author has no say in the texts surrounding translations of their work. Unauthorized commentaries of various kinds are appended to works during an author's lifetime and with an even freer hand after their death. Kathryn Batchelor notes that "there are some peritexts that are not sanctioned by the author or which even go directly against his wishes" (14), a fact we will see, for example, in presentations of Che Guevara's work by the anti-communist Praeger Publishers.⁴ In the case of translations, paratexts are elaborated at a linguistic and cultural remove from the author, making it even more improbable that they have met with the author's approval. The second problem with Genette's theory is the fact that, rather than viewing translations as recreations of the original text, he takes them to be paratexts of the original. As Şehnaz Tahir-Gürçağlar asserts, this amounts to "considering translation as a derivative activity" and asserting that a translation "will serve only its original and nothing else" (46). In order to apply Genette's framework for understanding paratexts without collapsing our fundamental understanding of translations as rewritings that mobilize their own domestic agendas, Genette's treatment of translation as paratext must be qualified to recognize "translation as text, with its own paratext" (Batchelor 20) in the case of literary and political works, and to recognize the applicability of Genette's concept of translation as paratext in the case of film subtitles and the translation of music lyrics. In these latter cases, the translation is not a total recreation of the original, but rather a rendering of one of its channels of communication that links up with the filmic or musical whole without wholly re-elaborating it.

As Florian Sedlmeier observes, Genette's great contribution is to displace the focus of analysis onto "the institutional conditions of production and reception that ensure the circulation of a text in the first place" (64). The paratext establishes a space where we can derive an understanding of the patronage system that impels the publication of particular translations, of the poetic value system the translator will (or attempts to) apply in their rendering, and, of course, of the ideological agenda that organizes and deploys both of those influencing forces. Of particular interest will be the ways in which the paratext pushes an interpretation of the text which the translation should theoretically, but does not always, harmonize with through its discursive operations on the original. Disjunction between the conceptual frame established by the paratext and what the translator actually does is common. Alexandra Lopes notes, for example, that prefaces tend to be a "rather poor indicator of the strategies employed by translators" (130), and as such the reader's experience transitioning from paratext to text can be jarring.

Also, given paratexts' importance, we must be alert to situations where they are absent. Many presentations plunge the audience into the translation with minimal preparation. A type of paratext that is particularly significant when it is absent is the one that discusses the translation as such, "punctur[ing] the illusion" that the translation is an original work (Hermans 24). Many translations lack a translator's foreword, a particularly important type of paratext marked by "metatranslative self-reflection when translation observes its own operations and the factors conditioning those operations" (Hermans 51). The absence of this kind of metadiscourse discourages the reader from pondering the ideological or aesthetic assumptions that might be at work in a translation. When the presentation of a translation fails to indicate the original work's title, date, or place of publication, it goes further in encouraging the reader to forget that they are reading a translation. The common occurrence of the unnamed translator works in the same way, but with a unique effect: the translator as person, endowed with their own set of competencies and presuppositions, is erased. In some cases, the anonymity of the translator is expected, as is the case with film subtitles, whereas readers tend to be more interested in the identity of the translator of a literary text. Often, erasures of traces of translatedness are deployed where there is a clear intent at political persuasion; the reader, listener, or viewer who is under the illusion that they are receiving a message directly is less impeded by questions regarding the channels through which that message was transmitted, and is therefore more primed to act in accordance with the message. Furthermore, the non-presence of paratexts is not the only means by which the audience can imagine they are interacting with the original work; the discursive choices of translations themselves can contribute to the effect. What Lawrence Venuti identifies as "fluency," the characteristic of a translation that has employed the norms of the target language and culture in a way that is so thoroughly comfortable for the

reader that they forget they are reading a translation. When this feeling is prominent in a translation it constructs a “representation inflected with [the reader’s] own codes and ideologies as if it were an immediate encounter with a foreign text and culture” (*Scandals* 12).

Shifting Historical Contexts

The translations we will analyze emerge from different historical moments since the Cuban Revolution. A brief chronological sketch of key moments is thus in order, beginning with the first years after Fulgencio Batista’s dictatorship was toppled on the eve of 1959. Though in the minds of many revolutionaries, victory meant that moderate democratic reforms were on the horizon, during the 1960s Cuba attempted a wholesale restructuring of its economy, government, and society according to communist ideology. In 1960 Fidel Castro announced there would be no elections; in 1961 he declared the Revolution Marxist-Leninist, impelled in part by the escalating hostility of the U.S.⁵ Under the protection and sponsorship of the Soviet Union, Cuba implemented a one-party political system, centralized economic planning, and an attempt at reforming the social consciousness of the population such that the individual comes naturally to put the good of the collectivity ahead of their own self-interest.

Because of our concern with cultural expression, the next period of interest is 1971–76, a time of heightened repression and censorship, dubbed by Cuban author Ambrosio Fornet the *Quinquenio Gris* (Gray Half-Decade), and also known as the *pavonato*, after Luis Pavón, director of the Consejo Nacional de Cultura (National Council on Culture). Writing in 2007, Fornet explains that with his metaphor he intended to highlight a contrast with the “dynamic” and “colorful” nature of the creative world during the first decade of socialism (4). Emilio Gallardo-Saborido explains that while the 1960s were a time “of continual exchange, of squabbles, arguments, and polemics, but also of effervescent artistic creativity” (“de intercambio continuo, de rifirrafes, discusiones y polémicas, pero también de una efervescente creatividad artística” [44]), the subsequent decade became a morass of dogmatism and mediocrity. Gallardo-Saborido laments that “monologic obstinacy and hierarchical imposition became one of the essential organizing principles of the cultural field” (“la cerrazón monologante, la imposición jerárquica, se convirtieron definitivamente en uno de los principios organizativos esenciales del campo cultural” [44]). Repressive actions against artists and intellectuals grew out of a broader process whereby the Cuban Communist Party increasingly emulated the strict bureaucratic regimentation of the Soviet model (Pérez-Stable 212). A relative thaw in the abysmal relationship between artists and government began with the creation of a Ministry of Culture in 1976, to be headed by Armando Hart, who immediately met with aggrieved parties and established a tone of greater intellectual openness (Fornet 15).

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 ushered in the next crucial period, as it plunged the Cuban economy into a state of extreme economic crisis. Economist José Luis Rodríguez outlines the gravity of the situation in this way:

The Cuban economy was extensively integrated with the socialist countries in the crucial areas of trade and investment. These nations supplied 85 percent of Cuba's imports, received nearly 80 percent of its exports, and provided 80 percent of its investments. The very sudden, near-total disruption of all these relations was the major reason for the depth of Cuba's economic crisis in the early 1990s.

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The Revolutionary government decided to euphemistically name this state of emergency “El Período Especial en Tiempos de Paz” (The Special Period in Times of Peace), which lasted for about a half-decade. Both the economy and the social fabric of the country were profoundly affected, though socialism for the most part survived the shock. Ariana Hernández Reguant paints the picture of Cubans' experience of the Special Period: given the government's decreased ability to provide for its citizens, “many [Cubans] began to wheel and deal, unleashing a thriving black market of goods and services. The fierce competition for extremely scarce resources further cleaved a society already divided by suspicion and distrust” (2). Absent Soviet subsidies, the government decided that boosting international tourism was the only viable solution to the country's grave economic situation. Revenues from tourism increased by over 28 percent each year from 1990 to 1998 (U-Echevarría Vallejo 73). The rapid changes in Cuba's economy and society during the Special Period eroded the social ideals of the 1960s, fomenting discontent, a natural orientation toward survival that increased individualism, and a rise in *jineterismo*, (literally “jockeying”), which can mean prostitution specifically or simply hustling to make a living satisfying the desires and interests of tourists (Whitfield 28).

Many argue that the Special Period in effect never ended. The twenty-first century has witnessed neither a return to pre-Special Period communism nor the opening of Cuba to representative democracy and market capitalism. Fidel Castro's death in 2016, long anticipated by opponents as the event that would lead to the dissolution of communism, had no impact on the continuity of government. Cuba today continues to survive, but not thrive. Its gross domestic product per capita has improved since the depths of the Special Period Crisis but was still lower in 2014 than it was in 1989 (Vidal Alejandro 107). Tourism, despite its mixed impact on the purity of Cuba's socialist culture, is still crucial to the island's economy, with over 4.5 million arrivals in 2018 (“International Tourism”).

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An important through line in the story of Cuba is the history of emigration or exile, which occurred in distinct waves, with most emigrants arriving in the United States. Immediately after Fulgencio Batista fled the country, those who worked for or supported his regime, along with wealthier Cubans, left the island and were welcomed by the U.S. as political refugees. Subsequent waves tended to be less wealthy—and less white—than the initial emigrants. Despite this fact, the Cuban immigrant came to be generally perceived as “highly educated, universally white, economically successful, residents of Miami, and martyrs of Castro’s revolution” well into the 1970s in the U.S. (Current ix). This image, combined with the strategic realities of the Cold War, facilitated the welcoming of Cubans despite racist and dehumanizing treatment of undocumented immigrants from other parts of Latin America. In 1965, 5,000 people left in a boatlift from the port of Camarioca (Masud-Piloto 4), after which daily “Freedom Flights” from Cuba carried over 300,000 Cubans to Miami until 1973 (Current xi). In 1980, after a group of Cubans attempted to obtain asylum from the Peruvian embassy in Havana, Castro opened the port of Mariel, from which 125,000 refugees left. Because Castro facilitated the emigration of a certain number of prosecuted criminals and psychiatric patients as a retaliatory gesture against the U.S., the *marielitos*, or those who left in the boatlift, became a stigmatized group in their new country (Hawk et al. 40). During the Special Period there was an increase in Cuban *balseros* attempting to escape to Florida in makeshift rafts or *balsas*. In the depths of Cuba’s economic crisis in 1994, Castro again facilitated a mass exodus, this time with 35,000 leaving for Florida in makeshift crafts. All but a few thousand were intercepted by the U.S. Coast Guard and taken to detention camps at the U.S. military base at Guantánamo. An unknown number of the rest died attempting the passage; Félix Masud-Piloto cites estimates that say one in four perished (xix). The U.S. government subsequently changed its preferential attitude toward Cuban immigrants with a “wet foot, dry foot” policy: migrants would have to reach U.S. soil to qualify for asylum, while those captured or rescued at sea would be sent back (Dastyari 51). Emigration from Cuba has been a steady reality since the Revolution, with upticks caused both by political or economic strife and the Cuban government’s desire to sabotage, embarrass, or extract concessions from the U.S.⁶

Chapter Summaries

Chapter 1 surveys anthologies of translated Cuban poetry published from 1967 to 2016. Many of these collections use poetry to advocate for the Revolution, either from within Cuba or from without. Others express in their prefatory material a troubled ambivalence about the Revolution’s human rights record while standing firm in their support for Cuban poets. Two collections are dedicated to work by women poets, one being

focused on writers living on the island, and the other presenting work by exile poets living in New York. The former engages in direct feminist advocacy, whereas the latter focuses on the inner experiences of not only womanhood, but also displacement from a childhood Cuba. Not all anthologies are explicitly political; one unique example is designed as a means for using poetry to better apprehend Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic. Another collection seeks a mass audience, presenting the Cuban cultural context of the poems in the fuzzy and emotive language of marketing, while the last anthology examined sees its mission as challenging Anglophone poets to expand their notion of the possibilities of their art. Across these anthologies, varying levels of consonance between stated agenda and actual translational decisions can be observed. At times, connections between text and paratext are clear, as when a translation in an anthology designed for political advocacy works with the language of a poem to amplify its political message. At others, there is dissonance, as where translations in a feminist anthology obscure a given poem's social message.

Chapter 2 considers science fiction, examining two conduits through which English speakers have been able to consider the genre's breadth and depth in Cuba. The first is an anthology of Hispanophone and Lusophone science fiction, and the second is a series of science fiction stories and novels offered by U.S. publisher Restless Books. Where the anthology is designed for use in the classroom and chooses its texts based primarily on literary concerns, Restless science fiction titles are aimed at a broader audience that is educated and interested in international literatures and cultures. Restless promotes its titles as a means for understanding the complexities of Cuba's economic, political, and social reality. The translations in both the anthology and in the Restless series coordinate to a certain extent with the overarching agendas visible by examining introductions and other paratexts, though problematic translation decisions occur.

Chapter 3 moves from the literary to the political and strategic sphere by examining multiple translations of two texts written by the Argentinian hero of the Cuban Revolution Ernesto "Che" Guevara. These two works, *La guerra de guerrillas* (Guerrilla Warfare) and *El hombre y el socialismo en Cuba* (Socialism and Man in Cuba) have been translated multiple times, from both the left and the right. Differences in these translations and in the paratextual apparatuses that frame them stem from ideology and organize themselves around three crucial elements of the original texts: the way they communicate Guevara's intellect, the extent to which they transmit his charisma, and how they treat the issue of women's status in the Revolution. In our survey we discover that translations at times work within the interpretive agendas established by paratexts, as when an anti-communist presentation of Guevara's warfare manual strips away information deemed less relevant to the strategic aims of disseminating

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a version of his work. At other moments, the ideological framework of a translation and translators' decisions end up at cross-purposes, as is the case where a feminist re-writing of *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* retains the traditionally gender-specific title "Socialism and Man in Cuba."

Chapter 4 moves from translations of written texts to translations of the verbal content of music. The Smithsonian Folkways online music archive facilitates a survey of the way Cuban music has been packaged for English-speaking audiences. During the 1970s and 1980s, two U.S. labels, Folkways and Paredon, put out three albums of Cuban music each, and in examining their liner notes we see distinct agendas. With a mission to expand multiculturalism in the English-speaking world, Folkways operates in an ethnomusicological mode, privileging musical sound over verbal content. Paredon, on the other hand, explicitly states the agenda of supporting leftist liberation movements throughout the Third World, inspired in part by its founders' time spent in Cuba in the 1960s. In Paredon booklets, political music takes the fore and lyrics are translated completely and carefully for the Anglophone reader, given the importance that they fully absorb the songs' ideological content. In the end, the experience imagined for the Folkways listener is one of academic study or cosmopolitan connoisseurship, whereas Paredon designed records to inspire concrete Marxist anti-imperialist action.

Chapter 5 deals with film subtitles, which, like lyric translations, do not translate all channels of communication in the original work, and thus play a paratextual role. In order to present a coherent picture of the variations of approach seen in the subtitling of Cuban films, we will take four canonical works by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea as our corpus. By doing so, we not only trace the presence in the Anglophone world of the work of Cuba's best-known filmmaker outside Cuba, but we also keep our thematic focus on the recurring question of the director's complex relationship with the government over the course of his career. Subtitling choices play a significant role in the possibility of an English speaker coming away from his films with a clear sense of the tightrope the filmmaker walks between support and criticism of the Revolution. Crucial issues that subtitles can be seen attending to or neglecting are the layered texture of communication and the subtleties of interpersonal interaction in the films.

Notes

- 1 The Cuban context focused on in this study can be seen as representative of what Jeremy Munday describes as a tendency broadly typical of Latin America: "the story of translation of Latin American writing over the course of the twentieth century shows that it was the basis for ideological struggle and intercultural encounter and often mixed up with the political upheavals of the hemisphere" (50).

- 2 For an examination of the motivations behind retranslations, see Deane-Cox. The author traces the genealogy of the common intuition that retranslations mark an inevitable trajectory of improvement over time, and argues for a method that examines the sociocultural influences that motivate and shape new translations rather than a heuristic that assumes a teleology of perfectibility.
- 3 Jeremy Munday analyzes an example of the mobilization of an agenda through translation paratext in the case of a 1929 English edition of Uruguayan author José Enrique Rodó's *Ariel*, whose many footnotes provide a space where the editor "refashions Rodó's writing through a North American political and moral prism and deflects and answers criticisms of the United States" (153).
- 4 Batchelor analyzes this problem in Genette's theory of the paratext in detail, observing that Genette contradicts himself by noting various ways in which editors and authors are at odds (14–17).
- 5 Historian Marifeli Pérez-Stable broaches the possibility, absent aggravating U.S. influences, of a third way between the brutally corrupt capitalism of the 1950s and the Soviet-style communism that took root in Cuba. She argues that in the end, "nearness and the historic intimacy it had imposed between the two countries had, indeed, contoured the radical nationalism that was now rendering the revolution so intransigent" (78).
- 6 For an assessment of the strategic objectives Castro achieved during the 1994 crisis, see Greenhill.

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2 The Politics and Poetics of the Anthology

Cuban Poetry in English

This chapter surveys anthologies of Cuban poetry published from the 1960s through to the past decade to show how political, philosophical, and commercial agendas inform the composition of each volume through text selection, translation, and the deployment of paratexts like prefaces and appendices. While some collections are coy about their motivations, others are candid about intentions that go beyond the reader's aesthetic enjoyment, employing paratextual contextualization to heavily influence the ideological conclusions the poems might lead the reader to. Some anthologies defend the Revolution unconditionally, some attach caveats concerning human rights, and others contest its totalizing ambitions by defining Cubanness as diasporic and untethered from allegiance to one ideology or another. Some collections address a sociopolitical issue, like gender, while others seek to advance philosophical or literary critical ideas rather than a position on political issues raised by the poems' content. Finally, different readerships are imagined. Unsurprisingly, many collections seem designed with the classroom in mind, while others aim either toward a broader market or to a select group of readers, like English-language poets.

An anthology is etymologically a gathering of flowers. The immediate suggestion is that a collection is a selection of the best or the most important works from a given generic, historical, or cultural domain. As Karen Kilcup explains,

composing an anthology creates a miniature canon, no matter how resistant the editor is to the vexed notions of goodness and importance ... by definition, what's in is important and good, and what's omitted is at least potentially questionable. Every responsible editor ponders long to formulate the best selection criteria.

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Though these criteria might be presented as objective and universal, they are inevitably the product of the aesthetic and political presuppositions of editors. Texts are chosen based on how easily they harmonize with

editors' ideology or the ideological pressures operating on them from without. The next step in the construction of the anthology, the rendering of the texts in English, is often ostensibly guided by the volume's overarching conceptual frame, though a degree of unpredictability is always present. Translations unleash such complex and multiple effects that they are difficult to rein in. Feminist anthologies can include translations that muzzle a woman poet's voice; proclamations made in an introduction can be flouted by specific translational choices; the clear picture of reality an anthology purports to offer can end up morphed by kaleidoscopic effects operating on different expressive levels of poems, like connotation, tone, and form. Not only are anthologies vexed by the decentering instability of translation, but they are also often complicated by the implications of non-translation and self-translation. Pieces of text that are left untranslated tend to trouble the conceptual balance of a collection's intended mode of presenting cultural or ideological points of view, while the phenomenon of the poet translating themselves crosses generally agreed-upon boundaries that define author and text.

Etymology aside, translation is never simply the carrying of a transcendent, easily defined content across a simply drawn line between languages. It is instead a complex and transgressive process of mediation among author, text, and reader in which acts of rewriting are motivated by conscious or unconscious agendas. What is particular about the translation of poetry is that mediation and recreation occur in relation to an original text that itself engages in self-aware signifying processes that often challenge standard notions of what is allowed in language. Barbara Folkhart asserts that "many of the mechanisms, contradictions and aporia of translation surface in a particularly acute way when the text involved is a poem... [poetry is] deeply rooted in the textures of its raw material: sound, prosody, imagery, denotations, connotations, intertextualities" (xi) and as such unfolds in an intimate, intense, and explicit relationship to everything that is particular about the language of its composition, including its sound system, its entanglement with culture, and its historical development. In addition to these difficulties, the traditional lyric conception of poetry as unique expression of a single person's moments of transcendent inspiration makes translation feel like a kind of faking, or even worse, a betrayal. There is so much that is local, particular, and personal about poetry. How can a poem be translated then, given that the target language is built around different means of expression, steeped in an alien cultural history, and employed by an individual, the translator, who might share little of the poet's vision or experience? The translator must examine the uniqueness of the source text's poetic language and ask themselves what can be done with the sonorous, representational, and self-reflexive mechanisms available in the target language. Many anthologies examined here purportedly simplify the translator's task by paratextually circumscribing the range of meanings and effects of

individual poems within the dominant message or concept motivating the collection. Where an anthology is designed as propaganda, for example, the exhortative dimension of the poems included must be attended to keenly. Nonetheless, as we will see, translation is too multivalent, and the job it is put up to too challenging, for it to harmonize always with an overarching agenda.

Anthologies as Revolutionary Advocacy

The anthology *Cuban Poetry 1959–1966* was published by the Instituto Cubano del Libro in 1967, the year of its founding.¹ Poets Heberto Padilla and Luis Suardíaz wrote the prologue and biographical sketches, and Sylvia Carranza translated them. Carranza and Claudia Beck translated many of the poems and provided editorial supervision over the volume as a whole. The collection runs to nearly eight hundred pages, which, considering that government publications were sold at a very low cost to make them accessible to all citizens, indicates a significant level of government support for projecting a positive image of the Revolution in the Anglophone world through culture. The occasion for the anthology is the Revolution itself, which is deemed to have radically transformed both poetic expression and the social reality it responds to. The transformation of Cuban society has fostered the creation of novel means of poetic expression: “a new universe of expression has dawned, a new truth, a new life” (5).

Accordingly, the collection is thoroughly ideological in design. Padilla and Suardíaz’s Foreword presents an anthology in which poetics are made secondary to the principle of political uniformity: the poems selected explore “the problems set forth by History” (5). In duly Marxist fashion, history, the force that supplants God, is capitalized. Despite their stylistic differences, the poets in the anthology are united by virtue of their participation in the Revolution (6). Individual artistic uniqueness is managed and contained by a dominant new sense of social solidarity, by “a shared atmosphere of tensions and emergent problems” (6). Padilla and Suardíaz’s concluding sentence extends this ideal of unity into one of anonymity, citing Paul Valéry’s musings on the possibility of composing an anthology of poetry in which no names are indicated and through which a kind of universal history of the genre could be read (6). From a Marxist standpoint, Padilla and Suardíaz criticize artistic cults of personality and more broadly the privileging of individuality those cults presuppose. Ideological commitment requires subjugating individuality to the concerns of the collective. Poets living outside Cuba, along with writers deemed problematic by the mid-1960s, such as Virgilio Piñera, are absent.² That Padilla, a poet who soon after the publication of this anthology was to suffer himself the repression of the problematic writer, layers the introduction with a bitter irony.

Poets are presented in chronological order by age. The first is Manuel Navarro Luna, who was 64 years old at the time of the Revolution's triumph and died seven years later. His poem "El canto de la estrella," the first in the anthology, opens with the image of the blood of the Revolutionary struggle, and gives a defiant warning to the United States government: you are Goliath, we are David with our sling at the ready (8). Anita Whitney Romeo's translation recreates the tone of noble patriotism in the original, avoiding word-to-word literalism such that the anti-imperialist message of the original comes through in the English. Nonetheless, images and distinctions get blurred. The simple omission of a period makes it seem that the exalted star on the Cuban flag refers to that of the enemy. At other points, the translation opts for metonymic proximity where a more direct choice would have better transmitted the original's exhortatory force. Because of these weakening effects in the translation, the poem, which is meant as the opening salvo of a book meant to glorify the Revolution and defy American aggression through poetic expression, comes across as clumsier and more muddled in tone. In Navarro Luna's "Playa Girón," it is Romeo's stilted diction that dulls images of the heroism of the Cuban militiamen who defeated the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Nicolás Guillén, the poet most lionized by the Revolution, is afforded a generous selection of texts in *Cuban Poetry 1959–1966*. The poem "Tengo," from the eponymous 1963 collection, is one of his most beloved hymns to the Revolution. The poem celebrates what Vivian Romeu calls "the attainment of long-awaited justice and equity" ("los logros de justicia y equidad largamente esperados" [129]). The speaker of the poem wakes at the dawn of the Revolution with his indigence transformed into the vast material and social wealth afforded by socialism. María Zielina underlines the fact that the new "I" that now possesses things is a social entity (106), an implied "we." With regard to Guillén's technique, she observes that "the scant use of adjectives and the repetition of the verb 'to have' give intensity to the events that are narrated" ("la poca adjetivación y la repetición del verbo 'tener' traen como resultado la vigorización de los sucesos que se narran" [105]). The repetition of the verb that forms the poem's title links up with the repetition of other phrases in the poem to drive home the point that the average Cuban citizen now possesses the wealth generated by the natural and human resources of the island, rather than toiling for the profit of foreign masters. Nonetheless, the translation, "I, Juan, Negro" by Lenox and Maryanne Raphael, studiously represses the original's anaphoric character. The issue at hand, as Lefevere would put it, is the fact that two different poetic systems clash in the translation (75). Because the poem's insistent repetitions do not fit the Anglophone preference for poetic concision, the translators excise them and, sewing together the gap left behind, render verse that fits conventional stylistic expectations. These revisions perhaps produce what an Anglophone

reader would recognize as an aesthetically pleasing text, but at a political cost. The erasure of so many instances of the verb “to have” diminishes the forceful message that the individual has become wealthy under socialism since the Revolution, and the suppression of other crucial phrases blurs the link Guillén constructs between poetic enunciation and possession, an important idea for a politically committed poet who has recently stepped into the role of poetic voice for the communist government. The speaker of the original, like the poet himself, finds that his words are more powerful thanks to the transformation of his material and social world, but the translation of “Tengo” opts for finesse over power. Another effect of the original poem’s repetitiveness is an informal intimacy; the reader encounters a speaker whose repetitions sound like authentic, unrehearsed speech. The translation attempts to elevate the Revolution and convey its nobility by silencing this conversational aspect of the poem. The cost incurred is the blurring of the performance through language of social equality and intimacy among comrades that Guillén has endeavored to construct in his poem.

As editor, Heberto Padilla allots a generous quantity of pages for his own poems in the collection, more than what is given even to José Lezama Lima, the older and more established giant of Cuban literature. Despite Padilla’s central role in producing an anthology intended to bolster support for the Revolution abroad, he was already deeply discontented with government repression of speech when the collection was being assembled. Though this uneasiness is nowhere to be found in the straightforwardly doctrinaire introduction attributed to him and the more fully committed Suardíaz, the poems Padilla chooses to include presage the controversy that would surround his 1968 collection *Fuera del juego*, which, though it won the Julián del Casal Prize from the Unión de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba, was published with an official disclaimer criticizing its lack of fidelity to the Revolution.³ Though among his poems in *Cuban Poetry* are texts that herald a new age ushered in by the Revolution (“El justo tiempo humano”) and declare the need for poets to sharpen their social conscience (“Los poetas cubanos ya no sueñan”), there are also poems whose content is oblique to the established lines of political argument to be found in the majority of the anthology. The examples he chooses to include in his own section position him as both a socially aware writer and as an aesthete interested in ambivalence and complexity.

A decade after Padilla and Suardíaz’s anthology, a collection with the same goal of increasing support for the Revolution was published in Jamaica. *Poems from Cuba: An Anthology of Recent Cuban Poetry*, edited and translated by J. R. Pereira, was published by the University of West Indies Press in 1977. Pereira, a Jamaican poet and scholar of Cuban literature, introduces the collection by laying out the political standpoint from which the poems are to be appreciated. The texts

evinced a feeling of social responsibility rather than “alienated” individualism (8). Though the reader might find “traditional themes, including love and death, loneliness and time,” such topics are approached “with a distinctly socialist attitude in which the links between individual and society ... are reflected” (9). To maintain ideological consistency, Pereira includes only those poets who were younger than 15 in 1959, “young writers whose main impressions and influences have been the result of a revolutionary environment” (13). Cuban poet Jesús Cos Causse contributed significantly to the process of text selection (10). Pereira’s feeling of alliance with the Cuban Revolution is profound, a fact that is notable given the moment at which his anthology is published. Heberto Padilla’s public humiliation and imprisonment had occurred six years earlier; threats, silencing, and imprisonment were visited upon many other writers because of their criticisms of the government, their deviations from conservative social norms, or both. The *Quinquenio Gris*, or the Gray Half-Decade, running from 1971 to 1975, was a time of both active suppression of those forms of literature and art that diverged from the model of Socialist Realism and anxious self-censorship.

Yet as a Jamaican intellectual committed to decrying the injustices of his native country, Pereira is inspired by the degree of social equality achieved in Cuba.⁴ He reveals at the close of his introduction that his agenda is not simply to highlight the Revolution’s social gains, but also to hold up politically committed Cuban poetry as an example for Jamaican writers:

Our minority of revolutionary poetry in Jamaica is in the denunciatory first phase of the struggle against imperialist, capitalist and class exploitation. These Cuban writers have moved to a more definitively constructive phase because theirs is a context of socialism. Hopefully, their experience will help to deepen our ideological consciousness here and at the same time inspire a relatively new type of poetic sensibility.

(10)

Cuban poetry is valuable for Jamaican writers in showing a path toward socialism by transforming not only political thought but poetic expression. As Venuti theorizes, translation can foster the creation of “a community of interest around the translated text in the receiving situation, an audience to whom it is intelligible and who put it to various uses” (“Translation, Community, Utopia” 20). Pereira poses his collection in this utopian mode, conceiving translation as that which goes beyond carrying a content across a boundary. Translation reacts with and acts upon the target language and culture and can be deployed with the intent that these effects have a predetermined political charge.

Appropriately, Pereira published a collection of his own politically committed poems the following year. Entitled *Profiles and Poemings*, the volume's first section confronts issues of race, class, and economic injustice in blunt, demotic speech. In addition to Pereira's admiration for the Revolution's success at beating back the tide of U.S. imperialism, a positive estimation of the Cuban Revolution's progress toward racial equality underlies his support for Castro's government and his hope that a similar system might be implemented in Jamaica. Pereira traces a trajectory in Cuban society from abject racial exploitation under colonialism and neocolonialism to liberation under communism. For example, he makes plain his view that Cuba can serve as a beacon for the liberation of people of color throughout the Americas in his poem "Ballad of the Jose Martí School," in which he allies Martí with Marcus Garvey (44).

Pereira's partnership in assembling *Poems from Cuba* with Jesús Cos Causse, an Afro-Cuban poet from Santiago de Cuba, forms a concrete personal link that evidences the possibility of strengthening bonds between Cuba and Jamaica. Cos Causse was an attaché at the Cuban Embassy in Jamaica from 1973 to 1975 (Pereira, *Poems* 30). Three of his texts included in *Poems from Cuba* were inspired by this time and by a sense of racial, political, and historical allegiance with Jamaicans. The first of these, "La rebelión de Morant Bay," opens with an epigraph by Claude McKay and dramatizes an 1865 Jamaican uprising against the British colonial government. Though it was brutally put down, scholar Clinton A. Hutton asserts that the insurrection "reflected the development of a deeper inner national dynamic that not even the butchery performed by the British military and their allies directed by Governor Edward John Eyre could turn back" (xiii–xiv). Narrating events in the first-person plural, the poem constructs an implicit identification between Afro-descendant Cuban poet and oppressed Jamaicans. A fundamental commonality among Afro-Caribbean peoples is put forth in the image of the rebels carrying "a flag of forest leaves, of deep roots, / of myriad flowers of all Africa's trees and the Caribbean's" (39) ("una bandera de hojas silvestres, de raíces profundas / y de flores numerosas de todos los árboles de África y del Caribe" [38]).⁵ The second, "Leyenda y tributo a Marcus Garvey," transhistorically links the Jamaican leader with Cuban heroes Mariana Grajales, Antonio Maceo, José Martí, and others. In "Leyenda Antillana" he describes Cuba and Jamaica as "one island divided by the whip-lash" (43) ("una sola isla dividida de un latigazo" [42]).

A fundamentally important poem Pereira includes in his collection is Nancy Morejón's "Mujer negra," a poetic synthesis of the historical experience of Afro-Cuban women from slavery to liberation under communism. As Esther Sánchez-Pardo González explains, "each verse presents a different stage in the development of the slave woman, from African woman transplanted as slave onto the island, the toiling slave, the rebel slave, and finally to the revolutionary woman" ("cada una de las estrofas

presenta una etapa diferente en el devenir de la mujer esclava, desde la mujer africana trasplantada como esclava a la isla, la esclava trabajadora, la esclava rebelde, hasta la revolucionaria” [179]). Pereira’s rendering of the poem includes choices that alternately facilitate or impede the reader’s absorption of the poem’s political message. He makes use of insertion in representing “anduve” (106) (I walked) as “I walked on” (107), reflecting the epic exertions of the black woman in her journey toward freedom. Faced with “palenque” (108), a fortified community of escaped slaves, Pereira must contend with a term that has no precise equivalent in English. In another context, recourse to a gloss or an explanatory footnote might be expected, but Pereira follows the typical format for poetry translation and avoids paratextual interventions that break the sense of the poem as an integral aesthetic whole. He balances the need to expand upon the term and maintain poetic concision by giving “maroon hideout” (109). Syntactic incompatibilities between languages also pose challenges. Where Morejón evokes the slave’s state of deprivation she places the direct object at the front of the sentence, which emphasizes what was withheld: “las cosechas no comí” (106). Translated directly, this would be “the harvests I did not eat,” but the effect is not the same, since a parallel relationship between syntax and emphasis is unavailable in English. Pereira instead restores English’s preferred subject–verb–predicate sequence and adds “none”: “I ate none of its harvest” (107). By doing so he registers Morejón’s blunt distillation of the injustice of slavery.

Nonetheless, there are translation choices that blur the text’s picture of oppression and struggle. By rendering the line “Bogué a lo largo de todos sus ríos” (106) (I rowed the length of all its rivers) as “I sailed along its rivers” (107) he softens labor into ease. In the stanza where this line appears, “bogué” is flanked by the verbs “sufrí” (I suffered) and “sembré” (I sowed). The image of the enslaved woman sailing the rivers of her country confuses Morejón’s imagery. What gets distorted at a crucial moment in the last stanza is the voice of the poem’s speaker, which shifts initially from her first-person narrative of suffering and persistence to a first-person plural invocation of the “us” and the “ours” of a liberating communism, then finally to an apostrophic second-person plural addressed to her compatriots:

Nada nos es ajeno.
 Nuestra la tierra.
 Nuestros el mar y el cielo.
 Nuestras la magia y la quimera.
 Iguales míos, aquí los veo bailar
 alrededor del árbol que plantamos para el comunismo.
 Su pródiga madera ya resuena.

(108)

There is nothing that isn't ours.
The earth is ours.
The sea and the sky are ours.
Magic and fantasy are ours.
My equals, I see you dance here
around the tree we planted for communism.
Its prodigal wood now resounds.

(translation mine)

Pereira's translation is:

Nothing is not ours.
Ours the earth.
Ours the sea and sky.
Ours the magic and fancy.
Equally mine, here I see them dance
around the tree we planted for communism.
Its wonderful wood now resounds.

(109)

At the emotionally climactic moment where the speaker calls her readers her “equals,” Pereira has “equally mine, here I see them dance.” A misreading of the noun “iguales” as an adverb and the rendering of the pronoun “los” as “them” rather than a plural “you” erases the apostrophic connection the speaker wishes to make with her reader. Of less dramatic impact, but still significant, is Pereira's translation of “pródiga” as “wonderful”: “Its wonderful wood now resounds.” This rendering uses alliteration to provide an oblique echo of the original's sonorously mimetic effect, where the final four words of the line all end with an open “ah” sound that evokes a sensation of resonance. Nonetheless, the adjective “wonderful” erases the intertextual evocations of “pródiga,” which Morejón uses to ironically invert the negative Biblical sense of wastefulness and evoke communism's generosity.

Women in the Revolution

In 1969 U.S. poet, translator, and photographer Margaret Randall moved to Cuba, where she would live for 11 years. In her memoir *To Change the World: My Years in Cuba*, she describes collaborations and friendships with Cuban poets (145–68). Her 1978 anthology *Estos cantos habitados / These Living Songs: Fifteen New Cuban Poets*, bears the fruit of her deep engagement with Cuban culture, politics, and poetry. Her collection explicitly advocates for the Revolution she had been participating in by offering a forum for Cuban poetic voices to both praise communism's social accomplishments and give evidence of the regime's educational

achievements through the variety and quality of their forms of expression. The predecessor to *Estos cantos habitados* was the 1967 number of the Mexican magazine *El Corno Emplumado* dedicated to Cuban poetry. Co-edited by Randall and Mexican poet and essayist Sergio Mondragón, the volume published work by a broad range of poets with Spanish and English on facing pages.⁶

Though not all poems in *Estos cantos* are overtly political, many make clear statements about the virtues of Cuban communism's effect on society. Randall differentiates her collection from those of her predecessors by constructing an extensive paratextual apparatus intended to enrich the reader's understanding of the historical, social, and political context of the poems. In contrast to Padilla and Suardíaz's collection, which appends a very brief introduction that reads like an afterthought, Randall's introduction is dense and multivalent. She sketches the history of Cuban literature and offers an assessment of the progress of the Revolution toward its goal of universal literacy and access to high culture. The reader interested in the problematics of anthologization is offered an explanation of both her methods for selecting the poems and her approach to eliciting philosophical statements from the poets. Randall explains that she asked each poet questions such as "how do you understand the poetic process?" and "what place does poetry occupy in your life?" (xx). In a gesture that implicitly resonates with the socialist ideal of the artistic collective, she includes a sampling of answers in the introduction without indicating names, leaving the reader with the sense of a choral response: poetry "should express communal concerns and hopes"; "the poet is in the people and the people [are] in the poet" (xxi). Randall explicitly echoes this ethic by explaining to her Anglo readership that "the whole concept of individual talent differs in a society where social identification is so much more complete" (xx). Her reference to T. S. Eliot's essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" anchors her English-language reader in familiarity in order to make possible an encounter with cultural and political difference; if for Eliot the poet must merge his individuality with "the consciousness of the past" (30), Randall seeks to show how the socialist artist merges their personality with the consciousness of the contemporary collective. Randall is deeply committed to the Revolution, which she asserts does not just provide material support for the writing, publication, and discussion of poetry, but supplies an encouraging moral foundation through its belief "that poetry is capable of changing life" (xxiii). Her inclusion of younger poets evidences her belief that a narrative of far-reaching cultural progress has been recently initiated and young people are in the process of writing it. Randall foregrounds the egalitarian accomplishments already made by the Revolution by including poets like Ángel Pena, a foundry worker with a seventh-grade education (85). On the issue of gender, Randall makes a significant error, one she acknowledges and seeks to redress in her 1982 anthology of Cuban women poets.

Though she recognizes the increased opportunities for women in communist Cuba, in her introduction to *Estos cantos habitados* she declares that “there are amazingly few women poets of consistent quality and passion” (xxiii). As a result, her anthology includes 13 men and only two women, Milagros González and Soleida Ríos. She subsequently explains this mistake as the result of her “own conditioning” (*Breaking* 2).⁷

The first poem in *Estos cantos habitados*, Raúl Rivero’s “Amigos,” is representative of the kind of poetry that predominates in the collection—direct, conversational, and politically explicit. The speaker accepts with resignation that he has lost friends because of his commitment to communism. These friends drink and “admir[e] each other’s tie” (3) and close their ears when the speaker wants to “say something / about the Third World” (3). Alex Fleites’s poem “Calle Ronda, 2 a.m.” (“Ronda Street, 2 a.m.”) takes up the theme of friendship from an opposite perspective. The text repeatedly evokes the death of a friend who comes to represent all the speaker’s comrades who have given their lives to the Revolutionary struggle. The speaker asks at the poem’s close why one would complain about having to stand guard in Havana in the middle of the night given such sacrifices on the part of others. The poem’s use of varied descriptions that emerge from the evocation of a single, collective *amigo* is conveyed clearly in Randall’s translation. She uses contractions like “there’s” and “isn’t” (17) to evoke the informal directness of speech in the original. The romantic tone of the line that describes a friend who “legaba su amor intacto al mundo” (16) comes across in the euphonious phrase “he willed his whole love to this world” (17).

In her 1982 collection *Breaking the Silences: An Anthology of 20th-Century Poetry by Cuban Women* Randall employs many of the same techniques found in *Estos cantos*, but with the determination to correct her own error of underrepresenting female poets and to call attention to Cuba’s history of tyrannizing women through “oppressive Christian (Catholic) bonds” and “vastly inadequate educational opportunities” (3). Evidence of her commitments comes through as she locates the sources of women’s oppression outside the sphere of the Revolution, in religion and economic inequality. Randall is candid about the mission of advocacy behind her book, which she calls “an act of justice and of love” (27). In her introduction, she gives a detailed picture of women’s inequality in areas like literacy and income at the eve of the Revolution and proceeds to paint a vastly more positive picture of women’s status under communism, highlighting

the literacy campaign, opening up schools and workplaces ... creating the conditions necessary for women to come out of the home and into the larger social space ... dealing with what Fidel Castro has termed subjective as well as objective obstacles.

She denies the “repression” (placing the term in quotation marks) that exile poets and other critics have denounced (24). *Breaking the Silences* is inspired by the Revolutionary promise of a liberation that is both objective and subjective, structural and psychological. The anthology returns again and again to these dualities in both the poems and in the considerable paratextual apparatus Randall includes.

As she does in *Estos cantos*, Randall includes a variety of material to contextualize the poems, this time within a feminist conceptual framework. What interests her most is how women poets deal with “the contradictions between traditional ‘role’ and discovered self” (22). Her lengthy introduction offers a history of Cuban women poets from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. Each contemporary writer’s section includes a photo that reveals elements of her personality, and Randall refers to each by her first name, establishing a tone of allegiance that is both feminist and socialist: woman is both sister and comrade. Because of her interest in their process of liberation in both the public and the private spheres, Randall includes poets’ marital status (many are divorced) and information about their living situation in many of the bios, a highly unusual editorial gesture. In all, the paratextual structure Randall puts in place is uniquely personal, revealing both her own agendas and facts about the personal lives of the poets. As she does in her previous anthology, Randall interviews each writer and asks her to respond to a series of questions. For *Breaking the Silences*, these are:

Why do you think women have come late to poetry? ... How was your own encounter with poetry? What place does poetry occupy in your life? Is there a conflict ... between the creative act and your life as a woman ...? Do you feel your women’s consciousness is reflected in your poetry ...? Where would you place your work within the general panorama of Cuban poetry?

(25–6)

This technique elicits a range of responses that sets off resonances and dissonances between literary text and anthologizing paratext. Randall’s question about a possible “woman’s consciousness” embodied in the poems incites replies that, when read together, offer the reader a way of listening in on a fundamental debate among Cuban women poets. Some contest the essentialist suggestion behind the question. Mirta Aguirre responds with the acerbic counter-question: “Would you ask a male poet ‘Do you think your condition as a man is reflected in your poetry?’” (44). Randall’s inclusion of this response reflects her willingness to have her editorial voice contradicted within the anthology’s dialogic space, something that does not typically occur within a traditionally constructed anthology. Nancy Morejón and Excilia Saldaña, for their part, accept the idea of a poetry of female consciousness with qualifications. The former

warns that there is no such thing as a feminine poetic style (140). The latter accepts the essentialist presupposition of Randall's question but complicates it by drawing attention to the intersectional nature of her identity: "I don't want to only write as a woman, but as a Black woman" (189). Marilyn Bobes, on the other hand, believes gender identity should necessarily be a secondary concern in a fully communist society: "at this point in history human beings have the right to achieve fullness of spirit based on their class consciousness, on their consciousness of their very existence and not their sexual affiliation" (278).

Many writers in the anthology argue that poetry occupies a position of greater prominence in society compared to the culturally stultified pre-revolutionary Cuba. Poet Albis Torres describes a communist Cuba in which "many people read and write poetry," where "to be a poet is valued," and the effort of writing feels "worth it" (216). For her part, Excilia Saldaña asserts that she would not have become a poet if it were not for the societal transformations set in motion by the Revolution (197). Randall explains in her introduction that poetry's enhanced status in Cuba comes from both the improvements in educational access and the government's efforts to encourage poetry through workshops, prizes, and publication opportunities (4–5). Her inclusion of these points is designed to spur the reader to reflect on the marginal status of poetry and poets in countries where the ideology of market capitalism has eroded non-monetary values.

Excilia Saldaña asserts that the Revolution has advanced the cause of women's equality, and speaks of her own personal investment in a form of communist feminism: "I want my son to grow up to be a man who will understand that 'his woman' is above all his comrade, his friend, his equal ... I'm sure he will be the kind of man Che dreamed of" (198). Many poets see an increased role for poetry in communism's steady march of social progress. Soleida Ríos remarks "I'm interested in poetry's capacity to change life and I think it has a critical role to play in the struggle for women's full equality" (250–51).

In contrast to *Estos cantos*, Randall includes selections from the poets' answers in their bios rather than reproducing responses anonymously in the anthology's introduction. In this way, she allows the reader to hear the individual voices of the poets and to understand the poems from the poets' own aesthetic and political point of view (26). The reader observes the subtle push and pull between loyalty to a socialist collective and the call for attention to issues affecting specific segments of that collective. Underlying Randall's method is an egalitarian ethic that resists the temptation to impose a totalizing editorial framework on the texts and instead values the way that inclusion of multiple voices can enrich the quality of ideas explored. Though her voice as editor and translator is prominent in her detailed paratextual supplements, Randall makes a concerted effort to allow each poet's point of view to be fully appreciated in relation to

economic and sociohistorical facts. Crucially, her attention to the uniqueness of each poet implies that a commitment to communism does not necessarily require the dissolution of individual identity.

Even though Randall praises the Revolution's social accomplishments, *Breaking the Silences* highlights the ways in which women's liberation in Cuba is still in process in the early 1980s. As Cuban gender studies scholar Norma Vasallo Barrueta acknowledges, political and juridical change under communism has been favorable to women's de jure rights, though the personal and cultural are not always transformed by public acts:

trascendiendo la realidad política y jurídica; pero marcándola con su impronta, está la cultura construida colectivamente a través de sucesivas transformaciones y también sedimentaciones del saber humano, en un proceso histórico y en Cuba, aún vivimos en una cultura patriarcal.

(58)

(beyond political and juridical reality, but marking it distinctly, there is culture, which is constructed collectively in a historical process through a series of transformations and also sedimentations of human knowledge. In Cuba, we still live in a patriarchal culture).

Randall's acknowledgement of this issue, like discussions of race or sexual orientation, runs the risk of provoking a negative reaction from the cultural-intellectual apparatus of a Cuban government whose broader projects she enthusiastically supports. Socialism and gender discrimination must be kept at a safe distance from one another, the latter being the unfortunate legacy of pre-revolutionary social history. The official message from the Revolutionary government at the time *Breaking the Silences* was published is that in spite of a lamentable past, Cuba is presently hard at work, deracinating prejudice in all forms and supplanting it with an ethic of total social equality.

One poem that addresses the problem of incomplete progress for women is Milagros González's "Diálogo primero" ("First Dialogue"). The text opens with an epigraph from Lenin's conversation in 1920 with the German Marxist Clara Zetkin on "the woman question," in which he asserts that men's help with domestic work is essential to the project of establishing equal status for women (114–15). González's title makes both extratextual and intratextual connections, referring both to this canonical dialogue and the female speaker's argument with a Cuban husband who imagines himself to be an important participant in the communist struggle for social justice but nonetheless fails to treat his own spouse as equal. He judges his wife for not perfectly executing the cooking and

cleaning tasks of the household, but when presented with a feather duster, claims to be too busy or tired. For her part, the speaker asserts in vivid metaphorical language her equality with her husband within socialism, claiming that women and men are “aire del mismo viento renovador del mundo” (174) (gusts of the same wind that renews the world).

González’s poem is a fierce, original, and funny critique of machismo. It plays a central role in the anthology’s mission to inform an Anglophone readership that is most likely progressive and predisposed to think optimistically about social equality in the Revolution about the tension between social progress and sexism in Cuba. It is also a work whose placement in the collection helps Randall do “justice” (27) to Cuban women whose poetic voices are in need of being heard. As translator, Randall makes semantic adjustments to help keep González’s social critique in focus. For example, she employs the technique of adaptation in working with the term “Fulano” (172). The speaker of the poem reminds her husband that “Luis,” “Pedro,” “Juan,” along with other men who live nearby, are more engaged in household work, but laments exhaustedly that her spouse is not those men (172). Instead, he is a “Fulano,” a generic proper name used in Spanish to denote a “so and so.” Translating “Fulano” is a challenge; the connotations of an expression like “John Doe,” for example, would not work. Randall overcomes this difficulty with the translation: “And your name isn’t Juan” (173). Her solution maintains the coherence of the passage by referring back to one of the names the wife mentions in her complaint, and its effect is appropriately humorous, given that the voice of the resistant husband can be heard through the phrase. At the conclusion of the poem, Randall supports the text’s feminist critique by translating the “solidaria muerte” (174) that the *machista* Marxist husband glorifies as “fraternal death” (177). Though the modifier in Spanish evokes a gender-neutral concept of solidarity, Randall opts for “fraternal,” making it clear that the attitude that deifies violence and disrespects domesticity is endemically masculine. With this technique, the translator compensates for the loss of certain effects of denotation occurring elsewhere in the poem by recreating them and placing them elsewhere in the text.

Nonetheless, there are places in the translation where González’s assertive wit does not express itself. In some cases, this diminution of effect is the result of a simple typographic error, as in the rendering of the militant husband’s pronouncement of “Patria o Muerte” (172) (Fatherland or Death) as “*Homeland and Death*” (173). This oversight erases the political and emotional content of the phrase. At other moments in the poem, what gets obscured is González’s light parodic tone; the “plumero” (172) (feather duster) the speaker hands her husband, and whose feminine associations cause the *machista* to squirm, is rendered as a “rag” (173). The image of the rag registers for the reader the idea that the man feels his dignity demeaned but

alters the light touch of humor evoked by the supposedly feminine delicacy of the “plumero.” Where the speaker of the poem describes “pisos donde sentar tus nalgas sin la preocupación de las escobas” (174) (floors where you can sit your buttocks down without worrying about brooms), Randall has: “floors so clean you can eat on them and spit on them” (175). The blend of intimacy and chiding exasperation in the original disappears, along with the gentler tone with which the speaker calls attention to her husband’s carefree existence. In its place, the English rendering has the man spitting on floors his wife has meticulously cleaned. This coarsening impedes the Anglophone reader’s sense of the mix of seriousness and gentle humor with which the female speaker addresses her husband, and crucially, interferes with the reader’s more subtle recognition of the careful tonal modulations necessary in a culture where *machismo* still permits aggressive responses to female self-assertion.

Ambivalent Advocacy

In her 2016 anthology *Only the Road / Solo el camino: Eight Decades of Cuban Poetry*, Randall looks back on her previous collections with the intention of continuing their methodological threads and revising or adding to their statements on politics and poetics. Thirty-eight years after *Estos cantos habitados*, Randall remains a supporter of the Revolution. Nonetheless, she recognizes valid criticisms of the regime’s suppression of free speech. She acknowledges the “ravages” of the government’s crackdowns on dissent during the *Quinquenio Gris* (3) and admits that the Revolution has engaged in censorship (6). Nonetheless, she apportions blame carefully: U.S. aggression has naturally provoked “legitimate fear and overreactive frenzy” in the Cuban government (4), and certain “troglodyte minds gained control of the main cultural institutions” in the late 1960s (6), inflicting a repressive control that ran counter to the truer, nobler mission of the Revolution. Randall blames “narrow-minded bureaucrats” (6) rather than Castro himself for the suffering of writers who criticized the government.⁹ She recognizes that Cuban literature and the sense of cultural identity that informs literary expression extend beyond national boundaries to embrace the Cuban diaspora in Florida and elsewhere, dedicating her anthology to “the poets of Cuba, wherever in the world they live” (vii) and includes important exile poets. Nonetheless, her discussion of the Padilla affair stops short of condemnation, admitting only that at the time, the events made her “uncomfortable” (9).

Anticipating Randall’s qualifications of her support for the Revolution in her introduction to *Only the Road* by nearly five decades, Nathaniel Tarn, in the introduction to his 1969 anthology *Con Cuba: An Anthology of Cuban Poetry of the Last Sixty Years*, poses his support for the regime

as conditional and increasingly uncertain.¹⁰ Though he approves of the regime's social reforms, he is concerned by the Cuban government's support for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. He confesses feeling that Cuba "might be losing its way" (11). Tarn's fundamental loyalty is to Cuban poets, and his deepest preoccupation is that they be allowed the freedom to express their individual experiences of life within the Revolution:

I want to say for myself that I am *Con Cuba* [With Cuba] only as long as Cuba is with every one of the poets who, as there is reason to believe, are among its warmest admirers and most inspired interpreters.

(11)

As if hoping to catch the ear of Cuban officialdom, he asserts that poets love their country in addition to being observers and critics. Tarn includes many fewer poems on explicitly political themes than are found in the collections examined so far.

Tarn's anthology expresses the sense that an emergency is at hand. He admits that the collection came together chaotically after a worrisome stay in Cuba (11). The reader finds evidence of this haste in the lack of biographical or bibliographical notes. Tarn was hamstrung by an inability to get hold of important books, and in the end relied heavily on Randall's collection of Cuban poetry in *El Corno Emplumado*. A stronger reader of French than of Spanish, Tarn also indicates that some poems are retranslations from the French version of *Poesía Cubana 1959–66* (11). Examining the translations, the feeling of hurry is reinforced. In some places there are errors that indicate a lack of editing, while in others, refractions of denotation and connotation evidence a lack of patient reflection on both the nature of the original and the multiple possibilities for English recreations.

The inclusion of José Lezama Lima's "Una oscura pradera me convida" ("An Obscure Meadow Lures Me," in Tarn's rendering) is illustrative of the kind of non-political poetry Tarn highlights in order to bolster his argument for freedom of expression within the Revolution.¹¹ Tarn's English rendering also shows evidence of haste. Lezama's intensely psychological poem narrates the experience of falling into an imaginative trance in which indistinct yet poignant impressions re-visit the speaker from the realm of memory. Its themes are evoked in sensuous imagery that Tarn's translation alters through clumsy literalism. The reader of the English is offered some basic orientation within the imaginary space Lezama constructs, but not a feeling for the poem's movements through that space, nor of the strange and wonderful sensuousness that is always alive in Lezama's language in productive and challenging dialogue with its intellectual content.

Anthologizing Exile

Whereas up to this point we have examined anthologies that focus on Cuban poetry written on the island, two collections, Felipe Lázaro's *Poetas cubanas en Nueva York: Antología breve / Cuban Women Poets in New York: A Brief Anthology*, and Francisco Morán's *Island of My Hunger: Cuban Poetry Today*, foreground the work of exiles. Lázaro's collection, published in 1991, follows his monolingual anthology of both male and female New York Cuban poets from three years earlier. The five women poets in the later anthology, Magali Alabau, Alina Galliano, Lourdes Gil, Maya Islas, and Iraida Iturralde, left Cuba as children or teenagers, and at the time of publication, their ages range from 37 to 46. They write in Spanish and maintain strong cultural connections to the island but have developed as writers in the U.S. Except for Magali Alabau, they all translate their own work.

In her introduction to *Poetas cubanas en Nueva York*, scholar Perla Rozencvaig states that the anthology works to correct the marginalized situation of both Cuban exile poetry and women's poetry, to "confirm that in exile, there are vibrant voices of women ready to transform daily language into an authentic poetic voice" (17–18). She argues that the work in the collection, though it was written in the U.S., is fundamentally Cuban (13). She also tries to anticipate and defuse the common criticism that Cuban exile writing is deformed by distorted memories and an obsessive nostalgia for a lost island Eden, by what Ricardo Ortiz calls "the projection into the past of the lost, mourned, and necessarily idealized object of desire" (136). Rozencvaig clarifies that, though in their poetry memory can be seen molding and remolding disjointed images of a lost homeland, "a careful reading of their collective work reveals a well-defined historical consciousness, which is not to say that they idealize their past" in their native land or that they seek refuge in that past, as previous generations have done (13). She acknowledges that the poems are suffused with backward glances but clarifies that they stop short of indulging in a kind of nostalgia that sinks into self-pity and fosters simplistic politicizing. Though she broaches the question of a "historical consciousness," she is reticent on the question, which is likely to be frustrating; for the reader who has sought out a collection of Cuban poetry, the relationship between individual poetic remembrance and the public historical record is a crucial issue, not something to be bracketed as Rozencvaig suggests. Instead of delineating the poets' relationship to history, the introduction focuses on their interior experience of exile. Rozencvaig underlines the poets' feeling of living between contrasting cultures and notes the ways in which lived duality can be both empowering and bewildering (13). The bilingual nature of the anthology itself echoes this complex and conflicted biculturalism encoded in the poems.

After sketching the fundamental questions relating to memory and identity, Rozencvaig draws on psychoanalysis and feminist literary theory to construct frameworks for the interpretation of each poet's work,

whose individual poems are grouped conceptually. The themes she finds recurring in the anthology are nostalgia, trauma, loss, doubled identity, and longing for wholeness. Given this thematic orientation and the more polysemic poetic language found throughout the collection, *Poetas cubanas en Nueva York* occupies new terrain rather than directly confronting the openly declaratory poems in the pro-Revolutionary anthologies that precede it. The work in this collection is more inward and denser with ambiguity. The poems “transform daily language,” to use Rozencaig’s aforementioned characterization, rather than use it in the service of direct political statement.

Magali Alabau is the only poet of the five whose work is not self-translated. The translator, Anne Twitty, effectively communicates the psychological intensity of Alabau’s untitled long poem, whose first line is “Trata de desatar las cuerdas, el cinturón de tantos gritos” (Try to untie the chords, the belt of so many cries). The poem dramatizes the way painful family memories warp and refract under the influence of emotion and imagination. It reveals family traumas and fractures them into oblique images. At the eye of the vortex of conflicted memories lies the lost homeland itself, which is variously evoked as a Pandora’s box of repressed memories (26), a “broken island” (31) (“una isla rota” [30]) that forms the setting of imaginary games, and, finally, “an unbroken island” (33) (“una isla completa” [32]) that the speaker and her sister, hoping against hope, imagine carrying with them safely across the sea. Cuba and family are inextricable in the childhood memories of the speaker; where one is broken, so is the other. Childish wishes that the family be mended are echoed in the image of an island whose pieces come back together to hold and protect the speaker. Twitty’s semantic choices work to convey the intensity of the poem’s psychological drama. Where Alabau evokes Cuba as “un baúl amarrado / lleno de prohibiciones” (26), Twitty has “a trunk bound with straps / full of the forbidden” (27). The Anglophone reader senses the concreteness of the image, while the psychological depth of “prohibiciones” registers via the similarly resonant “the forbidden.” Also, rather than render the “isla completa” mechanically as a “complete island,” she reflects the more emotionally charged, and textually relevant adjective “unbroken,” forming a connection to the previous appearance of the “broken island.”

The other four poets in *Cuban Women Poets in New York* self-translate, a phenomenon that requires specific theoretical framing, given that translation’s function as rewriting is intensified when poet and translator are the same person. In *Translation and Understanding*, Sukanta Chaudhuri asserts that self-translators feel a “proprietary right” to “claim in unique degree the translator’s function of modifying and remaking the original” (48). Traditional notions like fidelity to an original, which have worked to restrict translational agency, fall away more easily when the poet transitions from writing to translational rewriting. The Greek poet

Paschalis Nikolaou suggests that self-translation be viewed as “more of a double writing process than a two-stage reading-writing activity” (24–5). This doubling threatens unitary notions of the self and disrupts texts. Nikolaou describes self-translation as “anarchic,” “a destabilizing dance of associations that accelerates self-reflexivity, quickens the awareness of the materiality of words. It fosters a sense of plurality, undecidability and ambiguity” (28).

Rewriting, doubling, and destabilization proliferate in Lourdes Gil’s translation of her poem “Como arista de Cuba el zapateo.” The title might be stiffly translated as “Like a Cuban Cliff, the *Zapateo*”; Gil uses “A Cuban Folk-Dance at the Edge.” In the Cuban *zapateo* a male and female dancer tap the floor rhythmically with their feet. In the poem Gil compares three ambivalent encounters with “a self-absorbed boy” (“niño ensimismado” [74]).¹² These encounters connect with the image of courtship that the traditional dance calls forth. The boy is addressed by the speaker in the informal second person pronoun *tú*. In the first stanza, he flees a dark space charged with the possibility or impossibility of an erotic encounter, with “a shielded frown.” In the second, eroticism takes on playfully aggressive tones, as the speaker stages an “ambush” (“celada” [74]) and the boy runs off to the safety of his “epigones” (epígonos [74]). In the final stanza, staginess comes to the fore as speaker and boy stand on a platform or dais that faces “the unknown” (“lo desconocido” [74]). Artifice comes to form a central theme as the boy approaches the speaker in an attempt at romantic conquest that relies on “mimicked” erudition (“todo mímica” [74]) but ends, unresolved, in a Cuban folk dance that feels to the speaker like “a breath of wind from our native land” (“suspiro del país” [74]). The boy with whom the speaker engages in the uncertain dances of attraction and squabbling represents Cuba, in his metonymic connection to the sand of a Cuban beach in the first stanza, to a patio in Havana in the second, and to the *zapateo* of the third. The speaker’s ambivalent attraction to the boy expresses similar feelings for an abandoned country, and the boy’s youth, along with the childlike play evoked in the poem’s action, reflect the fact that the homeland was left during childhood. The poem shifts scenes, echoing the dramatic gesturing between the two figures. In this way, the speaker’s confrontation with her Cuban past takes on layers of mediation: a return to Cuba can be staged, but never lived.

As Nikolaou asserts, self-translation at first seems compatible with autobiography. An auto-translator may indeed “feel an obligation to recapture a former self” (27). Nonetheless, Nikolaou, speaking from his own creative experiences, describes how self-translation complicates simple communicative dynamics (28). Where the origin that the original poem ambiguously evokes is an early childhood in Cuba, the starting point of Gil’s translational rewriting is the poem itself. Where the original text dramatizes the movements of a young self who finds herself

onstage, looking out onto the darkness of the unknown, the translation strives to re-enact the adult poetic act of remembrance that placed her there. Chaudhuri captures something of the identity paradox we observe here when he states that the self-translator “cannot easily be other than himself [herself]; but the task of translation demands that he [she] must be” (49).

Gil’s translation comes out wordier than the original as she strives to clarify the nuances of her own images. In this way her English rendering calls attention to the arduousness of liminality, of living different languages and cultures at once, an experience amplified by the fact that the speaker of the poem psychologically inhabits the present and the past at once.¹³ The culturally specific “soplo los garbanzos” (74), literally “I blow on the garbanzos,” gets clarified as “[I] cool the stew” (75). Her efforts at clarification flow into elaboration. In the second stanza, the speaker taunts the boy with “Y rodarás a tus epígonos / lamentador de los excesos” (74), literally “And you will roll away to your epigones / lamenting the excesses.” Gil expands the images with “And you will wander to your epigone / in shallow shame, / mourning indulgence” (75). The phrase “shallow shame” calls attention to itself through alliteration and seeks to signal an affective nuance the self-translator worries would otherwise be lost. The line between elaboration and re-writing is at times fuzzy: “The self-absorbed boy who draws herbaria with sand” (translation mine) (“niño ensimismado que dibuja herbarios con arena” [74]) is interpreted for the reader as “a child absorbed in pressing twigs / against the many-colored sand” (75).

In Maya Islas’s poems “La Habana 1” and “La Habana 2” the homeland is similarly evoked with a nostalgia shot through with imagination and desire. As Rozencvaig notes in the introduction, Islas’s images dramatize manifold narratives of return to a Cuba that constantly morphs under the pressures of memory and desire (17). Havana is personified in the first text as a volatile adolescent girl, charged with erotic and generative power. She is home to inhabitants who are imagistically fused with the city itself, and both the city and its human manifestations give off a kind of magic glow. In the second poem, the speaker situates herself in northern exile, from which her mind’s eye glimpses a bright Havana that teems with historical and mythological imagery. Poseidon showers the city with coins, a reference to Havana’s history as a wealthy hub of colonial maritime commerce. A rowdy carnival procession courses through its streets, dissolving the physical city into a space of revelry, abundance, and joy. The poem closes with the image of singing and drinking female sailors who play the role of oracles who possess a mysterious secret. The timeframe referenced at the poem’s conclusion is that of the exiled speaker in her house decorated with northern fruit. The Havana of memory and imagination, a space where oranges abound instead of apples, offers the speaker an escape from the distress of her exile.

The Anglophone reader of Maya Islas's self-translations is largely given access to the movements of memory, imagination, and desire that animate the imagery of the original texts, though the English rendering reads like a palimpsest, a surface text with fissures that show its origin in the Spanish language. At times there are errors and awkward preposition usage. Lawrence Venuti refers to as "minoritizing" those translations that call attention to themselves by refusing to assimilate the original into a fluent target language that produces an illusion of transparency. Translation practices that "reveal the translation to be in fact a translation," can help "cultivat[e] a heterogeneous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves," and Venuti asserts a preference for them, given the critical and political work they can do through language (*Scandals* 11). Venuti's perspective helps the reader to see the rough surface of Islas's translations as a point of entry into new expressive possibilities for the English language. Nonetheless, returning our attention to the poem and the anthology's goal of exploring diverse female psychological experiences, one must also recognize a cost. A crucial moment of erasure occurs where the gender specificity of female sailors is lost. The connection between the femininity of the island and the female subjectivity of the speaker is important, and the obscuration of the gender of the mariners, along with their allusive connection in the poem to the tradition of female oracles and seers, represents a significant loss, not only for Islas's poem, but for the anthology as a whole, whose role is to confirm the existence of strong female poetic voices.

In both Gil's and Islas's self-translations, the doubling of the self that Nikolaou notes takes on a particular poignancy given the poets' status as exiles in the United States. The Cuban self that elaborates the original, in both cases, bears a difficult relationship to a migrant self that struggles to recreate the private experience of remembrance and loss for an Anglophone readership that approaches the texts not only from a foreign linguistic and cultural position, but most likely from the point of view of a life untouched by the challenges of exile. Where Gil elaborates, using less compact language in an effort to explicate the succinct poetic juxtapositions of her original poems, Islas offers a word-for-word rendering shot through with the otherness of Spanish semantics and syntax. For the bilingual reader, Gil and Islas's original poems and their translations, when read as interrelated, form a kind of self-referential bilingual testament to painful fissures of identity. Access to these poetic and personal complexities inherent in self-translation is one of the many important effects released by bilingual anthologies. The monolingual reader, on the other hand, encounters what Venuti calls a minoritized, heterogeneous poetic discourse in an English that has been injected with new and strange expressive possibilities. The final lines of Gil's "A Cuban Folk Dance at the Edge" offer a sense of this experience: "The polar coordinate is sealed / with Hamlet's method / a fresh breath from the land, a native dance-step" (75).

Though it includes work by poets residing in Cuba, Francisco Morán's 2007 anthology *Island of My Hunger* foregrounds the work of exiles. Morán, who left Cuba in the 1990s, explains in his introduction the transnational geography his collection emerges from: Cuban poetry sketches novel cartographies, "transforming countries into escape routes rather than fixed places" (10). Beneath this undermining of physical geography through the emergencies and provisionalities of emigration, one finds deep fissures, like "the ongoing tension between the homogenous official definition of who Cubans are and ... younger writers' vision of a culture in breakdown and flight" (10). The poems in *Island of My Hunger* attest to the fact that Cubaness possesses two contradictory qualities. Through the phenomenon of emigration, a sense of a shared cultural identity extends beyond the delineated geographical space of the nation, while at the same time, complex fracturings of cultural coherence show themselves to have always been occurring even within the seemingly homogenous social space of Revolutionary Cuba. In the end, through this effort to foreground multiple *cubanidades*, Morán resists communism's attempts to impose artificial unity (10). Of particular use in contesting enforced conformity is the "reclaiming [of] the body and its desires" (11) that Morán finds in so much of contemporary Cuban poetry, including his own. Bodies express individuality in resistance to the homogenizing pressures of an ideological collective founded on the implication that difference is dangerous. The homoeroticism that recurs in Morán's collection is doubly devious. To start with, the expression of sexual desire is the expression of individuality, while homosexual desire adds a second layer of aberration from Cuban communism's use of myths of restrictive masculinity in its perpetual war against the threatening, corrupting, feminizing influences of American capitalism. In addition to the body, language forms a site of difference and resistance for Morán. In the poetry of *The Island of My Hunger*, he seeks to address the basic dilemma that ideological rhetoric assails the Cuban citizen constantly, fostering a "redundant, parroting" cultural discourse in which novelty is impossible (11).

Through both wordplay and humorous eroticism, Morán's poem "Diálogo con la serpiente," translated by James Nolan as "Conversations with the Serpent," operates at both of the fundamental sites of deviance and difference highlighted in the anthology's introduction—the verbal and the corporeal. In a lighthearted evocation of the classical archetype of the *militia amoris*, the speaker of the first canto offers a series of friendly instructions to an unidentified listener with regards to the proper handling of a phallic serpent that is evoked as both appealing and dangerous. The second canto describes a sexual entanglement that consists of both pleasure and combat. The speaker does not indicate who is thus engaged, but implies that the figure is male, given the masculine ending of an adjective used to describe him. The third canto swerves from

the comically erotic to the unsettling images of guts and a knife (22). At this surprising moment, the *militia amoris* ceases to be a vehicle for humor and draws back the curtain on a deeper entanglement of sex and violence. In this way the poem participates in what Merrill Cole identifies as an archetype of homoerotic discourse: “since the troubadours, Western poetry has rarely spoken of love, desire, and pleasure without concurrently invoking the specter of death. Remembering Sodom and Sappho, Western discourse also marries representations of homoeroticism to catastrophe” (11). The poem then veers again, ending with an ironic evocation of a female virgin. Morán engages in devilish play here, mocking both the attitude of the unnamed seeker of sexual satisfaction and the Christian idea of the virgin birth. This heretical evocation of the Nativity underscores the Biblical resonances of the figure of the serpent itself. Translator James Nolan conveys the light tone that characterizes most of the poem, finding humorous sonorities and managing semantics so as to reflect Morán’s juxtaposition of high and low register explorations of sexual desire. In doing so, he offers the reader a means of access to the poem’s broader conceptual play.

A useful poem to examine alongside Morán’s is “Vestido de novia,” by Norge Espinosa, a Cuban poet residing on the island. In the poem Espinosa elaborates on the figure, in Federico García Lorca’s poem “Oda a Walt Whitman,” of a boy trying on a wedding dress in a dark closet. His title plays on the grammatical ambiguity of “vestido,” which can be read as both the adjective “dressed” or the noun “dress.” Espinosa echoes García Lorca’s lament of the dangers and frustrations inherent in the lives of men who defy society’s definition of masculinity. The speaker asks a series of unanswered questions that underline what is unattainable in the boy’s life: womanhood, satisfying romantic relationships, safety from physical abuse. The poem opens and closes with images that explore both vision and mirroring to foreground the conflict between the exterior, social image of the boy and his inner feeling of who he is.¹⁴

Nolan is again the translator, and in his rendering, “Dressed Up as a Bride,” he faces a series of difficult decisions posed by Espinosa’s wordplay. The ambiguity of “vestido” must be resolved in English translation; “dressed” and “dress” are not homonyms. Nolan’s choice of the adjective focuses attention on the physical and psychological situation of the young man, whereas the noun would have established that a metonymic relationship between clothing and person organizes the conceptual and affective movements of the poem. At times Nolan resists adapting the original language to attempt parallel dualities of signification. Nonetheless, the translation is not simply an exercise in resignation to semantic loss. There are many moments where choices snap a line into focus, offering the reader a vivid sense of the suffering that comes from violating society’s gender expectations. The translation mirrors the original’s plays on the intersection among body, sexuality,

identity, and marginalization in a way that stretches semantics but holds true to the conceptual thrust of the poem as a whole. Nolan intensifies some descriptions to compensate for the kinds of losses that occur when the polysemic richness of certain terms in the original cannot be brought across directly. At times a translator feels like an actor making sure they are heard in the back of the theater; additions of emphasis are necessary because there is always the danger that a translation might flatten the tone or lose the effects of mutual reinforcement among words that possess compatibilities or interactivities not available in the target language system. For this reason, Nolan takes advantage of certain opportunities to make vivid tonal and imagistic gestures.

Academic, Popular and Poetic Readerships

Katherine Hedeem's monolingual anthology *Nothing Out of This World: Cuban Poetry 1952–2000* is unlike any other collection studied here in its explicit insistence that it be read from a specific literary theoretical standpoint. Cuban poet and literary scholar Víctor Rodríguez Núñez makes it clear in his introduction that the anthology should be used in Anglophone academic contexts as a means for developing an understanding of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism in literature. Drawing on Bakhtin's ideas in "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," Rodríguez Núñez states that in *Nothing Out of This World* the reader will find examples of a poetry that resists falling into the solipsistic traps of lyric monologism. Instead, the poems assert a consciousness of the other and its interconnection with the self. Rodríguez Núñez echoes what Bakhtin identifies as the dangers inherent in the postures of lyric poetry, which reach their height in Romanticism: the poetic hero exists on a virtual plane where he lives a life of "pure self-experience" (Bakhtin 168). The dialogic consciousness that opposes lyric solipsism is not a social consciousness as theorized by communism, one that subsumes the individual within the collective. In spite of the Marxist dimension of Bakhtin's thought, Rodríguez Núñez clarifies that dialogic poetry is incompatible with both Cuban communism and Calvinist capitalism: "in dialogic poetry individuality is affirmed as individualism is denied, and the result is the construction of an insubordinate poetic subject, a social subject, who challenges any hierarchical, authoritarian system" (15).¹⁵ Bakhtin provides a language not only for theorizing a subjectivity capable of resisting ideology, but also for identifying what is good and bad in Cuban poetry. Rodríguez Núñez laments the rise in Cuba, above all during the 1970s, of "a barely tropicalized Socialist Realism ... poetry ... written by hired hands compliant with official thought" (23). The rise of this fossilized aesthetic form leads to the suppression of critical stances, formal innovation, and conceptual difficulty. Socialist realism's purported clarity, despite its assertions of social responsibility, is not dialogic because it

presupposes a passive reader. Though they deem themselves responsible, socialist realists do not respond authentically to the other, and the other does not respond in any real way to them.

The dialogic poems included in the anthology are explicitly directed toward reception in an academic context that transcends both the authorial partisanship and the readerly passivity that Hedeén and Rodríguez Núñez see in monologic poetry. They imagine their collection's reception taking place in a classroom whose environment is conditioned by the values of critical nonconformity and intellectual rigor. The exercise of reading *Nothing Out of This World*, a monolingual anthology with a paratextual apparatus that steers the reader so directly toward the implementation of a specific interpretive apparatus, is completely distinct from the process of reading anthologies like those of Pereira or Randall, which derive their coherence from an underlying political agenda.

The text that offers the most interesting example of this contrast is "Praise for the Neutrino," Hedeén's translation of Rodríguez Núñez's poem "Elogio del neutrino." At first reading, the translation manifests and multiplies the possibilities of dialogic poetry. Built on a foundation of apostrophe, the original unfolds two conversations at once—one with the neutrino itself and one with Chilean poet Jesús Sepúlveda, to whom the text is dedicated. The translation adds another axis of dialogue, this time between the poet and the translator, who is his colleague and collaborator on a variety of literary projects. The neutrino is at once a metaphor for a peaceful and loving way of being in the world and a representation of Rodríguez Núñez's friend Sepúlveda. The "you" that is evoked through apostrophe reveals a double conversation. With her translation Hedeén enters this dialogic space to introduce the conversation Cuban poet-neutrino-Chilean poet to new readers by re-voicing the light, ironic, friendly tone of the original. The speaker of the original poem addresses the neutrino as "tú." Hedeén must work without recourse to an equivalently informal "you" and so chooses to use contractions—no one's (134), it's (135)—to maintain intimacy and levity. She makes a subtle intervention, appropriately, at a junction of the poem that poses the neutrino as evidence of the interconnectedness of both things and people. Where the speaker of the original poem declares "gracias a ti/ nadie se aleja/ya de nadie y todo tiende a unirse" (114) (thanks to you / now nobody moves away / from anyone and everything tends to come together), Hedeén gives: "thanks to you / no one's far / from anyone now and everything tends to join" (134). Not only does she employ a contraction to recreate the speaker's playful and affectionate attitude; she modulates from movement to being with "no one [is]," compressing the image and amplifying its philosophical and interpersonal message of oneness.

Lorie Marie Carlson and Oscar Hijuelos's *Burnt Sugar/Caña quemada: Contemporary Cuban Poetry in Spanish and English* imagines a popular readership, a fact that makes itself evident in the Editors' Note, which

is designed to attract the non-specialist by arguing that reading Cuban poetry offers access to Cuban culture in general. The book contrasts vividly with Hedeem's collection, which so strictly stipulates the necessity of an academic approach. The editors of *Burnt Sugar* make the kind of broad declarations that are often found on the jacket copy of books aimed at a general readership: Cuba "has always been a nation of poets;" "Cuban culture has music at its core" (xv). This slippery, evocative usage is the language of marketing. Carlson and Hijuelos assert that coherence throughout the collection stems from the fact that the poems evidence a unique means of accessing an elusive essence of cultural identity, something they see as a fundamental property of poetry in general. The texts reveal "their essential 'Cubanness'"; they "reflect a state of mind, an essence" (xv). The difficulty of defining culture is evidenced by the grasping nature of these assertions, though underneath lies the notion that culture is predominantly a matrix of emotional experiences, which manifests itself as a shared sense of "poignancy" (xvi). The readerly experience the anthology implicitly seeks to facilitate is both emotional and social; the poems offer closeness with a cultural other (xv).

Burnt Sugar also distinguishes itself from other anthologies examined here by virtue of being bilingual, with an asterisk. Emilio Ballagas's "Elegía de María Belén Chacón" is left untranslated, which the editors justify by asserting that the poem "presents language so unyielding to translation that it remains in its originality, alone" (xvii). The musicality of Ballagas's language as it mimics the rhythms of traditional rumba is likely what makes it so "unyielding," yet the editors themselves assert music as a defining element of Cuban culture and purport to offer the reader a direct experience of Cubanness. Though it is held out as an element of Cuban culture that is appealing and accessible to the reader, Cuban musicality presents itself as untranslatable, pointing up a tension between the emotional and aesthetic appeal of musicality and its cultural specificity. Untranslatability, which Andrew Chesterman identifies as a translation studies "supermeme" because of its prevalence and appeal, is, of course, a specious concept:

from the linguistic angle, the untranslatability idea looks like a restriction of language to langue only, to language as system; it seems to deny the role played by parole, by what people can do in their actual use of language. Translation is, after all, a form of language use; and from this point of view nothing is untranslatable.

(7)

Making a translation that does something in relation to Ballagas's musicality—mimics, echoes, re-inhabits it—is possible if, as Chesterman points out, translation is understood as act. To argue that Ballagas's poem is untranslatable because it is rooted in sound is to view languages as

hermetic systems, sealed off from each other by their impenetrable structuredness. This line of reasoning reveals its own extremeness when its logical implications are followed: surely semantic, syntactic, syntagmatic, and pragmatic systems within languages are incompatible as well, leading us to the radical position Chesterman summarizes thus: “if translation is defined in terms of equivalence, and since absolute equivalence is practically unattainable, translation must surely be impossible” (6). Arguing a different kind of untranslatability, Carlson and Hijuelos leave Achy Obejas’s “Sugarcane,” Adrián Castro’s “To the Rumba Players of Belén, Cuba ... An Interpretation of a Song ...,” and Lissette Méndez’s “Secretos” in their original form because of “their hybrid use of both English and Spanish” (xvii). The assertion that bilingual poems are untranslatable is also problematic given that historical intimacy with the U.S. has made code switching another essential component of Cuban experience. For the Anglophone reader, the poems’ movements from English to Spanish are a movement from the intelligible to the unintelligible, whereas for the bilingual Cuban poet, they are simply slippages from one plane of culture to another. Though they present a challenge, bilingual poems are not by definition untranslatable, and their complex duality can be represented by attending to what Mohamed A. H. Ahmed identifies as “the uniqueness of bilingual literary texts, where authorial creativity is influenced by the unique practices of bilingualism” (4).

Like *Cuban Women Poets in New York*, Carlson and Hijuelos’s anthology contains examples of self-translation. *Burnt Sugar* differs though, in its inclusion of texts originally written in English that the poet has rendered in Spanish. Rita María Martínez’s translation of her poem “Going Bananas,” an affectionate evocation of her father’s passion for cultivating varieties of banana trees (90), contradicts the anthologists’ assertions of untranslatability. Martínez works with supposedly untranslatable elements as simply another condition of the task of translation rather than seeing them as making the task impossible. Spanish words and phrases in her English poem are left as such in her second rendering. The loss of the code-switching dynamic in the original is then counterbalanced by a non-translation that occurs at the end of the poem. The sweaty t-shirt with the phrase “Going Bananas” that her father wears as he enters the kitchen, arms full of fruit, appears as such in the Spanish, and Martínez even highlights the interlingual flow at work by employing a syntax that sounds like English. By doing so, the Spanish-speaking reader registers the transcultural space in which the poem’s descriptions are situated.

Throughout *Burnt Sugar*, the English text always appears first, whether it is the translation or the original. To get to the Spanish-language text, the reader usually has to turn a page or pages. In most bilingual anthologies, the translation sits on the right-hand page facing the original, in a position of secondariness despite interconnection with its counterpart. Carlson and Hijuelos’s collection privileges the English language both

through primacy and through separation—since the texts often do not face each other, the process of carefully comparing text to its rewriting is discouraged. This fact likely stems from the anthology's intended use as pleasure reading rather than material for academic investigation, though, as we have already seen, the book contradicts itself. It would not be expected that a poem originally written in English would be followed by a translation into Spanish, but such is the case on a number of occasions.

Mark Weiss, editor of the 2009 collection *The Whole Island: Six Decades of Cuban Poetry*, sees poets as his primary readership. Avoiding simplistic political stances, he poses his collection as a means for measuring the differences between how Cuban and Anglophone poets think about poetry itself. The editor states in an interview with Cuban novelist José Manuel Prieto: "I was after translations that could become a part of the dialogue of English-language poetry, influencing perceptions of the possibilities of the art for both poets and readers, while remaining reasonably faithful to the originals." One way domestic poetry can strengthen itself is to analyze a foreign poetry rigorously, without falling back onto the facility of bias. *The Whole Island* is offered as a corrective to the fact that so many anthologies have fallen into the trap of schematizing the complexity of poetic work by Cuban poets in order to "flatter [the] preconceptions" of readers, publishers, and translators themselves (2). Rather than an ideologically facile reading experience, Weiss offers a kaleidoscopic image of the ways poets understand both their homeland and their craft. This image of Cuban poetry challenges the reader through both its inner complexity and its cultural uniqueness (3–4). It is implied that practitioners of the art of poetry are likely to be those most motivated and prepared to digest an anthology designed in this way. To reach his goals, Weiss finds it necessary to avoid the distortions produced by cultural observers from both ends of the political spectrum. Where readers of the left expect a vision of a "Cuba of heroes, where the new man ... has managed to create a society based on cooperation and compassion," their counterparts on the right see only "a gray, joyless, island-wide gulag"; "reality," Weiss cautions, "has always been more complex" (1).

Readers of *The Whole Island*, instead of encountering texts that confirm their preconceptions, are asked to participate in a dialogue between Cuban and U.S. poetries, a conversation complicated and enriched by the fact that poetic cultures in the two nations are so distinct (4–5). Weiss poses his anthology as a challenge, rather than a satisfaction of aesthetic or ideological desires; the poetry is not presented "as North Americans might wish it" (4). In harmony with this intention, the collection often leaves culturally specific references and usages untranslated and offers explanatory notes at the end of the volume, after biobibliographical sketches of each poet. For example, in Rebecca Seiferle's translation of Nicolás Guillén's poem "Guitarra," "*mulata*" (33) appears as such, with

italics calling attention to the foreignness of the term. In the introduction Weiss explains that the term appears in Spanish throughout the anthology to avoid domesticating it by layering it with the racism of the term “mulatto” (4). In Cuba, the adjective describes racial hybridity less insultingly. Weiss’s aim is to allow Guillén’s poem to challenge the U.S. reader by presenting the complexity of racial identity in Cuba in a way that is not predigested for easy use or abuse by ideological agendas. Instead, paratextual resources are offered to spur the reader to engage in their own independent research.¹⁶

As has been seen in many anthologies, stated goals are sometimes contradicted by actual translation decisions. Interesting examples can be found in Rebecca Seiferle’s translations of a selection of poems from Nicolás Guillén’s *El Gran Zoo*, a 1967 collection that presents sociohistorical realities as curious animal specimens. “El hambre,” for example, presents hunger as a voracious beast. In contrast to the preservation of the cultural specificity embodied by the term “mulata,” Seiferle’s translation of “suburbios” (38) in “El hambre” produces a swerve. In the original, Guillén zoomorphizes hunger and the speaker declares that it was ensnared “en la India (suburbios de Bombay)” (38). A “suburbio” here is a slum, a fact supported not only by the general tendency of the term to be used this way in Spanish, but also by the context of the poem’s themes of hunger and violence. Seiferle’s rendering, “in India (Bombay’s suburbs)” (39) attenuates the poem’s political message by blurring the image of hunger originating in poverty. Similarly, Seiferle renders Guillén’s poem “Lynch” as “Lynching” (44), shifting the focus of the poem’s denunciation of racial violence in the U.S. from person to act. By doing so, the translator blurs the conceptual linkage among zoo, animal, and the historical figure of Lynch. This in turn blunts the effect of the poem’s final line, which declares that Lynch has been castrated (44). The poem’s function as fantasy of revenge on racism does not come through clearly, with the secondary effect of obfuscating the Anglophone reader’s appreciation of the highly personal way in which Guillén upheld the Cuban Revolution’s social accomplishments by pointedly criticizing the injustices of U.S. society.

Conclusion

The variety of anthologies surveyed here maps the many routes English speakers have been able to trace through the vast and varied terrain of Cuban poetry since the Revolution. Most obviously, the breadth of texts on offer stems from the diversity of poets, writing inside and outside Cuba, engaging political and personal issues, and employing a range of techniques. Just as importantly, a plurality of editorial approaches has framed Cuban poetic work kaleidoscopically since the 1960s, employing political, psychoanalytical, academic, and commercial approaches. As we

have seen, the translated poems themselves do not always obey the agendas announced by the anthology's paratextual language. Instead translation shows itself to be a mechanism that alternates constantly, often within a single text, between amplifying and muffling political or philosophical agendas. The English speaker who gets their hands on more than one anthology comes to appreciate not only the different political positions Cuban poets take up, but also that not all Cuban poetry is anthemic. Many anthologists design collections meant to show that Cuban poetry cannot be used as a vehicle for reading a preconceived and simplified history of left versus right but should rather be appreciated as showing the thematic breadth poetry naturally possesses in any language. Further, there are collections like Weiss's, which draw the attention to the unique formal and expressive characteristics of the works to enrich the domestic poetics.

Notes

- 1 An organ of the Ministry of Culture, The Instituto Cubano del Libro incorporated the official publishing houses that had been founded during the first years of the Revolution. Its first publication was a 25-cent edition of *Don Quijote* in four volumes, which had an initial press run of 400,000 ("Instituto").
- 2 For documentation and analysis of Piñera's official ostracism, see Anderson and Jambrina.
- 3 The story of the Padilla affair can be traced though the dossier of primary sources compiled by Lourdes Casal. For Padilla's account of the controversy surrounding *Fuera del juego*, and his subsequent imprisonment by the state police, see *Self-Portrait of the Other*, pp. 130–66.
- 4 At the time of the publication of *Poems from Cuba*, Jamaica was experiencing a decline in GDP caused by global economic malaise. At the same time, Prime Minister Michael Manley was implementing moderate socialist reforms (Ledgister 9).
- 5 Cos Causse says of a common Caribbean identity: "el Caribe es una forma de ser, de proyectarse con características propias dentro de este universo. Muy sencillo: estando en Jamaica, donde viví como diplomático de 1973 a 1975, me sentía como en Santiago. En Alemania, por ejemplo, me sentía en otra galaxia" (Cedeño Pineda) (the Caribbean is a way of being, of showing what your particular characteristics are in this universe. It's very simple: being in Jamaica, where I lived as a diplomat from 1973 to 1975, I felt like I was in Santiago [Cuba]. In Germany, for example, I felt like I was in another galaxy).
- 6 Alan R. Davison offers an analysis of the literary significance and political commitments of the magazine in his book-length study. For Randall's reminiscence on the project, see "Words for *El Corno Emplumado*."
- 7 Randall confesses that she made the same mistake in her Cuban poetry number of *El Corno Emplumado*: "I cringe at the paucity of work by good women poets" ("Words" 136).
- 8 Randall refers here to Castro's speech at the 1974 Second Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women, where he both highlights women's increased participation in the workforce under the Revolution and notes the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and cites alarming statistics showing vastly unequal representation in local government positions. "The truth is that objective and subjective factors sustain a situation of

discrimination against women,” he admits (“la realidad es que aún subsisten factores objetivos y subjetivos que mantienen una situación de discriminación con relación a la mujer”). He identifies the “objective” factors: lack of child care and health care. On a “subjective” level he identifies “the problem of an old culture, old habits, old mentalities, old prejudices” (“el problema de una vieja cultura, de viejos hábitos, de viejas mentalidades, de viejos prejuicios”). Here we see that Randall echoes an apologetic discourse coming from the highest levels: social prejudice is a legacy of the past, not a problem endemic to the Revolution itself.

- 9 Randall most likely has in mind Luis Pavón, director of the National Council on Culture from 1971 to 1976.
- 10 A broad-ranging intellectual, Tarn’s interests bridge the fields of anthropology and literature. He has translated a number of Latin American poets, most notably Pablo Neruda.
- 11 Reading it as a contestatory response to Wallace Stevens’s “Academic Discourse at Havana,” Gustavo Pérez-Firmat does detect political resonances in the poem.
- 12 Translations in this initial discussion of the poem are mine.
- 13 Another case of a mode of self-translation that tends heavily toward expansion and explicitation is Ariel Dorfman’s translations of his own work, as analyzed by Munday (208–16).
- 14 For Espinosa’s historical analysis of gay life, homophobia, and queer culture in Cuba, see *Cuerpos de un deseo diferente*.
- 15 Michael Gardiner comments that “like the major Western Marxists (Bloch, Gramsci, Adorno, etc.) Bakhtin’s thought matured during the political and cultural tumult of the interwar years, which produced a libertarian humanist vision of socialism that was inimicably opposed to the authoritarian tendencies of Leninism and Stalin’s ‘barrack communism’” (5).
- 16 For a thorough treatment of the immensely complex question of racial categorization and discrimination in Cuba, see Morales Domínguez.

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3 Marx Goes to Mars?

Cuban Science Fiction in Translation

Though science fiction has been a significant cultural phenomenon in Cuba for six decades, English-speaking readers have not had access to important examples of the genre until somewhat recently. This chapter will examine two conduits through which Anglophone readers can experience some of the stylistic and intellectual breadth of the genre. The first is Andrea L. Bell and Yolanda Molina-Gavilán's 2003 collection *Cosmos Latinos: An Anthology of Science Fiction from Latin America and Spain*, and the second is the series of Cuban sci-fi titles put out by independent publisher Restless Books beginning in 2014. Bell and Molina-Gavilán formulate their collection with classroom use in mind, and their fundamental agenda is to correct a simplified image of Latin American literature among English speakers by presenting texts whose techniques work outside the parameters of the simplified and heavily marketed product for exotic delectation known as magical realism. The way this stylistic heuristic has been perpetuated participates in what Jeremy Munday calls "the image of the exotic, natural Latin America [that] for many years runs through the selection and packaging of texts, the consolidation of certain genres in translation and the reception as seen in the reviews in the press" (50). Restless Books, on the other hand, aims at a non-academic market of educated readers interested in expanding their understanding of global cultures. The publisher markets its Cuban science fiction works in terms of the picture they can offer of the country's complex social and political history.

Cosmos is part of a series by Wesleyan University Press that includes both science fiction and its criticism. The primary market for their series is scholars and students, and as a result a variety of classroom-ready compendia is offered, including *Sisters of Tomorrow: The First Women of Science Fiction*, and *The Wesleyan Anthology of Science Fiction*. The press offers an online teaching guide for the latter volume, including bibliographical information, discussion questions, and sample syllabi. Given its classroom orientation, *Cosmos Latinos* exerts significant pressure on the works it translates through paratexts that direct the reader toward specific interpretations. As we will see, the relationship between translation

and explanatory paratext varies across the three Cuban stories in the collection. Restless Books, on the other hand, was founded in 2013 by Ilán Stavans, Annette Hochstein, and Joshua Ellison to “feed [the] hunger and curiosity” of a progressive and cosmopolitan readership with works by international authors that violate the exoticizing conventions that normally determine what non-domestic works get translated and published (“Restless Books History”). Explicitly defined as a means for fulfilling specific readerly desires, Restless works to develop a non-academic community of readers interested in discovering literary originality. As a result, its deployment of paratext is markedly different. *Cosmos Latinos* uses what Genette calls peritexts, those paratexts that are located inside the book and that are completely determined by the publisher (16), abutting the translations of the literary works with the intent of influencing how they are read. Restless paratexts are epitexts (Genette 344), located outside the covers, in the less immediate context of the publisher’s website and in the online spaces where they are echoed and responded to by readers and reviewers. Genette characterizes the epitext as “not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space” (344). The paratextual language of Restless directs readers toward general ways of contextualizing their readings, but nonetheless the publisher is less forceful in advancing predefined interpretive agendas. As we will see, contrasting deployments of paratext lead to contrasting impacts on the reader’s experience of the translations themselves.

A Brief History of Cuban Futures

Though science fiction was written in Cuba prior to the Revolution, the 1960s are the decade when the genre begins to gain momentum. Juan Carlos Toledano identifies the “founding fathers” from this period as Óscar Hurtado, Ángel Arango, and Miguel Collazo (“Daína Chaviano” 19). Together, these authors produced the foundation for a canon in a compact period, from 1964 to 1968. Hurtado’s contributions are not just to be found in his writings, such as the 1964 novel-in-verse *La ciudad muerta de Korad* (The Dead City of Korad). He also played a crucial role in developing a readership for science fiction in Cuba by editing collections of stories and founding the Dragón series, which published global science fiction, along with detective and fantasy fiction. Arango’s story collections *¿Adónde van los cefalomos?* (Where Are the Cephalomes Going),¹ *El planeta negro* (The Black Planet), and *Robotomaquia* established a mode that recalls such Golden Age science fiction authors as Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein (Yoss, *Quinta dimensión* 62) while still manifesting a Cuban and Marxist point of view. Collazo’s *El libro fantástico de Oaj* (Oaj’s Book of the Fantastic), published in 1966, creates what author and scholar of Cuban science fiction Yoss² describes

as a parodic Cuban riff on Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* (*Quinta dimensión* 64). These early works illustrate a crucial fact: the Cuban science fiction that has achieved both critical respect and an enthusiastic readership participates in an English-language-dominated global genre tradition while at the same time retaining a distinct Cubanness. Nonetheless, this specificity is not simply achieved by staging archetypal science fiction plots in Cuban locales, but also shows itself thematically, tonally, and stylistically.³

The flourishing of the genre in the 1960s was stunted by the government's policy of censorship and Sovietization of the arts in the following decade, when science fiction's agenda of warning society about frightening futures clashed with the Revolution's enforced optimism. As Yoss asserts, officialdom during this repressive period saw science fiction as "pessimistic, antisocial, heretically foreign to the sacred models of socialist realism imported from the USSR" ("pesimista, antisocial, heréticamente ajena a los sagrados modelos de realismo socialista importados de la URSS") (*Quinta dimensión* 65–6). Nonetheless, there was no way of eradicating a form of expression that both satisfied an eager readership and provided such a useful means for exploring the achievements and vulnerabilities of both Cuban society and humanity at large.

The end of the decade saw a relaxation of cultural policy and the beginning of a resurgence. A yearly prize for the best science fiction work by an unpublished author was inaugurated in 1979, signaling official acceptance of the genre. Daína Chaviano's *Los mundos que amo* (*The Worlds I Love*), whose eponymous story depicts a young woman attempting to communicate with extraterrestrials, won in the first competition. Leonardo Gala Echemendía describes Chaviano as "the voice of a generation that does not want to stand still, that feels the urgent need to communicate with the best aspects of the time period in which it finds itself living" ("la voz de una generación que no quiere quedarse detenida, y que siente la necesidad imperiosa de comunicarse con lo mejor del tiempo que le ha tocado vivir") (14), a natural response to the stultifying effects of government policies in the 1970s.

The 1980s saw the publication of three more science fiction-inflected books by Chaviano, including *Amoroso planeta* (*Loving Planet*). This collection includes the story "La anunciación," which we will examine here. Agustín de Rojas followed Chaviano in winning the David for his novel *Espiral* (*Spiral*). This work, along with *Una leyenda del futuro* (*A Legend of the Future*), from 1985, and *El año 200* (*The Year 200*), published in 1990, form the basis for Rojas's revered status among Cuban authors and readers by virtue of their socialist seriousness, their psychological intensity, and their scientific rigor.⁴ During the 1980s, the genre's development was also encouraged by a series of literary workshops named after Óscar Hurtado.

If the 1970s dealt an ideological blow to science fiction, the damage caused by the fall of the Soviet Union and the beginning of what the Cuban government euphemistically dubbed the Special Period in Times of Peace, was more material. The profound economic crisis of the 1990s was accompanied, not coincidentally, by the somewhat belated discovery of a new science fiction subgenre: cyberpunk. Young Cuban writers' attraction to cyberpunk was fueled by the sense that socialism's dreams had failed, and society was nearing a point of breakdown. As Juan Carlos Toledano explains, "the positive socialist hero had never been completely realized, and his failure made way for a new hero who was unhappy with the unfulfilled promises of socialism and capitalism alike: the cyberpunk hero" ("Socialist Realism" 446). Cyberpunk is understood to be born out of the death of the idea of utopia, a generalization that finds support in the Cuban case. Toledano identifies three authors, Vladímir Hernández, Michel Encinosa Fú, and Yoss, as the most important cyberpunk practitioners who show how the Cuban interpretation of the genre "rebels against both socialist realism and imperialistic late-capitalism" ("Socialist Realism" 450). For Fredric Jameson cyberpunk is anti-socialist; in the face of the death of the old utopias it "assumes that capitalism is itself a kind of utopia of difference and variety" (276). Nonetheless, Cuban interpretations tend toward political ambivalence. Two authors we will consider here, Encinosa Fú and Yoss, find in the language of cyberpunk a way of reflecting the complexity of Cuban reality without resorting to ideological simplification.

Cuban science fiction is marked by a distinct inclination toward the use of humor. This can be theorized as stemming from that culturally defining tendency called *choteo*, of which Cuban intellectual Jorge Mañach gives his canonical definition: "a habit of irreverence" rooted in "a repugnance toward all authority" (52) ("un hábito de irrespetuosidad" ... "una repugnancia a toda autoridad" [16]). Over the course of the country's history, material difficulty, frequent political change, and the periodically frustrated ambition to become a fully independent republic have forged the reflex to make light of the serious, to bring the lofty down to earth, and survive daily life through invention and irreverence. Though humor certainly is to be found in English-language science fiction—Douglas Adams's *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* being an evident example—its dominant tone is sober. The humor employed by Cuban science fiction authors takes on different shades, from the dark to the playful, as we will see in the texts we examine here. An important question is how translators gauge the importance of humor in the source text and how important they believe it is to the Anglophone reader's experience. Given that many English-speaking science fiction readers expect the genre to be dominantly serious, it is no surprise that translations might gloss over, or even suppress, comical elements.

Sci-Fi Typologies

To set conceptual parameters for understanding how Cuban authors operate and innovate within the genre horizons of science fiction, it is helpful to start with some of the definitions Carl Malmgren sets forth in *Worlds Apart: Narratology of Science Fiction*. Malmgren establishes that “an SF world ... contains at least one factor of disjunction from the basic narrative world” (9). Disjunction can occur at the level of character, character relationships, objects, phenomena, or even the narrative space itself. But science fiction is not a realm of pure fantasy. Authors are “free to speculate, to fabulate, to invent. But the discourse of the genre does not grant total license,” because the work must always adhere to “the laws of nature and the assumptions of the scientific method” (9). Malmgren draws here on Darko Suvin’s foundational concept of the “novum,” or story element (technology, creature, topography) that does not exist, yet at the same time is scientifically possible (80–81). Science fiction is scientific to its core. It is grounded in “a naturalizing discourse which takes for granted the explicability of the natural universe” (Malmgren 10).

Though this quality marks all examples from the genre, Malmgren perceives a fundamental split between two modes: the extrapolative and the speculative. Extrapolative science fiction is based on “logical projection or extension from existing actualities” (12). It charts future developments based on the circumstances of the author’s contemporary world. Speculative science fiction makes “a quantum leap of the imagination, itself the product of poetic vision or paralogic, toward an entirely *other* state of affairs” (12). The story types Malmgren identifies—Alien Encounter, Alternate Society, Gadget SF, Alternate World, and Science Fantasy—are each subdivided into the extrapolative and the speculative (18). For example, an extrapolative Alien Encounter story would be Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein*, whereas a speculative version would be Stanisław Lem’s *Solaris* (18).

Cyberpunk, for its part, is generally viewed as a subgenre of science fiction focused on concepts of virtual reality, artificial intelligence, chaotic mega-urbanism, criminality, and dystopia. It can be understood within Malmgren’s schema just as other types of science fiction can, though whether it is extrapolative or speculative is not agreed upon, as Brian McHale explains: “while the cyberpunks themselves describe their own world-building practice as extrapolative, other extrapolative SF writers tend to regard them as ... more preoccupied with style and ‘texture’ than with extrapolation” (5). Inspired in different ways by the prototypical 1984 novel *Neuromancer* by William Gibson, cyberpunk style draws from both the hardboiled crime novel and postmodern fiction, while cyberpunk plots tend to play out at least partially in virtual worlds. They are typically set in a future urban dystopia in which dangerous technological and social realities in the author’s real world are extrapolated to extreme degrees.

The technological and social tend to come together in a dynamic whereby new inventions are monopolized by megalomaniacal individuals or shadowy cabals to oppress the masses and torture the marginalized. The cyberpunk hero is typically an outcast who challenges this tyrannical order. To use Malmgren's system, it could be said that cyberpunk's disjunctions or innovations operate dominantly on the level of topography (16). Its most striking feature tends to be its sprawling, overcrowded, multifarious, and violent urban spaces—what McHale characterizes as “microworlds ... collapsed together in the heterotopian space of a future megalopolis” (10). Furthermore, McHale asserts that cyberpunk tends to explore not only its own topographical “texture,” but also the philosophical questions of death and the stability or instability of the self (6).

Given the crucial question of Cuban science fiction's relationship to Marxism, it is useful to consider Raymond Williams's assertions about the connections among science fiction, utopia, and socialism. The theorist describes four archetypes in utopian fiction: the paradise or hell, the externally altered world, the willed transformation, and the technological transformation (203). The willed transformation, “in which a new kind of life has been achieved by human effort” (203) is the mode of utopian writing socialist science fiction typically operates in. Williams offers a crucial characterization of the socialist in contradistinction to other utopian modes: “the technology need not be only a marvelous new energy source, or some industrial resource of that kind, but can be also a new set of laws, new abstract property relations, indeed precisely new social *machinery*” (208, emphasis in original). This strain of utopian science fiction avoids fetishizing the startling new technology or physical world-transformation, concerning itself instead with a social novum, an amazing innovation in how people interrelate and cooperate. This model is useful for understanding Agustín de Rojas's novel *Una leyenda del futuro*, which we will examine below. Nonetheless, a great deal of the Cuban science fiction available in English translation is not clearly Marxist, especially in the case of the anthology *Cosmos Latinos*, a fact that likely has surprised, and perhaps frustrated, many readers.

Imagined Readerships

It can be speculated that there are three modes of potential interest in Cuban science fiction among English-speaking readers. These can be defined as mindsets that determine what the reader wants to get from the text. By defining these mindsets, we can begin to theorize the readerly agendas brought to bear on the translations and the extent to which translations serve or frustrate readers' desires. The first mindset is that of the reader who is dominantly interested in science fiction and approaches a Cuban work as another example from what they see as a globally homogeneous genre. Malmgren, Suvin, and McHale's typologies describe all science

fiction works for this type of reader, regardless of language. Furthermore, Cuban specificities are not only of less interest, but might in some cases be taken as a distraction from the experience of mental immersion in an imaginative world that is not expected to be mapped by the cultural boundaries of the present. The Cubanness of a science fiction text might feel like a diminishment of readerly pleasure, a displacement from the fantastic to the mundane. However, it is important not to take this speculation too far. Christopher Menadue and Susan Jacups's 2016 survey of science fiction and fantasy readers suggests that they tend to be formally educated, see themselves as flexible thinkers who are "open to all sides of an argument," and feel that their favored genre "opens readers up to new ideas." Though the pure science fiction reader may be less interested in the cultural specificity of some works, it would be unfair to imagine that they would be entirely hostile to cultural difference in a science fiction text. The second reader, on the other hand, can be imagined to be dominantly interested in Cuba. They approach the work as a means for gaining cultural and historical information. This reader might disregard or become impatient with exactly what the first reader relishes: precisely those scientific and futuristic commonplaces that define the genre. Insights into two general topics are most likely paramount for this second type of reader: the particularities of Cuban culture and the failures or successes of the Cuban Revolution. Some works studied here are more readable in this way, like Yoss's *A Planet for Rent*, which sets stories about the desperation of the Special Period in a world of spaceships and teleporters. Michel Encinosa Fú's "Like the Roses Had to Die," in contrast, constructs a densely populated cyberpunk world that does not easily map onto twenty-first-century Cuba. Finally, there is the reader who is interested precisely in Cuban science fiction. This reader enjoys both the cultural descriptiveness of the text and its imaginativeness, without experiencing dissonance between the two.

The three readerly mindsets we have sketched here in turn suggest distinct attitudes toward translation. The first reader will want to be immersed in an English-language text that reads like a typical Anglophone science fiction work of the same type. This reader would approach Michel Encinosa Fú's work, for example, with the expectation that it offer an experience similar to that of reading *Neuromancer*. To a certain extent, this kind of frictionless readerly experience is available, given that Cuban science fiction participates in the global language of its genre, and, as Yoss asserts, many of its questions translate universally:

¿quiénes somos, de dónde venimos, a dónde vamos? Sobreviviremos el desastre ecológico al que nosotros mismos nos estamos precipitando? ¿Y al stress informático del cual Internet es el síntoma más visible? ¿Estamos solos en el universo? ¿Qué ocurrirá cuando se logre al fin la Inteligencia Artificial?

(*Quinta dimensión* 79)

(who are we; where do we come from; where are we going? Will we survive the ecological disaster we ourselves are hastening? And the information stress of which the Internet is the most visible symptom? Are we alone in the universe? What will happen when Artificial Intelligence is finally perfected?)

Yet despite the seeming universality of the questions Cuban science fiction asks, Lawrence Venuti points out the danger of the readerly mindset that expects no challenges from a translation. He warns in *The Scandals of Translation* that “fluency is assimilationist”: it so thoroughly adopts the norms of the receiving context’s aesthetic and ideological expectations that it creates the illusion that it is, in fact, the original text (12). Each translation examined here seeks a certain degree of fluency, though none attempts to suppress cultural or literary specificities for the sake of offering a simple and comfortable sci-fi read.

The second reader will be hungry for clues to contemporary Cuban reality despite the temporal and spatial estrangement the science fiction text evokes. A translation that elides, obscures, or glosses over cultural specificities in favor of ease of reception according to the expectations of the genre will frustrate this reader’s hopes. Even if the questions raised are future-oriented, this reader is likely to process them as information about the present. Yoss identifies the specifically Cuban questions in sci-fi written at the turn of the millennium: “¿seremos en el futuro inmediato una reserva turística mundial? ¿Cuál es el futuro que nos espera como país subdesarrollado en un mundo neoliberal? ¿Después del socialismo (y/o de Fidel) qué?” (*Quinta dimensión* 79) (will we, in the immediate future, become a world tourist park? What future awaits us as an underdeveloped country in a neoliberal world? After socialism [and/or Fidel] what?). The reader who is mining Cuban science fiction for answers to these questions will find varying degrees of satisfaction throughout the texts analyzed here, most likely gravitating toward the work of Rojas and Yoss. *Cosmos Latinos* is likely to be somewhat frustrating for this reader for two reasons, given that it is not exclusively a Cuban anthology and the Cuban stories it does contain refuse to offer easy anthropological or historicist interpretations.

The third type of reader, who is interested in both the generic conventions of science fiction and the cultural history of Cuba, will look for the translation to keep both generic universals and cultural details in focus. This reader can be imagined as “ideal,” from the point of view of author, translator, and publisher, but is likely to be less common. The website for Restless Books has this reader in mind as it includes introductory language and sample reviews that speak to both the science fiction credentials and the Cubanness of the texts.

No matter their expectations, the Anglophone reader of a translated work of science fiction is faced with two levels of estrangement, each of which can be intensified or attenuated based on prior readerly experience.

The first grows out of the encounter with the creative elements of science fiction itself, and the second is generated by the way Cuban realities or points of view confront the reader. If the first is the estrangement of the beyond, the second is the experience of cultural difference in the earthly here and now. Both experiences turn to face their own opposites, nonetheless. The novelty of science fiction always falls within certain expected parameters, whether those be defined by the genre or by Suvin's definition of the novum as innovation that obeys shared scientific understandings. Science fiction readers are accustomed to this interplay of the new and the expected, of surprise and satisfaction. Readers may bring a similar mindset to their interpretation of cultural information, expecting difference to occur within familiar parameters, such as those that posit that all Cubans are passionate, that Cuban culture is inherently group-oriented, or even that the Cuban Revolution is pure glory or pure evil. Reading Cuban science fiction potentially upsets the balance between novelty and confirmation of presuppositions for the Anglophone reader.

***Cosmos Latinos*: Directed and Divergent Readings**

Bell and Molina-Gavilán open their introductory essay to *Cosmos Latinos* by stating the problem their volume is meant to solve: it “introduces readers to a rich and exciting body of literature that most English speakers are unaware even exists” (1). The editors cite both the most proximate cause for this state of affairs—“the scarcity of SF texts translated into English” (2)—and factors operative on the level of aesthetics: “a distorted image of Latin American literature” that values only those texts that satisfy Anglophone appetites for magical realism (2). This emphasis on correcting a stunted idea of Latin American and peninsular literary style motivates the editors to include texts based on criteria of stylistic originality, and the result is that the Cuban works chosen would most likely frustrate the reader primarily interested in transparent messages about the island's culture and politics. Bell and Molina-Gavilán present 27 texts written in nine different countries, situating the works within a paratextual apparatus that discourages simplistic expectations about content and style. Their introduction provides a historical overview of the development of the genre starting in the nineteenth century, and they anchor their chronology in relevant historical, political, economic, and technological causes for periods when publications were abundant or scarce. They describe the influence of Soviet science fiction during the 1960s, emphasizing the socialist content that translated so readily between communist contexts, and mention the cultural freeze that occurred during the 1970s (9). They characterize the 1990s as a healthy period for the genre in Cuba and throughout the Hispanophone and Lusophone world (10) and foresee continued development (13). In processing the introduction's chronology, the reader approaching *Cosmos Latinos* with a focused interest in Cuba

must be attentive to those ways in which Cuban political and cultural history has differed from that of Spain or Argentina and not fall into the error of seeing the editors' broad chronology as perfectly describing the Cuban case.

In a subsection titled "Themes and Theory," the editors suggest "some of the qualities that make contemporary SF narrative in Spanish and Portuguese so distinctive": its preference for the social sciences over the hard sciences, its interest in probing Christian beliefs, and its humoristic tendency (14). The danger of invalid generalization re-emerges for the Anglophone reader in this section, so Bell and Molina-Gavilán are careful about the breadth of their statements. Cuban science fiction can be broadly described according to the themes laid out in the introduction, though the first two describe it most weakly. The best-known contemporary writer, Yoss, has a solid foundation in the sciences, especially biology. To be fair, the editors do mention that he is an exception (14). And despite the popularity of Daína Chaviano's story "La anunciación," Cuban science fiction is often influenced by Marxist historical materialism and as a result is generally less interested in Christian doctrine. Thus, the fact that many readers' first access has come through Bell and Molina-Gavilán's volume carries with it both the advantages and the dangers of situating Cuban science fiction in relation to works from such a broad spectrum of countries. Aware of this issue, the editors inflect their chronologies and thematic generalizations by emphasizing points of divergence; given both their cultural differences and their radically contrasting political situations in the 1960s, there is no way Spain and Cuba would produce similar science fiction during that period.

In addition to the introduction, the bio-bibliographical notes that precede each author's work shape the Anglophone reader's experience. Pertinent biographical details, like Ángel Arango's background in aviation, or Daína Chaviano's early readings of English-language science fiction classics, steer readers' understanding. The result is that the audience is prompted to pay attention to the description of the spaceship that lands on a mysterious planet in Arango's "The Cosmonaut" or to search for classic sci-fi influences on Chaviano's rewriting of the Gospel of Luke. The editors offer a brief characterization of each author's stylistic tendencies and themes. Nonetheless, the degree of harmony between the discussion offered in the note and the story that follows varies among the three examples considered here. As a result, the reader's experience of the transition from paratext to text differs in each case.

The first Cuban text in *Cosmos Latinos* is Ángel Arango's "The Cosmonaut" ("El cosmonauta"), translated by Andrea L. Bell. The short story was written in 1964 but did not appear in print until nine years later (63). To use Malmgren's typology, it is an "alien encounter" story, which by definition "broaches the question of Self and Other" (54). Arango's story typifies what Malmgren asserts is "the model and

the thematic thrust of all alien encounters, defining the Self from the estranged perspective of the Other" (55). Arango constructs this alien other in a speculative mode. As the story opens on the scene of a distant planet, we observe the strange play of two creatures named Git and Nuí. Git is a male creature with tentacles, while the female Nuí's defining characteristic is her powerful pincers. We soon discover that their games lead to reproduction; when Nuí bites off a piece of one of Git's tentacles, a new creature grows. Reproduction marks the creatures as radically alien: the process occurs across species, the female is the aggressive party, the male gives birth, and finally, the whole process is presented as innocent play. A third creature named Mut stands by, observing the antics. The author confronts the reader with what Gregory Benford calls "unknowable aliens" (56–7), which stand opposite their "anthropocentric" counterparts (53–6). In doing so, Arango sets the conditions for the failure of human comprehension of this thoroughly strange other.

Soon, a flash appears in the sky. An astronaut makes an emergency landing, opens the door to his ship, and looks out on the strange creatures eyeing him with curiosity. Human and aliens attempt communication, to no avail. The explorer is nonetheless confident that the beings see him as their new ruler. After the three aliens speculate among themselves about what kind of creature the man is, Nuí can no longer contain her curiosity, and playfully bites off the man's arms, thinking they are like Git's tentacles. The story ends with the man bleeding to death while the uncomprehending Nuí continues chopping with her pincers.

The story cautions against colonial hubris. Though neither party acts out of malice, their radical differences result in the impossibility of communication, which in turn leads to a deadly accident. The fact that incompatibilities of language are a central theme in the story sets up an ironic circularity within the English translation of the text. The Anglophone reader is encouraged to contemplate the translated nature of the text they are reading, and the unsettling question of that translation's futility is hinted at. What if the fluency of Bell's translation is a mask for the underlying impossibility of understanding across boundaries of cultural difference? What if violence is the ever-possible implication of this? Though Bell's rendering mostly offers the Anglophone reader a fluent and accessible read, she nonetheless makes a crucial choice that preserves the foreignness of the original text. Bell leaves the sound of Nuí's pincers the way it appears in the Spanish original: "*choc, choc, choc*" (65), marked by italics that call attention to their status as foreign words. Onomatopoeic language is, of course, not universal. It is linguistically particular, as any child learning the wildly unique sounds animals make in different languages can attest. It is significant that this reminder of foreignness is situated at the dramatic axis formed by the sound of Nuí's pincers as it recurs throughout the text. In its first occurrences, the sound announces difference. Then, at the story's gory end, the sound punctuates

the swift contradiction of the colonialist's confidence that he can not only communicate with, but be warmly welcomed by, the creatures he sees as his natural subjects. The radically undigested nature of uncomfortable sound stands out in the translation.

Bell chooses to avoid paraphrase and renders the action and tone of the original in natural English. For example, she maintains a logical connection to the comment in the preceding note about Arango's background in aviation by rendering the mechanics of the spacecraft's emergency landing carefully. She also blends accuracy with naturalness as she renders the attitudes of both the cosmonaut and the aliens: the man is "spurred by self-confidence" (66) and the alien creatures "observ[e]" him (66), rather than simply "watch" or "look." The thematic elements of hubris and curiosity are transmitted with the kind of fluency that makes the translation read like an original text. Venuti's warning about the "assimilationist" implications of this kind of reading experience becomes relevant here. As if heeding Venuti's concern, the doubly unsettling sound of Nui's pincers reappears at the end of the text, its disturbing effect amplified by its placement at the end of a decidedly less fluid English sentence: "while bleeding to death, the cosmonaut felt he was running out of air, and the last thing that he heard was, again, *choc! choc! choc! choc!*" (67). Difference punctuates and problematizes the translation, multiplying the original's range of signification. The Anglophone reader enters a dialogue not only with Arango's critique, but with Bell's subtle amplification of that critique through non-translation. Questions proliferate, centered on both the problematics of translation across languages and cultures and the issue of the double suggestion, from both author and translator, that the reader's confidence that they can understand the other, Cuban or otherwise, might be folly. The translation not only presents (or re-presents) the text. It also confronts the reader with themselves. Though "The Cosmonaut" would appeal to the English-speaking reader who is predominantly interested in science fiction, it would likely frustrate the agenda of a reader looking for a window onto Cubanness. Though it raises the relevant issue of colonialism, it does not flesh out the encounter between human and alien in a way that is easily readable as allegory for Cuba's colonial experience. Furthermore, though it was written during the first delirious decade of societal transformation by a committed writer, the story does not read easily as communist allegory.

The second Cuban story in *Cosmos Latinos*, Daína Chaviano's "The Annunciation" ("La anunciación"), is a subtle parodic text that lacks qualities likely to offer an easy appeal to either the science fiction fan or the student of Cuba. The sci-fi enthusiast is left wanting more detail about the alien visitation that drives its plot, while the reader looking for specific cultural insights is also left wanting, given the broad themes that are treated. Originally published in Chaviano's 1983 collection *Amoroso planeta*, the story's inclusion in the anthology is likely based on its popularity in Cuba and its generic and tonal complexity, rather than any kind

of easy representativeness. Like “El cosmonauta,” Chaviano’s story participates in the “alien encounter” convention, though rather than offer a sobering warning, it indulges in subversive fun. The author retells the biblical account of the visit by the angel Gabriel to Mary in Luke 1:26–38 through a lens that blends certain limited science fiction details, high-register ecclesiastical language, and romance novel kitsch. In Chaviano’s story, Gabriel is an alien, and rather than simply announce to Mary that she will soon be impregnated by the Holy Spirit, he seduces her himself. Mary plays the role of the ingénue in the encounter, which provides a vehicle for Chaviano to poke fun at Christian insistence on Mary’s chastity. The language the two characters use with each other is intentionally stilted and formal, and contrasts with the franker eroticism of the narration. Mary enjoys her encounter with Gabriel, and Chaviano describes her orgasm in a sly mix of spiritual and popular literary language. The story ends with Gabriel’s voice glorifying Mary in a diction that mimics the gospels. The reader is left pondering two new propositions, one even more blasphemous than the other: that Mary was not a virgin, and that Jesus was half alien. As Toledano explains, the story fits a pattern in Chaviano’s work, where “our myths and religions are explained as mere misunderstandings of a too distant past” (“Daína Chaviano” 29). In the case of “La anunciación,” this treatment of tradition opens a space for a feminist rewriting that loosens patriarchal control over Mary’s sexuality.

The biobibliographical note that appears before the translation of “La anunciación” cues the reader to listen for resonances between the story and classic English-language authors by identifying that Chaviano had read Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, and Ursula Le Guin (201). The alert reader probably recognizes in this last author a possible model, not just for the introduction of feminist themes into a work of science fiction, but also for the use of the genre to explore religious ideas from a critical perspective.⁵ The note does not offer much exegesis of the themes of “The Annunciation,” asserting that the story represents “a mesmerizing reconsideration of the New Testament’s annunciation story” (201). Instead it focuses on its stylistic originality (201). The note ends by explaining Chaviano’s abandonment of the Revolution and asserts tantalizingly that science fiction has provided her with a powerful means for responding to totalitarianism (201) but leaves loose ends in two senses. First, it does not explain its assertions, and second, “The Annunciation” subverts Christian doctrine, which the Revolution also explicitly opposes, so the transition from a mention of Chaviano’s political dissension to a reading of the story is disjointed. As a result, the note prepares the reader less for the text to come than does the paratext that precedes Arango’s “The Cosmonaut.”

Juan Carlos Toledano’s translation is various in its effects. In the story’s exposition Toledano places Mary in an “alcove” (202) rather than squarely in her bedroom (“alcoba” [145]). By doing so, he dials down the

tension of the original's atmosphere of erotic repression with an English term that reads as formal, and the effect is a kind of affective distancing. Toledano shifts away from Chaviano's play with the stylistic conventions of the romance novel as he renders "una aprensión que emanaba de todo el ambiente suscitaba en ella una inquietud creciente" (145) as: "fear issued from everything in the atmosphere and provoked in her a mounting unease" (202). Again, his version formalizes, employing a language reminiscent of previous centuries with "issued," "atmosphere," and "mounting unease." Along with this formality comes a stronger sense of foreboding, untinged by the winking irony found in the original.

Despite these interventions, as the translation progresses it increasingly focuses on transmitting the tension between the formality with which Mary and Gabriel address each other and the crucial action that eventually unfolds. In this way Toledano recreates Chaviano's sly humor: "¿no sabéis acaso que mi esposo y señor, por alguna razón ajena a mi comprensión, juró no tocarme jamás?" (147), Mary asks Gabriel when he announces that she will soon be with child. The English echoes the tone: "are you unaware perhaps that my husband and master—for a reason beyond my understanding—has sworn never to touch me?" (203). Chaviano's ironic concoction of the biblical and the tawdry reaches its height, expectedly, in the narration of Gabriel and Mary's coupling. Here Toledano's rendering sets off complex effects. At times it returns to its early efforts to decrease intensity. "Todo le daba vueltas" (153) becomes "everything was spinning around" (207), where more vivid evocations of the sensation of vertigo are available in the English language. Toledano goes from dialing down to dialing up as "se sintió invadida por una sensación de altura y vértigo jamás soñada" (153) is given blunt treatment with the verb "penetrate": "she felt penetrated by an undreamed sensation of height and vertigo" (207). Toledano's choice is significant, given the possibility of using language that treats the situation with coy conventionality, like "flooded with." This harsh diction sets off a dissonance with the felicitous phrase "undreamed sensation." Nonetheless, the translation swerves again, back in the direction of the parodic wink. In the original, the moment of Mary's orgasm comes across in the kind of tawdry poetry found in the romance novel: "ella se estremeció hasta el fondo de sus entrañas, como si un cálido aguacero de primavera hubiese bañado lo más profundo de su simiente" (153), and Toledano draws on parallel conventions in English by giving: "she shook to her innermost core, as if a hot spring shower had bathed the deepest part of her seed" (207). His rendering offers the standard kind of operation found in the pulp genre by making the clichéd profundity of "innermost core" clash with the poeticism of the language that follows ("spring shower"; "deepest ... seed").

Toledano's translation attends to the central question of stylistic innovation that the story's paratextual framing in *Cosmos Latinos* establishes. The reader of the translation comes to feel a push and pull

between formality and flow, between the gentle and the blunt. To achieve this, the translator scrambles and reformulates Chaviano's style, making local changes but attempting a broader balance of tonalities. The result is a kind of representation of the bravura of the original in ones and zeroes. The translation is not what Venuti would call "fluent"; instead, it ends up disquieting while also being frequently funny. In the end, the reader experiences foreignness through the translation, and is given an indirect and intervened representation of the complex way Chaviano works with language.

The last Cuban text in *Cosmos Latinos* is Michel Encinosa Fú's "Like the Roses Had to Die." The original story, "Como tuvieron que morir las rosas," was published in the collection *Dioses de neón* (Neon Gods) in 2006, after *Cosmos* came out. The editors indicate it was written in 2001. According to Malmgren's typology, the story can be identified as "alternate world" science fiction, a modality that emphasizes characters' interactions with their environment. Malmgren finds a dark thread in this type of fiction, as it dramatizes characters' "struggles to survive in the diverse topographies of an indifferent universe" (20). Encinosa Fú's story takes place in Ofidia ("place of snakes"), a future dystopia that the author and Juan Alexander Padrón invented in 1994 for a role-playing game (Portales Machado 537) and which the author returns to in a series of subsequent stories.⁶ The topography of Ofidia fits squarely within the world-building parameters of cyberpunk. It is a chaotic and violent mega-urban space crisscrossed by boundaries among territories that are ruthlessly policed by official and unofficial powers. It is a brutal place, described in commentary by Yoss as a world where "nada es sagrado, todo tiene su precio y no hay límite a lo que se vende o se compra" (*Quinta dimensión* 85) (nothing is sacred; everything has its price and there is no limit to what is bought and sold). It is populated by a dizzying variety of beings, including "exotics" (313) ("exóticos" [20]), or humans who have grafted tissues from other species onto their bodies. The villain Baphomet, a "pure" human, has hatched a plan to eliminate exotics and thereby cleanse the human race. The protagonist, the Wolf ("La Loba") enlists the assistance of the Wizard ("El Mago") to free the Wolf's lover from Baphomet and foil his evil machinations. In the end they fail at the former but succeed at the latter.

Though the story narrates the defeat of a villain whose agenda is to eliminate "exotics" and purify humanity, Bell and Molina-Gavilán's preliminary note warns the reader against interpreting the text as "a straightforward paean to individuality" that suggests through allegory that Fidel Castro is the enemy of diversity (305). Instead, the editors call the reader's attention to "an implicit denunciation of the illusion of choosing one's own singularity" (305). This editorial intervention anticipates and challenges the desire to arrive at a simple political interpretation of the text. The editors are right to do so, as Encinosa Fú's story unfolds an

unresolved argument about the valor or narcissism of those “exotics” who call attention to themselves by altering their bodies. The reader who approaches the text looking for a story about Cuban politics that is easily assimilable into a preconceived set of concepts is forewarned that such an agenda will be frustrated.

The editors also prepare the reader for a challenging read, noting the story’s neologisms and its “highly literary style” influenced by José Lezama Lima (305), a Cuban author famous (or infamous) for his densely erudite and devilishly eccentric inventiveness. Complexly mediating between the style of the original and the cognitive comfort of the reader, Ted Angell’s translation walks a line between carrying across a sense of the intense strangeness of Encinosa Fú’s language and taking steps to clarify images and actions for the reader. By doing so, he respects the literary texture of the language while at the same time recognizing that the muscle of the story is its cinematic action: explosions, battles involving futuristic weapons, and a hallucinogenic twist at the climax. An example of Encinosa Fú’s baroque language comes at a moment when the narrator steps back from a description of Baphomet’s brutality to muse: “cuántas semillas de instante harían falta para procrear la jungla de lo eterno? Biopsia de la cólera, ociología aplicada a la barbarie, orgasmo de atrocidad a la vuelta de cada esquina” (40). The translation gives: “how many seeds of moments would be necessary to procreate the jungle of the eternal? Biopsy of rage, leisureology applied to barbarity, orgasms of atrocity around each corner” (327). The reader is given a clear lens onto the eccentricity of the Spanish here. Angell renders “cólera” with the intensity of “rage,” noting the vicious action the narrator is reflecting on.

Though the story’s oddness comes through where Angell lets his English be idiosyncratic, dialogue and plot are kept in focus through carefully considered translational interventions. Yoss notes, for example, the “telegraphic” nature of Encinosa Fú’s dialogue (*Quinta dimensión* 86). Angell often decodes this telegraphy for the sake of the vivid progress of the action. When Santo, a henchman who turns on Baphomet to offer assistance to the protagonists, confesses his plan to escape to another world, he asks: “¿Salen? Voy en esa. Lejos. Fuera. Vamos, vamos ...” (29) (Are you leaving? I am. Far. Away. Let’s go, let’s go ...). Angell has: “Are you getting out? I am. Somewhere away from here. C’mon, c’mon ...” (320). From “salen” to “getting out” there is a crucial act of specification of tone and reference to plot context. The same is true for “Lejos. Fuera.” At other moments, Angell clarifies Encinosa Fú’s usages by connecting them explicitly to their context. For example, “despojo” (9), which could refer to any number of types of waste, becomes a “slag heap” (306). When the Wolf taunts the Wizard: “algo te está fallando” (10) (something is going wrong for you), the English clarifies: “something is going wrong with your plans” (306). The phrase “meterse aquí a plomo limpio” (11) is vividly clarified through the language of hardboiled fiction: “to butt

in here, fully geared and shooting at random” (307). As the Wizard and the Wolf draw closer to their confrontation with Baphomet, the narrator indicates that the two “traían cola” (25) (were being followed). The translation expands for the sake of clarity again with “trackers were on their trail” (317). Throughout, Angell takes pains to ensure that the reader holds a clear sense of both dystopian topology and narrative propulsion. The result is a fluent English-language cyberpunk read, attuned to that subgenre’s partial derivation from pulp crime novels. As we attend to the conventions of one of its subgenres, the general globality of science fiction conventions comes into view. Angell has access to a generic language that crosses boundaries between national languages.

The scientific or at times pseudoscientific language of the genre generally translates cleanly, given that academic diction in both Spanish and English is founded on Greek and Latin terms. Nonetheless, Angell unpacks some of Encinosa Fú’s coinages. Instead of rendering “crisopéyic[o]” (15) as “chrysopoeic” or, more confusingly, “chrysopoetic,” he explicates the term as “techno-alchemy” (310), a rendering that connects with the context of the Wizard’s experiments in both technology and magic. Even where the English-speaking reader would likely encounter no difficulty, as in the possible translation of “mnemocristales” (16) as “mnemocrystals,” Angell opts for “memory crystals” (311). In this way, he leans away from the techno-scientific rhetoric of cyberpunk and toward fluent standard English. At times, this tendency flattens out Encinosa Fú’s humor. An advertisement for “software de telediltónica en interfase aleatoria” (19) reads as “random interface sex software” (313), rather than the more direct “random interface teledildonic software,” this latter option specifying more clearly the kind of technology involved. Nonetheless, the story’s hard-edged humor, a crucial element that helps mark it as typical of Cuban sci-fi, survives translation intact throughout the English version.

Restless Books for Curious Readers

Ilán Stavans, Annette Hochstein, and Joshua Ellison founded Restless Books in Brooklyn, New York, in 2013. From the start, their goal has been to publish foreign authors who have enjoyed minimal communication with Anglophone audiences. Their objective is not only to serve these writers, but also to offer English-speaking readers access to expressions of cultural specificity that are absent or diluted in translated works normally published in the U.S. They frame their project as a “response to the parochial, inward-looking, and homogenizing trends in American publishing. Our guiding conviction has always been that readers are naturally hungry for new destinations, experiences, and perspectives” (“Restless Books History”). In the duality of their focus on both marginal author and privileged U.S. reader they evidence what Lawrence Venuti describes as a utopian impulse possible in all translations, where:

the translator seeks to build a community with foreign cultures, to share an understanding with and of them and to collaborate on projects founded on that understanding, going so far as to allow it to revise and develop receiving values and institutions. The very impulse to seek a community abroad suggests that the translator wishes to extend or complete a particular receiving situation, to compensate for a defect in the translating language and culture.

(“Translation, Community, Utopia” 12)

The utopia that forms the backdrop of the Restless Books project is that of a U.S. culture founded on, and proud of, its multiple immigrant heritages. The publisher explicitly states the agenda of opposing the racism, xenophobia, and anti-intellectualism that have always existed in spite of, or as a reaction against, the cultural diversity of the U.S. (“Restless Books History”). Venuti’s assertion that utopian translation efforts open outward into acts of cross-cultural collaboration is evident in the case of Restless. Through its various cultural activities, the publisher strives

to celebrate immigrant writing and bring literature to underserved communities. We believe that immigrant stories are a vital component of our cultural consciousness; they help to ensure awareness of our communities, build empathy for our neighbors, and strengthen our democracy.

(“Restless Books Mission”)

Though Restless portrays itself as dissolving boundaries and opening spaces for previously unheard voices, it is nonetheless crucial to note that there are no woman writers included in its Cuban science fiction catalog.

Though the texts we will examine are rich with traditional science fiction elements, the promotional copy on the publisher’s website tends to highlight what each work can tell the reader about Cuban reality, marking an orientation toward readers looking for cultural and historical information. The publisher avoids what might be a viable marketing approach: downplaying the Cuban specificity of the books and underlining those qualities that allow them to participate in the global conversation of sci-fi. Target readers of Restless books are educated, progressive, and interested in foreign cultures. Nonetheless, Restless does not pander to the simplistic celebratory visions of Cuba that this group is susceptible to at times. The advertising copy for most of the Cuban science fiction in their catalogue emphasizes the country’s problems. Examples of this kind of language are: “out of the modern-day dystopia of Cuba comes an instant classic” (“A Planet for Rent”) and “a science-fiction survival story that captures the intense pressures—economic, ideological, and psychological—inside Communist Cuba” (“A Legend of the Future”).

As of the year 2020, there are 15 science fiction titles in its catalogue, 12 of which are from Cuba. For our purposes here, we will examine three texts, one by Agustín de Rojas and two by Yoss. Of keen interest to the reader who uses science fiction as a lens onto the history of Cuban political thought, Rojas's fundamentally optimistic novel makes a case for the use of mind-enhancing technologies for the purpose of spreading communism. In contrast, Yoss, who began writing after the fall of the Soviet Union during the acute economic and social crises of the Special Period, swings wildly between bleak visions of Cuban suffering and raucous humor. For the reader interested in its particularly Cuban content, Yoss's work offers a lens onto the history of Cuban political discontent. The two translators, Nick Caistor and David Frye, offer carefully considered renderings. As we will see, Caistor's work is more straightforward, given the academic register that pervades Rojas's language. David Frye has his hands full with Yoss's inventive, yet classically Cuban *choteo*-style humor.

Mind-melds and Socialist Self-Sacrifice: *A Legend of the Future*

Written from 1980 to 1981 and originally published by the official imprint Letras Cubanas in 1985, *Una leyenda del futuro* is the second in a trilogy of works set in a universe divided by the rivalry between a capitalist Empire and a communist Federation. The universe of the trilogy reflects a Cold War *weltanschauung* being worked out through science fiction speculation. The socialist utopia that is in the process of being realized in Rojas's fictions has been achieved in the context of a grueling global struggle against capitalist imperialism. Raymond Williams underlines the political and philosophical importance of fictions that frame the ideal society or world through this lens:

utopia is not merely the alternative world, throwing its light on the darkness of the intolerable present, but lies at the far end of generations of struggle and of fierce and destructive conflict, its perspective, necessarily, is altered. The post-religious imagining of a harmonious community, the enlightened rational projection of an order of peace and plenty, have been replaced, or at least qualified, by the light at the end of the tunnel, the sweet promise which sustains effort and principle and hope through the long years of revolutionary preparation and organisation.

(209)

This mode of utopian writing, which we see in Rojas's trilogy, supports militancy over idle imagination of what might be, sustained cooperative effort over techno-futurist or Romantic wishfulness. The novels unfold within the context of a universal war. The fundamental utopian

socialist question in the text is how to perfect group collaboration for the purpose of advancing the Federation's mission of universal hegemony. The plot traces the efforts of three crew members to find a way to get their Federation spaceship back to Earth after a collision with an asteroid. Isanusi, the captain of the ship, is badly injured and near death. Crewmates Gema and Thondup are slowly dying of radiation poisoning. As they confront their dire situation, the three characters embody different mental strengths that are brought into harmony to make the success of their mission possible. Gema is a physiologist who has been enhanced through psychological conditioning to become "una computadora humana" ("a human computer" [37]). She is hyper-rational and capable of examining multiple courses of action thoroughly and dispassionately. Her name most obviously suggests "gem"; she is of value to her group because of the lapidary clarity and complexity of her mind. But "Gema" also evokes "twin." This second sense is reflected when she melds her mind with Isanusi's to make him more successful as pilot and leader to future crews when his brain is linked to the spaceship computer. For his part, Thondup is a psychosociologist who is also skilled in technology. Like his crewmates, his name is significant, as it is taken from the birth name of the fourteenth Dalai Lama. The Buddhism that Rojas incorporates into the novel through the character of Thondup is schematic, juxtaposing meditation as clear perception of reality with a Western view of the vivid and challenging imagery of Tibetan Buddhist art. We find evidence of this heuristic image of Buddhism in the fact that the character Thondup oscillates throughout the novel between the poles of mental discipline and hallucination. Shortly after the accident, he struggles with visions that his dead crewmates are alive. "NO MÁS VISIONES" ("NO MORE VISIONS" [35]), he tells himself, choosing to enter self-induced trances that, somewhat paradoxically, bring him back to reality. This therapy is insufficient, though, and he turns to psychoactive medication to maintain equilibrium. At the novel's climax, the pill bottle is empty, and Thondup descends into delirium, deciding that aliens have invaded the ship and that it has become necessary to destroy the craft, along with himself and his two crewmates, in order to protect Earth from an invasion. Gema, the model of dispassionate pragmatism, kills Thondup to protect the mission. The third principal character, Isanusi, whose name is Zulu for "diviner," is described as possessing a pure mind that perceives reality transparently and comprehensively. When it becomes clear that his body is irrecoverable, but his mind is still intact, Gema and Thondup remove his brain and link it to the spaceship's control computer. Though Gema and Thondup die, Isanusi's enhanced brain not only survives and pilots the ship safely to Earth, but goes on living for millennia, training generation after generation of crews on how to meld their wills for the benefit of the Federation.

Una leyenda del futuro is an example of what Carl Malmgren calls “alternate society science fiction” (18), where the primary *novum* in the text is the social order in which the action takes place. The questions this type of fiction asks are: “what constitutes a good or bad society? What is the proper relation between the individual and the community? To what extent are freedom and order mutually antagonistic? What are the main determinants of ‘social reality?’” (80). The novel is extrapolative, rather than speculative, in its exploration of the dimensions of the perfect society, given that Cuba already presents a version-in-process of the communist project striving to perfect itself while it simultaneously wards off hostile foreign threats. The lens through which Rojas examines these questions is distinctly psychological. His chief concern in the novel is the level of mental fitness required for individuals to work together to make communism successful and to defeat capitalism in the struggle for universal hegemony. The challenges that complicate this struggle are both internal and external. The chief internal challenges are emotional self-regulation and clear-headed analysis of reality. Throughout the novel, characters must demonstrate their capacity to overcome their baser emotions, like lust or fear, as well as the tendency of the human mind to get lost in worlds of its own invention. Though Isanusi is the leader of the crew and is presented as possessing the most perfect mind, his physical incapacitation after the collision with the asteroid clears the way for Gema to step forward and demonstrate ideal communist psychological strengths as she tackles the various challenges of helping manage Thondup’s psychological balance and finding a way to save Isanusi from imminent death. In the end, Gema executes the crucial and difficult actions, including killing one of her crewmates, that allow the spaceship to return safely to earth after her own death, with the cyborg Isanusi at the helm, virtual versions of his crewmates programmed into his mind so that they too can achieve a kind of immortality.

Una leyenda del futuro is fundamentally utopian in its optimism about the potential to use science and technology to overcome human flaws and maintain the interpersonal dynamics necessary for teams of people to defend communism and extend its reach. Psychological conditioning, referred to in the novel as “sugestocibernética” (“suggestocybernetics” [15]) is employed to make crewmates stronger members of a cohesive unit. The technique is something that must be applied with caution, nonetheless. If the individual does not already possess the necessary intellectual makeup, the deployment of mind-shaping technologies and techniques can be harmful. In a disquisition early in the novel, Thondup explains that, being more ethical, the Communist Federation suspended its early psychological experiments when it discovered that those who lack the mental fortitude necessary for functioning selflessly under stressful conditions were subjected to mental conditioning, a kind of schizophrenia could result. This forbearance is contrasted with the ruthlessness of the Empire’s deployment of psychological

conditioning to brainwash those who question capitalism, no matter the psychic damage possible. The Federation's implementation of technologies for shaping human minds creates "una interdependencia mutua extremadamente elevada" ("an extremely close mutual dependence" [100]) that is knit together by each member's capacity for emotional telepathy. Though each constituent of the group retains their individuality, they "agree on all the fundamentals" (131) ("coinciden en todo lo fundamental"). In this respect the protagonists of *Una leyenda del futuro* are a microcosm of the ideal communist society Che Guevara describes in *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* (Socialism and Man in Cuba), one in which each individual possesses "conciencia de la necesidad de su incorporación a la sociedad" (14) (consciousness of the necessity of his incorporation into society). There is a parallel between the novel's interest in the psychology that must necessarily underlie successful participation in a socialist society and Guevara's description of the individual's "total consciencia de su ser social, lo que equivale a su realización plena como criatura humana, rotas todas las cadenas de la enajenación" (17) (total consciousness of his status as a social being, which means his full realization as a human being, all of the chains of his alienation broken). Rojas, like Guevara, represents this idea that the melding of the individual with the group, rather than being oppressive, liberates the individual to express their humanity fully. The emblem of this concept of collectivity is Isanusi, the human individual who, thanks to the judicious application of technology, provides space for the coexistence of his crewmates within his newly upgraded brain.

Rojas's novel fulfills Restless Books' marketing promises by providing an experience that is likely satisfying for both readers of science fiction and readers of Cuba. As Yoss explains, Rojas's solid scientific background allowed him to successfully write science fiction grounded in logical applications of established scientific concepts (*Quinta dimensión* 69). Readers primarily interested in the novel's participation in the conventions of the genre are likely to be pleased with the care the author takes to explain both the concrete technologies aboard the spaceship and the more abstract psychological conditioning techniques that play such a crucial role in the story's development. Yet at the same time, Yoss highlights the fact that Rojas's works represent "una CF auténticamente socialista, cubana, y de calidad" (*Quinta dimensión* 69) (an authentically socialist, Cuban, high-quality SF). As we have stated before, for the reader whose dominant interest is Cuba itself, extrapolative science fiction is likely to be more appealing than its speculative alternative. Rojas's novel is indeed fundamentally extrapolative; his characters simply display higher degrees of commitment to collective action than could be found in Revolutionary Cuba at the time of its writing, not a way of operating as a group that is wholly alien to the author's context. This characteristic of the novel is likely to please readers who are looking for a lens onto the social mechanisms that organize the Revolution.

Though the three readerly mindsets speculated about in this chapter will find something to like in the novel, many English speakers will feel confronted by its blunt criticism of capitalist imperialism, which one character describes as a “monstruo” (“monster” [178]). Also, given the individualism that is fundamental to Anglo cultures, many readers will likely be uncomfortable with the unapologetic espousal of mind alteration for the sake of a collective goal. As Carl Malmgren points out, in science fiction that imagines alternate societies the reader “is invited to compare that society with his or her own” (77), and in *Una leyenda del futuro*, Rojas makes a loaded invitation of this type, working within what Malmgren would call “a normative framework” (80) that steers the reader in the direction of accepting the superiority of one societal system of organization over another. The political orientation of the reader will have a significant impact on the amount of discomfort these confrontations will cause. As we will see, Caistor’s translation carries the confrontational nature of Rojas’s text across directly, leaving the reader to decide how they want to sit with the critique of the U.S. and of other powerful first world countries.

Rojas uses precise, high register language throughout the novel to reflect the advanced level of scientific and technical training among its three main characters, which makes for a relatively frictionless translation process for Caistor. This type of language tends to transfer unproblematically, as we have discussed. In Caistor’s translation we find further evidence of the directness with which the scientific language of science fiction can be rendered across language barriers. *Una leyenda del futuro* complicates the situation only slightly by liberally employing scientific neologisms. Terms like “sugestocibernética,” “hipnotrón,” and “sicoestabilizador” are not fraught with cultural subtleties, and thus transfer with little complication as “suggestocybernetics” (15), “hypnotron” (16), and “psychostabilizer” (54). Nonetheless, the verb “eidetizar” and its variants require some adjustments on the translator’s part. Drawing on the concept of eidetic memory, Rojas uses the verb to describe entrance into a quasi-hypnotic state to recover details that a person only registered unconsciously in the past. Caistor avoids “eideticize,” a verb that is only sporadically used in English. When Thondup informs Gema: “mientras eidetizabas, parece que nos cruzamos con otro siderolito,” the English reads “while you were in your eidetic state, I think there was another meteorite” (121). Though English is known for its powers of concision, the present example shows the concentrated potency of the Spanish verb, which Caistor unpacks in the phrase “you were in your eidetic state,” transferring the sense of the imperfect aspect of the past tense in the original. Where the rendering of Rojas’s scientific language becomes more fraught is in the case of the strongly anticommunist reader for whom there might be denotative, but not connotative equivalence between the English terms and what the Spanish terms would have meant for a Cuban Revolutionary reader

of the original. Though Caistor has made no evident intervention, the translation of Rojas's language of psychological optimization feels like the language of brainwashing for readers critical of the Revolution.

When dialogue takes on a greater degree of familiarity, Caistor recreates the informality of the language, employing contractions like "I'll" and "let's" and adjusting semantic choices appropriately. On the other hand, when Gema is speaking into the ship's electronic log and needs to pause, her language stiffens in the Spanish: "—Por razones de trabajo, se aplaza la continuación del informe ..." Caistor refrains from using a contraction here: "For work reasons I am interrupting this report" (27).

Surprisingly, punctuation presents Caistor with a significant dilemma. Rojas uses two different styles of quotation marks available to him in Spanish to distinguish between spoken and inner dialogue. When a character speaks, Rojas uses double quotation marks (""); when they think something to themselves, he employs guillemets (<< >>). Lacking a parallel resource in English, Caistor collapses both into the double quotation mark. By doing so, he relies on both the general flow of dialogue and action and on explicit indicators of which type of speech is to come. For example, when Isanusi wakes up from a coma and does not yet realize that he is paralyzed, he asks "what if this isn't a nightmare" (16), a question marked by guillemets in the original. The reader is left to infer both from the nature of the question and the lack of an answer from Gema that Isanusi's speech is interior. When speech is preceded by a verb like "said" or "sighed," the distinction between types of quotation marks is clearly unnecessary. Nonetheless, there are knotty stretches of dialogue in which interlocutors both speak aloud and think things to themselves. The complex individual and interpersonal psychology Rojas represents in these passages is scaffolded by his choice to provide clarity through punctuation. During these passages in the English translation, Caistor resists introducing textual markers that are not in the original, relying instead on the reader's attentiveness and logic. He interpellates this reader as prepared for interpretive challenges, a choice that finds support in the aforementioned study of science fiction and fantasy readerships by Menadue and Jacups. Nonetheless, some science fiction-oriented reviewers of the translation indicate that they found it challenging to follow the flow of dialogue in the novel. Kenyon Ellefson, for example, writing in the *Portland Book Review*, finds that "the story is primarily told as a string of dialogue, both internal and external, with no differentiation between the two, causing mild confusion to the reader."⁷

The Special Period in Outer Space: *A Planet for Rent*

It comes as no surprise that, in contrast to Rojas's optimism in the 1980s, science fiction written during the economic, political, and social crises of the Special Period leans heavily toward the dystopic. Yoss emerges as

the strongest voice of Cuban science fiction during this time, tackling the country's most distressing problems with a blend of bluntness and levity that has earned him cult status among readers. *Se alquila un planeta*, originally published in 2001, comprises stories written during the mid-1990s. Though, like Encinosa Fú's work, it shows cyberpunk influences, *Se alquila un planeta* is distinct in its readability as an allegory of life in Special Period Cuba. It is decidedly extrapolative, projecting quotidian realities into an imaginative space. The reading experience offers a strong component of recognition to balance out the sense of estrangement generated by such phenomena as teleportals, insectoid aliens and the use of computer software to hijack human bodies. Yoss confronts both neoimperialism and injustices within Cuban society. One only needs to read Earth as Cuba, and the aliens called "xenoides" as First World tourists or capitalists. The inhabitants of Earth are dominated not only by alien forces, but also their own planet's tourism board. The reader familiar with Cuba will understand how tourism could feel oppressive to Cubans. With the collapse of Soviet support, citizens went from operating within a planned economy in which, in spite of hardships, equality was the general rule, to a highly unequal system in which access to tourists' foreign currency separated out and privileged a minority of the population. Alongside this imbalance came the many restrictions against Cubans entering hotels, beaches, or other areas cordoned off exclusively for tourists.

The collection opens with an eponymous piece, which reads like a come-on from a cross between a carnival barker and a shady real estate dealer, offering to rent the planet Earth to any interested alien with money. The situation established from the outset, where Earth is a macrocosm of Cuba during the Special Period, is in place throughout the collection. The stories we will examine here look at three aspects of this reality: the sad state of the planet as a whole, the proliferation of prostitution as a way for women to escape poverty, and intrepid people's attempts to escape the planet (country) by any means possible. The first text to examine is "Se alquila un planeta" itself. The unnamed speaker repeats the title phrase again and again, and the piece unfolds like a song, unspooling new variations on the central theme. The speaker describes the many attributes of Earth that are now for sale, ranging from its physical environment to the human race's cultural achievements. Of course, all these attributes can be read as analogous to Cuba's tangible and intangible environment, and the piece is in part a denunciation of the broken economic system that has led the country to such a desperate point. Nonetheless, stronger criticism is aimed at the predatory capitalism that is primed to snatch Cuba up in its hour of abandonment by the failed Soviet system.

David Frye's translation for the 2014 Restless edition makes a crucial intervention at the outset. Though the title of the collection and of its opening piece are the same, he renders the first as *A Planet for Rent* and

the second as “For Rent, One Planet.” His version of the opening piece’s title firmly situates it as an advertisement, and in turn reflects back onto the book’s title, re-casting it by contrast as a more traditional announcement of theme or setting. In this way he makes a fine distinction: the collection tells the broader story of the planet’s colonial situation, while its first text unfolds a *mise en scène* that offers a more specific dramatization of that situation. Throughout his translation, Frye recreates the language of the aggressive hawk. The exhortation “pasen,” appears as “step on up” (1). “Una oferta comercial única” is pitched to the familiar phraseology of shady marketing as “a once-in-a-lifetime business opportunity” (1). Frye evokes the cultural associations of auctioneering, clearly transmitting the idea that the planet has been cheapened. In this way he communicates Yoss’s anti-colonial commentary. By being so fully immersed in the situation of being advertised to, the Anglophone reader feels confronted, experiencing that productive sensation of being shown their own privilege. If we look beyond Frye’s work at the level of style and connotation, we notice him at times using insertions to give an even stronger political critique than is found in the original. “Se alquila un planeta, para usted, hijo inocente de una cultura y una raza ganadora” (A planet for rent, for you, innocent child of a victorious culture and race) translates as “for rent, one planet, for you, innocent child of a culture and race that won the lottery” (2). With this addition, Frye expands upon and strengthens the sense that economic leverage is not conferred on xenoids because of their supposed superiority, but rather because of the random luck of history. Again, many Anglophone readers are likely to realize, uncomfortably, that they themselves are the xenoids. Frye’s intervention sharpens the impact of this recognition.

Earth’s (Cuba’s) colonial situation is narrated with a different kind of specificity in the story “Trabajadora social.” Buca is a female “social worker,” a sarcastic euphemism for a sex worker, who has found her golden ticket in the form of Selshaliman, a member of the alien “Grodo” race, who has taken her as his lover. The action unfolds at an astroport as the couple prepare to depart for the Grodo’s home planet. We learn that Selshaliman, a hermaphroditic creature, is taking Buca as his wife so that he can use her to incubate his eggs. When the larvae hatch, she will die. Fully aware of the plan, Buca has decided to live a few years of wealth and luxury until her time comes. The story ends with her boarding a shuttle to the spaceship that will take her away forever. Given the evident fact that “Buca” is an anagram of “Cuba,” it becomes clear that the protagonist’s choice—to escape poverty and hopelessness by attracting a wealthy foreigner—is common. Though succeeding in such a strategy promises a much-improved material existence, it will come at the cost of a kind of interior death, represented so vividly by the recently hatched alien larvae that “eat her guts without a care in the world,” in Frye’s rendering (25) (“se coman sus entrañas con toda tranquilidad”).

Frye's translation focuses on offering a sense of the direct, demotic language employed by both narrator and characters. At times, the translator adapts sayings, as when "donde las dan, las toman" (literally, "where they give them, they take them") becomes "what's good for the goose ..." (7). In this case, Frye adjusts his choice to context: the narrator is describing how Earthlings have learned to advertise to alien tourists using alien mind tricks. Whereas the Spanish expression is darkened by a sense of menace (don't dish it out if you can't take it), the translation goes for the lighter and more oblique usage of a popular saying, adding an ellipsis that keeps the language grounded in orality. At other times, Frye allows more foreignness to seep into the translation. When a disdainful security guard says of Buca: "aunque la vistas de seda, la mona, mona se queda" (literally, "though you might dress her in silk, the monkey—or 'the pretty woman'—is still a monkey"). Two levels of difficulty face the translator here. The first, most obviously, is the use of a refrain, which almost never translates directly. The second is the play between "pretty woman" and "female monkey" in the word "mona," which dissuades Frye from adapting the saying to something like "a leopard can't change its spots." The translation, "a monkey's still a monkey, even in a silk dress" (23), avoids trying to reflect the play on "mona," inserting "dress" instead to evoke the idea of female beauty. On the level of denotation, the reader of the translation gets close to the same sense that the reader of the original would have. Nonetheless, the image of the monkey in the translation provokes a sense of strangeness that reminds the reader they are reading a translation, an experience the Hispanophone reader does not encounter.

Another aspect of the social crisis of the Special Period is allegorized in the story "Túnel de fuga" ("Escape Tunnel"). The three main characters Friga, Adam, and Jowe piece together a homemade spaceship to attempt to escape the hopelessness of their lives on Earth and find some measure of economic opportunity on an alien planet. Their story closely parallels that of the *balseros* who improvise rafts to attempt the treacherous passage to Florida. The economic desperation of the 1990s precipitated a significant increase in these attempts. In Yoss's story, the three escapees manage to make it past Planetary Security and zoom via hyperspace in the direction of the star Tau Ceti,⁸ which is orbited by a promising planet. However, when they return to space, they find themselves eight light-years away. Their predicament represents the situation many *balseros* have found themselves in—stranded and floating in the Straits of Florida, midway between two countries. An attempt to enter cryptobiosis to survive the 150-year journey fails because of damage to their ship, and Adam dies. Jowe and Friga attempt one last hyperspace boost but end up boomeranged back into Earth's orbit. Friga is apprehended, and Jowe commits suicide by hurling himself into space without a spacesuit. The story ends with Friga's recognition that in death Jowe has at least

achieved a kind of freedom from the misery of life on Earth. Yoss's depiction of the failure of hyperspace to catapult his characters to freedom reflects what Malmgren describes as science fiction's inevitable faithfulness to the scientific paradigms of its day. In the late twentieth century, discoveries about both the immensity of the universe and the impossibility of traveling faster than light "have taken space away again, eliminated it as a truly viable locus of estrangement for 'pure' SF" (Malmgren 175).

The original is a suspenseful page-turner, and Frye's translation follows suit. The English-speaking reader encounters little friction as the story propels itself with cinematic urgency. Frye's tough-textured concision serves the narrative well. Where the original describes Friga as having no livelihood outside of crime, the revelation is followed by "y nunca lo tuvo" (and she never had it); Frye goes for the punch of a fragment: "never has" (192). When the narrator employs sayings, Frye adapts; "harina de otro costal" (literally "flour from a different sack"), becomes "another kettle of fish" (195). Referring to the fact that it is more difficult to steer a hyperspace ship than to build its engine, the English phrase balances lightheartedness with a sense of the intimidating difficulty of the protagonists' task. Humor and dread are equally mixed. Further, Frye smooths out the reading experience through cultural adaptation when he converts meters to feet in the description of Friga's height (191). The name of the improvised ship, "El 'Esperanza,'" is translated "the *Hope*" (199), given that in a text of this type, an understanding of the significance of the craft's name is superior to the strategy of marking cultural specificity by leaving names untranslated. Finally, as we have established, the technical and scientific language of science fiction tends to translate without raising too many dilemmas, and such is the case with "Escape Tunnel." Yoss's descriptions of the particularities of hyperspace travel and cryptobiotic preservation of human bodies during lengthy spaceflights cross the boundary between Spanish and English relatively free of the swerves and compromises necessary when dealing with more culturally specific usage.

"Escape Tunnel" is a text that likely satisfies a broad spectrum of Anglophone readers. The blend of a hard-charging adventure plot with a liberal dose of technological detail makes for a fluent read for the English speaker looking for a pure science fiction experience. The reader who is more interested in Cuba is offered characters whose stories are suggestive of the real experiences of Cubans who not only suffer economic hardship but are also suffocated by social conformism. Friga defies expectations of traditional femininity and defends herself with force. Adam is a geek and a misfit. Jowe is a poetic soul who has suffered a traumatic past. The reader hoping to understand Cuba is also offered insights into the complexity of the *balsero* phenomenon—from the technical ingenuity to the foolhardiness of their project, from the optimism driving the attempt at escape to the frequent tragedies that occur during the journey.

Big Fun in *Super Extra Grande*

Though moments of humor punctuate the collection, *Se alquila un planeta* is a dark book. Yoss's novel *Superextragrande*, published in Cuba in 2012 and in Spain in 2014, is a more lighthearted read. The text falls into Malmgren's "alternate world" category, given its interest in alien landscapes (18). The protagonist is a veterinarian specializing in enormous alien creatures. The novel's title, which means "super extra big," applies both to these creatures and to the human protagonist himself, who explains that because of extensive time spent in weightlessness, he has grown unnaturally large. His name, Jan Amos Sangán Dongo, is a play on the Cuban slang expression "sangandongo," meaning "enormous." Jan has been tasked with extracting two female aliens, An-Mhaly and Enti Kmusa, from the bowels of an enormous meteor-munching creature called a "laketon" (88) ("lagotón" [58]) that lives on the planet Brobdingnag.⁹ The laketon is a single-celled amoeba-like creature weighing trillions of tons. An-Mhaly and Enti's predicament is the cause of an intergalactic crisis, given that they were in the process of negotiating the drawdown of a tense conflict between two races vying to inhabit the same planet. The intrepid hero flies to Brobdingnag in a spacecraft called the *Beagle*, enters the laketon, and as he propels himself through the creature, the reader is treated to a comic review of the anatomy of a eukaryotic cell—protoplasm, ribosomes, endoplasmic reticulum, and all. Sangán Dongo, of course, finds An-Mhaly and Enti, returns them to safety, and is richly rewarded for his efforts. Yoss's text is a raucous mix of detailed scientific extrapolation and irreverent *choteo*. The English-speaking reader looking for a comical science fiction read is likely to be satisfied with what they find in Frye's translation. On the other hand, the reader looking for easy allegories about Cuban life or politics is likely to be frustrated. Yoss's text is indelibly Cuban, but not in the way *Planet for Rent* is. A Cuban *choteo* attitude that topples anyone and anything that considers itself sacrosanct is evidenced *par excellence* in Sangán Dongo's narration, but the Anglophone reader is less likely to be attuned to this less evident cultural wavelength.

The title of the translated text is *Super Extra Grande*. This choice of non-translation is predicated on the interpretability of the word "grande" and the aim of calling attention to the text's foreign origin. This tension between comprehensibility and difference plays out throughout the Anglophone reader's experience of both comforting sci-fi familiarity and teasing confrontation. On the one hand, the reader encounters familiar references—to *Gulliver's Travels* and to Charles Darwin's triumphant journey of scientific discovery. On the other, they bump up against Yoss's humorous jabs at the hubris of the United States. Malmgren points out that many U.S. readers of science fiction are accustomed to stories that repeat comfortable "alien-as-enemy stories [that are] predicated upon

rather limited assumptions based essentially upon questions of power ... this Cold War mentality can envision the Other only in terms of conquest, of 'us' versus 'them'" (59). Yoss plays on, and reverses, the triumphalist dynamic of so many science fiction stories written from an English-speaking perspective. In *Super Extra Grande*, Spanglish, not English, is the intergalactic lingua franca,¹⁰ and an Ecuadorian priest is the inventor of a hyperspace travel technology that has refashioned the universe by bringing countless alien races into contact with each other. Named "the González drive" (51) ("el impulso González" [34]), the technology allows an Ecuadorian satellite to fly to Mars in a matter of minutes, unfurling a giant banner that reads "SUCK ON THIS, DUMB-ASS GRINGOS!" (52) ("¡CHÚPENSE ESTA, GRINGOS COMEMIERDAS!" [34]). As is the case with *A Planet for Rent*, Yoss's later novel confronts the English-speaking reader with a universe that contradicts their tendency to approach foreign texts from a conscious or unconscious sense of cultural superiority. Frye's translation ensures that Yoss's gestures of Hispanic self-assertion come across clearly, allowing the confrontation between author and reader to play out, potentially resulting in some productive realizations.

Being the lingua franca of the cosmos, Spanglish is how characters communicate across divisions among species in the novel. A crucial difference between the original and Frye's translation arises regarding this issue. In *Superextragrande*, the narrator informs the reader that characters are communicating this way, but the dialogue is rendered on the page in Spanish. When the narrator describes the alien character Narbuk as speaking a primitive, ungrammatical version of Spanglish, the reader encounters ungrammatical Spanish. The original text makes its political point by elevating the language of people living in zones of contact between Anglo and Hispanic cultures but eschews the use of Spanglish because it imagines its dominant readership to be monolingual Spanish speakers. It is notable in this regard that in the original, Spanglish is referred to by one of its Spanish names, *hispanglés*. The direct way for Frye to recreate this would be for the narrator to indicate the use of Spanglish but render dialogue in English. Nonetheless, Frye chooses to render conversations in his own fanciful version of Spanglish. At work here is what Lawrence Venuti identifies as an inescapable fact of translation: "the linguistic and cultural differences of the source text can only be signaled indirectly, by their displacement in the translation, through differences introduced into values and institutions in the receiving situation" ("Translation, Community, Utopia" 12). The margin of difference between Spanish and Spanglish is not precisely the same as that between English and Spanglish. Though it is common for monolinguals on both sides to look down on Spanglish, for global political reasons they do so from different positions. To a Spanish speaker, Spanglish is often a dangerous corruption of the purity of an imagined universal Hispanic heritage, an impediment to the resistance to Anglophone imperialism. These speakers are often situated

outside Spanish-English contact zones, such as the U.S. southwest or cities like Miami or New York. If they do live within one of those zones, they feel a personal critical distance from the processes of cultural hybridization occurring there, again for reasons of cultural resistance. Monolingual Anglophones are less likely to view Spanglish as a corruption of the English language than as a comical or quizzical kind of cultural difference. Though they too operate from the assumption that their own language is superior, they do so from the position of thinking of themselves as the native and the speaker of Spanglish as the immigrant.

If he were to reproduce Yoss's suppression of the textual appearance of Spanglish in the original, the translator would be catering to the monolingual reader for whom a confrontation with that hybridity would be unwelcome. As Remy Attig notes,

there is a long history of publishers valuing only that which is written in a "domesticated" neutral North American English—that is to say a use of a "pure" English that cushions readers from confronting anything that could be perceived as other.

(24)

Publishing in Spanglish in this context rebels against this norm. Frye imagines the readership for his translation to not only be comfortable with difference and hybridity, but even further, to possess enough command of the Spanish language to be able to follow the Spanglish dialogue he creates. By doing so, he risks alienating both the readers interested in the novel as science fiction and those who approach it looking for a window onto Cuba. As Lourdes Torres observes, "when reading texts by cultural others mainstream readers expect to gain access to other worlds, not to be made aware of their limitations" (82).

Frye's decisions attempt a balance between the goals of confronting the reader with difference and making that difference approachable. He helps the process along by choosing the Spanish version of a word when it is a more recognizable cognate, assuming the reader also possesses a basic command of Spanish morphology. When he uses "probablemente" (12) for example, he expects his reader to recognize that it means "probably" and not "probable." On a semantic level, commonly known terms like "agua" and "día" (12) are left in the Spanish, while "bostezar" and "colmillos" (14) are translated as "yawn" and "fangs" (15). Despite this strategy, the monolingual Anglophone reader is bound to miss a great deal of the comic nuance embedded in the novel's dialogue. For example, when the narrator tells his assistant Narbuk, "modera tu lengua, lagarto. Esta operación es secreta ..." (13) (watch your tongue, lizard. This is a secret operation), the translation reads, "wátcha tu tongue, lagartija. This is an op oscuro" (13). The non-bilingual reader is not likely to register the meaning of "lagartija" and "oscuro" in this passage.

Multiplying the translator's challenges, *Superextragrande* signals, even if it does not include, two types of Spanglish, one cultivated and the other primitive. The narrator gives explicit instructions to the translator by describing Narbuk's imperfect *hispanglés*: "se empeña en torturar la gramática y la sintaxis del hispanglés, al peor estilo de un indio piel roja de holoserias de tercera categoría: con horrible tozudez, se come casi todas las preposiciones y sólo usa verbos en infinitivo" (12). In Frye's rendering: "he seems to go out of his way to mangle the grammar and syntax of the Spanglish language, stubbornly dropping prepositions and mutilating verbs like he's doing a bad impression of a native in a third-rate holoserias" (11).¹¹ Frye follows this guidance, to frequently hilarious effect. To assist the Anglophone reader, he usually marks Narbuk's weak command of grammar with English phrases like "much many" (14) and "me know us find already muchos fish bones" (28). Nonetheless, there are moments when the infelicity of Narbuk's *hispanglés* is rendered in a way that is likely to confuse the monolingual Anglophone reader. For example, Narbuk uses his primitive grammar to cite the saying *lo que cuesta vale* (what is costly has worth) as "lo que costar valer" (14), while the translation offers the enigmatic "que worth es, worth es well" (15). Frye plays up the alien's tortured Spanglish, but most likely mystifies the English-speaking reader at the same time.

Dialogue predominates as the hero tackles a smaller-stakes job at the opening of the book. Then narration takes over as the novel thrusts us into its central plot. The difficulties the English-speaking reader encounters in interpreting the dialogue disappear in Frye's skillful representation of the protagonist's raucously funny relation of his exploits. Informal expressiveness is carried across, as the narrator's description of Narbuk—"y luego no entiende por qué me río de él" (15)—is given as "and he doesn't get why I think he's funny" (17). The translator shows awareness of the difficulties of translating humor when he makes interventions to ensure a comic effect in the English. When Sangan Dongo describes the fact that Cetian females have six breasts, he confides that he does not personally find such a body type attractive but adds in an aside: "quizás si hubiera sido un bebé habría pensado diferente, claro ..." (18). Fry adds the adjective "thirsty" to his translation to strengthen the humorous effect: "If I'd been a thirsty baby I might have thought differently, of course ..." (21).

Conclusion

Cuban science fiction finds two very different means for reaching the English-speaking reader between *Cosmos Latinos* and Restless Books. Designing their anthology for academic contexts, Bell and Molina-Gavilán unfold an armature of paratexts that exerts significant, if uneven, pressures on the stories. The fact that the anthology encompasses science fiction from a broad spectrum of countries adds a significant element of noise to the signal an Anglophone reader interested in Cuba is hoping to

tune in when reading the introduction to the volume. This reader also encounters little that is obviously Cuban in the three stories. In a gesture that can potentially expand simplistic Anglophone framings of Cuba, the editors choose the three stories with literary history (Arango's foundational role, for example) and literary quality (Chaviano and Encinosa Fú's stylistic bravura) in mind, rather than easily digestible cultural representativeness. Readers looking for archetypal science fiction reads are likely to be comfortable with Arango's "The Cosmonaut" and Encinosa Fú's "Like the Roses Had to Die," but significantly challenged by Chaviano's stylistically hybrid rewriting of Bible verses.

Restless, on the other hand, markets its books to a non-academic readership looking for a mix of pleasure and cultural education. The paratextual supports stand at a greater remove, operating through the mechanism of online copy to draw readers to the text without instructing them how to read it, as happens in *Cosmos Latinos*. Where Bell and Molina-Gavilán aim to support research and teaching, the publishers of Restless make clear that they serve the cultural and political agenda of combatting the tendency toward self-satisfied cultural insularism in the U.S. Both Rojas and Yoss's texts serve this aim in different ways. *A Legend of the Future* advances an unapologetically communist optimism about mind alteration, while Yoss's work teases the U.S. reader's implicit feelings of superiority.

Cosmos Latinos focuses on stylistic quality and originality, as is reflected in its translations. The English versions of the Cuban stories in the anthology both accentuate and ameliorate the complications of reading across language and cultural barriers. On the other hand, each Restless translation is different in its central issues. The scientific language of *A Legend of the Future* carries across without much incident, but the translator's inability to mark the crucial distinction between outer and inner dialogue adds friction to the reading experience, forcing the reader to invest more cognitive resources to follow the novel's suspenseful plot and absorb its forceful ideological content. In *A Planet for Rent* we find the translator making a variety of interventions with the goal of ensuring that the ideological multivalence of Yoss's text is clear to the Anglophone reader. *Super Extra Grande* puts that same translator through his paces again, demanding that he reflect both its jabs at the U.S. reader and its raucous hilarity.

Notes

- 1 "Cefalomo" is a neologism, suggesting both the combination of "cefálico" and "hombre" to create "brain people" and "cefálico" with "lomo" ("back"). The *cefalomos* are humans whose bodies have mostly disappeared through evolution because they have outsourced their physical activities to robots, with whom they communicate telepathically. There is a moment in the eponymous short story in which one of these robots observes the backs of these former humans heaving anxiously (110).

- 2 Yoss is the pen name of José Miguel Sánchez Gómez.
- 3 Nonetheless, Yoss laments the existence of many works that simply “translated clichés from world SF to a Cuban setting. Martians landing in Bartolo’s archetypal and very Cuban banana grove, the predictable robot who cuckolds his creator, etc.” (“trasladaban clichés de la CF mundial al ambiente cubano. Los marcianos aterrizando en el arquetípico y criollísimo platanar de Bartolo, el tópic robot que pegaba los cuernos a su creador, etc.”) (“Marcianos” 72).
- 4 This entire trilogy is available in English translation from Restless Books.
- 5 A feminist consciousness evolved over time in Le Guin’s work. For an assessment, see Clark. For an analysis of her critical stance toward monotheistic religion, see Erlich.
- 6 Ofidia is the setting for stories in the collections *Niños de neón* and *Dioses de neón*, as well as the novella *Veredas* (Portales Machado 357).
- 7 Similarly, Rachel Cordasco, writing on her website “Speculative Fiction in Translation,” confesses: “I found it difficult to get in to the story at first, since I was so confused about where the characters were and what was happening to them.”
- 8 Yoss chooses Tau Ceti not only for scientific reasons, but also because it is a commonplace in science fiction. Asimov, Heinlein, Ursula Le Guin imagine exploration and encounters there. What is more, it would be innocent to imagine that the homophony of Ceti and SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) escapes the author.
- 9 There is an astronomical parallel to Yoss’s playful reference to Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* in the fact that two craters on Mars’s moon Phobos have been named after its protagonist.
- 10 Yoss is most likely riffing on the prediction in H. G. Wells’s *The Shape of Things to Come* that Spanish and English would become mutually substitutable languages in the U.S. by the twenty-first century (242).
- 11 By asserting that Spanglish has its own grammar, Yoss defies the prejudices of many readers, whether of the original or the English translation.

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4 Warrior, Thinker, Human Presence

Translating Che Guevara

Che Guevara circulates through Anglophone channels of political and cultural discourse in iconic form.¹ Where he is worshiped and where he is reviled, his image proliferates. Alberto Korda's 1960 photograph *El guerrillero heroico* flows across boundaries of time and culture, whether in hagiographic or oppositional contexts.² Though the reader can refer to works like Maria-Carolina Cambre's *The Semiotics of Che Guevara: Affective Gateways* for an analysis of the political uses of his image, parallel work on the processing of Che's writings for circulation through English-speaking cultures is still needed in order to trace the multiple versions of the man and his thought that have made their way into the consciousness of English speakers through the written word. As André Lefevere reminds us, translations are rewritings that introduce their own kind of "image" of an author into new cultural contexts, reminding us of "the power wielded by these images, and therefore by their makers" (4). Over the past 60 years, English speakers have not accessed a single version, but rather encountered multiple representations of Che's ideas by interacting with an array of different kinds of rewriting, including, but not limited to short biographies in textbooks, encyclopedia entries, documentary films, posters, t-shirts, and isolated quotations.

When readers encounter translations of Guevara's writing, they are accessing his thought more directly, but not in an unmediated fashion. The translation they interact with is mediated in three fundamental ways: by being presented in the context of a prefatory or encompassing paratextual apparatus, by being the result of the condensation or cutting of the original, and by virtue of the multifarious operations the translator executes when working with Che's language itself. To broadly conceptualize the life that the man has led in Anglophone minds, it is necessary to consider not only the multiplicity of readers, each with their own political and cultural thinking patterns. It is essential to bring into view the numerous ways in which Che's Spanish-language texts traverse boundaries of language, culture, and time before informing mental constructs. In mapping the flows of ideas and representations it is important to recognize that readers of these less mediated representations of Guevara's

thought go on to produce rewritings like, for example, a paragraph in a history textbook, that then either solidify a mental image of Guevara or motivate the reader to seek out other rewritings. The flow of representation both branches and loops back, and full mapping is, of course, impossible. Nonetheless, attention can be focused on text translations to capture some of the conceptual movements occurring closer to the boundary between languages, cultures, and historical moments, thereby offering a means for a more solid understanding of downstream popular culture conceptualizations of Che's ideas.

As we attend to the political valence of translations, it also becomes clear that their goal is not only the communication of concepts, but also the motivation of political or military action. As José Santaemilia reminds us, "translation is not (and will not be) a neutral affair—it is always provisional, fragmentary, contradictory, polemical, political. A translation always adds something: ideology, political (in)correction, urgency or restraint" (6). These qualities show themselves to differing degrees in the translations we will examine. The provisional nature of translation comes into focus when charting how new versions refer to, repeat, or revise prior renderings. Fragmentarity comes vividly into view when we find translations that make significant excisions from the text. Contradiction also reveals itself to be a common phenomenon, where we see a given presentation announcing an agenda in its introduction only to work counter to that agenda in its actual processing of the language of the original work. Pervading these characteristics is what Santaemilia identifies as the ideological, polemical, or political. The motivatedness of translations of Guevara from distinct political standpoints is apparent throughout the examples we will consider, and suffuses the phenomena of provisionality, fragmentarity, and contradiction.³

For the purposes of defining a broad but manageable corpus, this chapter will examine multiple English-language renderings of two crucial yet very different Guevara texts: his 1961 manual *La guerra de guerrillas* (Guerrilla Warfare) and his 1965 essay *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* (Socialism and Man in Cuba). The thematic range found across the two texts offers a wide perspective on how Che has been introduced into political and cultural debates in the English-speaking world. The first, represented by his warfare manual, involves the tactical strategizing needed to defeat capitalist imperialism. The second, a letter-turned-essay, engages in the philosophical reflection deemed necessary to set a clear agenda for molding a new socialist society. Given the breadth of concerns addressed between these two texts, we can more effectively plot the terrain of Che's complex life in Anglophone textual circulation.

Observing how Che has been rewritten through translation provides vivid insights into how ideology motivates translation decisions. Given that politics carves out such distinct territories on the map of Guevara's textual movements through English-speaking cultures, we will organize

our examination according to the ideological divide between pro- and anti-communism. As we have seen in our examination of translation of other media, the function of prefaces, introductions, footnotes, and appendices interacts with the signifying processes of translations themselves. Examining the paratextual framing of the translations gives us a fuller impression of the Che image being projected. In relation to the bifurcation between editions that celebrate Che or contest him, we will set forth some hypotheses regarding the textual and paratextual strategies one would expect to see in different presentations of Guevara's writing. Then, in detailed examinations of the translations, we will be able to compare what we observe to these parameters.

As we examine how political agendas shape translations of Guevara, three questions come into focus. First: is Che's status as intellectual architect of the Revolution clear in the translation's treatment of both his ideas and his rhetoric? Writing from a left perspective, Margaret Randall frames the issue for us:

the Che of popular culture is much more a man of action than ideas. With the passage of time, even students of his life tend to focus more on his guerrilla struggles than on his thought. But Che was an original thinker, and one who contributed a great deal to our understanding of the problems inherent in trying to change society so that exploitation is a thing of the past and human beings may reach their full potential.

(36)

Paul J. Dosal describes Che in 1960 in this way: "he looked like a common soldier who had just come from the field of battle, but he sounded like a professor of revolutionary theory and practice ... no other militant in the rebel army matched Guevara's intellect" (165–66). There is significant conceptual content in the two texts we will examine, and translations that focus on or blur Che's intellectuality have complex political implications. The second question that overarches our investigation is: can the Anglophone reader sense Guevara's personality—the way he inserts his own humanness into his tactical and philosophical disquisitions—and can the reader feel the emotion he means to convey in his writing? This question relates to the importance of Che's charisma in convincing readers to accept his ideas, an issue, again, with important implications for global ideological struggles. The third question regards the social status of women, a topic that arises in both *La guerra de guerrillas* and in *El hombre y el socialismo en Cuba*. A way to phrase this question might be: how does the translation frame the complex question of gender equality, both in Guevara's thinking and in the Revolution as a whole? From a contemporary point of view, Che's record on the issue is mixed, as is to be expected of a man who, despite his radical egalitarianism, is the product

of his culture and time. As we will see, English translations intentionally or unintentionally refigure Che's opinions, to significant political effect.

As we would expect, the question of Che's intellectual stature is especially important in an academic packaging of his texts, but it also has important ramifications for the openly partisan formats we will consider here.⁴ For leftist publishers, it makes sense to raise Che's stature with a clear representation of his erudition. For anti-communist publishers, despite the temptation to obfuscate the reader's sense of Guevara's intelligence, a clear picture of the man's thinking is advisable to prevent the strategic error of underestimating the force of his ideas. With regards to the question of Che's personality and emotional appeal, similar urgencies present themselves. In the case of leftist publications, allowing Che to come through as a human presence, not only where he employs impassioned political rhetoric but also where his sense of humor comes spilling into a text that is otherwise stolidly serious, means allowing the reader a more significant affective connection with the man, perhaps leading to a deeper inspiration to put his ideas into action. For those publishers with a clear anti-communist agenda, depersonalizing Che is also detrimental, in that it might lead readers to underestimate the power of the man's charisma, which can lead to a misapprehension of the dimensions of the ideological battle at hand. The Che mystique is real and should not be taken lightly. Finally, with regards to the question of women's equality, those sections of Che's text where the issue is treated come across haphazardly into English, with the paradoxical phenomenon of some leftist treatments of the text making Che sound more sexist than he is. One publication from the left is unique in its project of addressing the issue head-on. Adrienne Rich's *Manifesto: Three Classic Essays on How to Change the World* attempts a gender-neutral rewriting of Che's *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* to remove barriers between its ideas and the feminist sensibilities of twenty-first century leftist readers. By doing so, it seeks to remake Che's text as a call to action in a new era. Rich's translation situates her in what Sherry Simon identifies as a tradition of women translators who have worked "to build communication networks in the service of progressive political agendas" (2).

The translations examined here were published between 1961 and 2018, and considering their political motivations, it is important to consider what the horizon of possibilities for action inspired by Che's writings would have been at distinct historical moments. International leftist hopes that Cuba would replicate itself globally generally decline with time after the publication of *La guerra de guerrillas*. Guevara fails to help galvanize a nascent revolution in the Congo in 1965 and is captured and killed in 1967 in a failed attempt to overthrow the right-wing Barrientos regime in Bolivia.⁵ Brian Loveman and Thomas M. Davies, Jr. assert that, in addition to the fact that they were usually unsuccessful, leftist liberation movements provoked the ascendance of reactionary

dictatorships: “with harsh military regimes in control of the Southern Cone and more traditional dictatorships dominating most of Central America, the threat of ‘more Cubas’ appeared defeated” (xi–xii). The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 erases communist government from most of the globe, and Cuba struggles through the economic emergencies of the Special Period and into a series of fluctuating and uneasy compromises with free market capitalism up to the present moment. As a result, the horizon of leftist aspirations shifts, but does not disappear, as opposition to imperialism remains strong. In the preface to her 2005 collection that includes “Socialism and Man in Cuba,” Adrienne Rich asserts the relevance of Che’s and other Marxist ideas in resistance to the Iraq war (9). In relation to the general decline of the Guevarist threat, it is not surprising to see that there are no new anti-communist translations of Guevara after 1972. This is not to say that anti-communists in the English-speaking world perceive his threat as completely banished, given that they periodically reference his image and mystique to criticize socialist reforms at home and abroad.

What Lawrence Venuti calls fluency, or that quality of a translation that makes it read as if it were the original, is a crucial issue for publishers on both sides of the ideological divide considered here. Venuti explains that in the English-speaking world “a translated text ... is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent” (*Invisibility* 1). He also demonstrates that transparency is an illusory effect; it is impossible for a translation to offer unmediated access to the meaning-making processes that were operative within its own cultural context. Of course, effects that are illusory, from Venuti’s ontological point of view, can nonetheless be pragmatically potent, setting in motion consequential chains of political thought and action. For the leftist publisher, a fluent translation can be theorized as especially desirable, given that the reader is more likely to be inspired to act if there is a feeling of identification with the author thanks to the rendering of their language in an easily assimilable style. Furthermore, the internationalism implicit in communist political thought benefits from translations that do not feel foreign, that make the Revolution feel less like a Cuban particularity and more like a global possibility. On the other hand, it would stand to reason that an oppositional translation would tend toward a rendering that transmits the informational content of the texts without domesticating them. In this mode, Che reads as Latin American. He is an object to be studied, and the dividing line between his identity and that of the skeptical reader is maintained. Beyond avoiding translation choices that digest difference and give the impression that Guevara writes directly to the reader in English, it should come as no surprise to also note where terms and references are anchored to their original context, rather than adapted for easy comprehension in English, given the

political importance of avoiding a situation in which the anti-communist reader is pulled into too intimate a relationship with the author as person. What we will see as we compare translations is that not all leftist presentations of Guevara's work engage in fluent translation as we might expect, and that anti-communist editions use a lucid, easily read English not only through manipulation of the linguistic texture of the text, but also through aggressive deletions and condensations.

Always relevant in the analysis of translation, paratexts have played multivalent roles in shaping the reader's experience of Che translations. In some cases, they make forceful ideological statements, attempting to influence how the reader interprets Guevara's political ideas. One anti-communist presentation of the warfare manual employs an introduction that clearly presents the text as an aid in defeating Che's agenda. At times, ideologically motivated deployment of paratext has ambiguous effects. Ocean Press's 2006 translation of Guevara's *La guerra de guerrillas*, for example, uses footnotes to indicate where Guevara made comments on his own writing, creating the paradoxical dynamic of bringing the person of Che into more intimate dialogue with the reader and relativizing or bracketing off certain sections of the text Guevara indicates require revision. Operating at another semiotic level is the frequent absence of paratext in English-language editions of the text. In these cases, the reader's experience is one of being immersed immediately, and perhaps disorientingly, into the flow of Guevara's ideas and references to his own historical moment. Not only are there cases where there is no preface, introduction, footnotes, or appendices; often the translator's name is also absent. Following the logic of Gérard Genette's assertion that the author's name is itself a kind of paratext (37), the presence or non-presence of the translator's name exerts its own paratextual effect on the translation. Interestingly, the phenomenon occurs on both sides of the ideological rift examined here. From a leftist standpoint the anonymity of the translator is a gesture that suppresses individuality to focus on the collectivist message of the text itself. Nonetheless, anti-communist presentations of the text also tend to leave the translator anonymous, a fact that grows out of the U.S. military policy of identifying translators with letters and numbers rather than by name. Finally, Genette theorizes that images such as illustrations and photos also function as paratexts (406), and in the texts studied here, they appear or disappear, to subtle yet significant effect. The original text of Guevara's warfare manual was accompanied by images illustrating such concepts as how to string up a tent between trees and how to dig traps for enemy tanks. Where these images are reproduced in translations, the instructional intent of the original is carried across. Where they are left out, which occurs in both celebratory and oppositional editions, the feeling of the immediately practical value of the text is diminished, and in the case of anti-communist presentations, one can deduce a lack of strategic interest in the images.

Guerrilla Warfare: Bible and Text-in-Process

Guevara wrote his manual on guerrilla warfare in 1960, when the memory of the revolutionary victory over Batista's military was fresh. Paul J. Dosal explains that the work is the fruit of the scholarly approach Guevara took to leading the struggle against Batista: "he had recorded and studied the history of the Cuban insurrection as he fought it, stuffing his knapsack with field diaries, papers, and books" (165–6). The text operates in two modes, offering practical instruction in battlefield tactics and explaining the means to inspire local support for the guerrilla fighters' cause. At the articulation point between these is the *foco*, Guevara's concept of a small vanguard of guerrilla fighters that can create both the tactical and the ideological conditions for the growth of a general insurrection against an oppressive government. Marco Gabbas explains that

La guerra de guerrillas shows Guevara's ideas on the guerrilla war as a political movement, and as a war which is at the same time a war of manoeuvre and a war of position (in Gramscian terms) adapted to Latin American conditions which should enable a revolutionary political movement to gain hegemony over the population.

(56)

Guevara's aim in offering the lessons of his own experience in Cuba is the export of the revolution to other Third World countries, and eventually, to the world. Writing in 1967, I. F. Stone remarks that Guevara's lessons were studied carefully on both sides of the Cold War divide: "his little book on guerrilla war has become not only a bible for revolutionaries but the anti-bible of the Green Berets of Fort Bragg." A crucial section of the text we will be visiting and revisiting as we examine English translations is Guevara's explanation of a woman's capacity to contribute to a guerrilla war effort. Progressive for its time, today it reads as sexist, especially to readers on the political left. Though Guevara underlines the fact that women have played an important role in guerrilla warfare despite persistent underestimation of their powers, the reader may be disappointed to find the roles Guevara highlights: cook, seamstress, teacher, and social worker among the local population.⁶

One of the first English translations of *Guerra de guerrillas*, by J. P. Morray, was published in 1961 by the Monthly Review Press, the publishing arm of the eponymous socialist journal published in New York.⁷ Morray's rendering exerts an outsized influence as it appears over time in various editions and forms the basis that future translators work from. The 1961 text is punctuated by occasional footnotes providing biographical and historical context and copy on the inside and outside jacket flaps takes the place of a preface. Where prefaces, as internal components of a volume, tend to point toward the main text, jacket copy operates in a

more liminal space between inside and outside, and as a result, it typically operates in a marketing role. As Genette observes, “the most obvious function of the jacket is to attract attention” (28). The jacket to the 1961 volume couches a brief content summary in language that lionizes Guevara: “guerrilla warfare is both a science and an art. One of the most brilliant students of the subject is Ernesto ‘Che’ Guevara.” The fact that the translation is published shortly after the original is highlighted at the close of the jacket blurb: “the book is unquestionably destined to become an important historical document.” Finally, the text includes reproductions of the original edition’s black and white etchings illustrating such strategic practices as launching a Molotov cocktail with a rifle.

Murray was a U.S. author and professor of law who lived in Cuba from 1960 to 1962, serving for part of that time as visiting professor at the University of Havana. Two books emerged from his research and experience on the island. In 1962 he published a sympathetic analysis of Castro’s transition from anti-imperialist liberal to communist in *The Second Revolution in Cuba*, also from the Monthly Review Press.⁸ The year before, with the same publisher, he put out *Guerrilla Warfare*, his translation of *La guerra de guerrillas*. His translation amplifies the impression of reading a textbook through careful interventions to allow for the clear transmission of Che’s ideas, but shows a lack of interest in conveying his style. Murray makes insertions for the benefit of clarity, for example when dealing with the Spanish word *guerrilla*, which can refer both to a mode of warfare and the group of soldiers that engage in it. When the sense is the latter, he gives “guerrilla band” (17). Further, he often divides Guevara’s longer sentences in two, a practice guided by English language stylistic norms. In keeping with this preference for concision in written English, he also makes excisions for the sake of compactness, a strategy evidenced in his rendering of Che’s crucial statement “no se debe dar, de ninguna manera, batalla que no se gane, combate o escaramuza que no se gane” (17) as “no battle, combat, or skirmish is to be fought unless it will be won” (19). Murray privileges conventions for economical presentation of information over poeticism here as he removes both the amplification of the negative with “de ninguna manera” (ever, at any time, in any way) and the repetition of the verb “ganar” (to win). The result is that the reader receives a punchy, aphoristic assertion but is given no sense of the expressive power of the language. Not only are there moments where Che’s use of emphatic repetition is elided; the metaphorical flavor of his language is diluted at many points as well. In some cases, informational nuance gets blurred; when Guevara writes of how a soldier might “conciliar el sueño” (48), Murray gives “sleeping” (51), though the phrase, which literally means to win or earn sleep, communicates the immense difficulty of achieving adequate rest in the wild. Beyond the level of simple denotation, the flattening out of metaphorical language clouds both the reader’s sense of

Guevara's flair as a writer and the impression that the man is personally present in the text. When he describes a strategy for protecting soldiers against enemy mortar fire, he uses the phrase "para que la labor de los morteros se nulifique" (66) (so that the mortars' hard work is nullified). Morray opts for directness and economy by rendering the phrase as "so that mortar fire will be ineffective" (69). Read as information, nothing is lost. What is absent is the feeling of bravura, of tough-guy irony, in both the metaphor of "labor" and the half-step up to the more formal "nulificarse." A more vivid example of the loss of personal flavor occurs when Guevara describes the dreaded phenomenon of "cara de cerco" (58), the panicked expression of the soldier who has been circled by the enemy. Morray's direct rendering, "encirclement face" (62), is unintentionally humorous in its refusal to recreate the author's mirthful treatment of the subject. With a simple adjustment to "siege face," a clearer feeling for the author's tone comes through.

On the issue of the role of women in guerrilla warfare, Morray's translation amplifies the problematic elements of the original's assertions and language. Where Che refers to the *guerrillera* as a "compañera" (83) he employs a term that evokes socialist and military senses of comradeship; Morray's choice to use "companion" (88) activates connotations of subservience. Where Guevara describes the woman warrior as just as tough as a man, he uses the adjective "resistente" (83) or "tough," whereas the translation again falls into the trap of directness, calling her "resistant" (88). The most egregious error of this type comes where Morray again assumes direct correspondences between cognates; where the original asserts her "papel relevante" (83) (important role) the translation describes her "relief role" (88). Morray's translation was published in 1961, a moment when readers generally turned a deaf ear to such patronizing tones. Nonetheless, it has been reprinted many times since, most likely to increasingly dismayed readerships as consciousness about women's rights and representation in language has developed over time.

Whereas Morray's translation emerged when the Cuban Revolution seemed to many leftists to promise the feasibility of socialist revolution throughout the world, the Australian leftist publisher Ocean Press's *Guerrilla Warfare: The Authorized Edition*, from 2006, testifies to both the immortality of leftist hopes and the complex questions and problems that attenuate them. The volume includes both a new translation and a radically different set of paratexts. The editorial note explains that the present edition reproduces the extensive notes Guevara wrote in a published copy of his own work, with the intent of publishing an expanded and revised text (viii). The edition uses footnotes to explain where Che marked the text in red or green ink to indicate that an idea should be corrected, restated, or expanded upon in a subsequent edition. Bolded terms in the translation indicate his edits. As a result, the reader

imagines the marked and re-marked appearance of the page, and Che comes to feel present through his interactions with his own text. Further, a vivid image of the author's punctiliousness comes through, which might heighten some readers' respect for him as an intellectual. Whereas this enhanced sense of connection with and respect for the author seems to support the edition's political agenda, the Ocean edition also releases a contrasting effect in presenting *Guerrilla Warfare* as text-in-process. The footnotes crack the surface of the text and unsettle the ideologically motivated desire to see it as an unchanging, canonical, sacred object. This effect is particularly keen when a footnote indicates that Che has written "fix this" in the margin of his text (26). Seeing no actual emendation sketched out, some readers may be left with a sense of uncomfortable uncertainty. Finding Che's note "check" undermines the reader's confidence in the factual accuracy of the evidence he uses to support certain arguments (55). In the end, the book is haunted by an ambivalent relationship between univocity and the fissured quality of Che's text. The edition shines light on both the author's intellect and his limitations by revealing his struggles with the arduousness of the writing process. As opposed to their standard function of introducing a separate editorial voice into the main text, the Ocean footnotes explaining Che's own editorial notes bring the author into conversation with his own work. Where Ocean's editorial voice does break in, it is often to amplify rather than relativize the text's arguments. For example, one footnote defends Che's use of the term "adoctrinamiento" (21) claiming that "Che uses the term 'indoctrination' to mean political education" (24); the editor works to fend off the reader's potential discomfort and protect the author's agenda.

Contrasting the sense of intimacy with Che that this paratextual structure facilitates, both editors and translator are left anonymous, a fact that amplifies the worshipful tone of a book that purports to channel the hero's presence rather than place his words in quotation marks, bracket them, or place them in dialogue with other revolutionary ideas or histories. The edition does include a signed foreword by Harry "Pombo" Villegas, who fought alongside Guevara in Cuba. Villegas's words harmonize with the general agenda of the volume as they assert Che as immortal example for all who strive for social justice (1). The unnamed translator contributes to the project of bringing the reader closer to the author by relaxing the stiffness of Morray's translation at several moments in the text. Nonetheless, there is ample evidence that the translator has worked from the preceding version, especially when the latter's more peculiar errors are reproduced. In the discussion on the role of women, the Ocean edition repeats the error of reading "papel relevante" as "a relief role" (106). For "resistente" it again gives "resistant" (106) instead of "tough." Nonetheless, where Morray renders "compañera" as "companion," the Ocean edition uses "compañero" (106), a strange mix of foreignization

and domestication through the preservation of the Spanish and the lack of gender agreement. This decision is equivalent to the choice of referring to a Latina as a “Latino woman.” Where the masculine “compañero” appears in the original, the translator tends to leave it as such. In this way, non-translation at crucial moments leaves the imprint of the original in the translation, releasing a complex set of effects. “Compañero” occurs at crucial moments where Che brings the value of comradeship to the fore. Non-translation inscribes difference within the English-language text at these moments where the author privileges the concept of solidarity. This, on the one hand, reduces the sense of the universality of some of Che’s assertions while at the same time enhancing the sense that the “real” Che is present at those moments in the translation where the Spanish the real man spoke punctures the surface of the English-language text.

La guerra de guerrillas Decoded by the Enemy

The 1961 Praeger Publishers edition of *Guerrilla Warfare* presents Guevara’s text within an explicitly oppositional framework. Frederick Praeger was an Austrian Jewish immigrant who emigrated to the United States in 1938 and became a citizen in 1941. He began publishing books in 1950, focusing on works by former communists that provide an insider’s analysis of the system’s injustices.⁹ Having served as an army officer in World War II, Praeger also took an interest in publishing source texts and analyses on leftist guerrilla tactics with the aim of aiding the U.S. military.¹⁰ In *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*, Frances Stonor Saunders contends that Praeger

published between twenty and twenty-five volumes in which the CIA had an interest in either the writing, the publication, or the distribution. Praeger said it either reimbursed him directly for the expenses of publication or guaranteed, usually through a foundation, the purchase of enough copies to make it worthwhile.

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In 1961 Praeger published a translation of *Guerra de guerrillas* titled *Che Guevara on Guerrilla Warfare*. The version, whose title already signals a distance between publisher and author, is the result of a multi-step rewriting process. First, both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marines produced strategic translations, from which Marine Major Harries-Clichy Peterson created a heavily condensed version of the third chapter for publication in the *Marine Corps Gazette* in the summer of 1961. The publisher is credited as having an active role in the presentation of the final Praeger translation (xxxiii); the translators or editors involved in this process are not credited. In this suppression we see a surprising commonality with many leftist translations. As Venuti reminds us, the translator’s

invisibility and the reader's experience of fluency are linked: "the effect of transparency conceals the numerous conditions under which the translation is made, starting with the translator's crucial intervention. The more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator" (*Invisibility* 1). In the Praeger edition, this dynamic works to fulfil the strategic aim of offering decision-makers a frictionless reading experience suffused with the illusion of unmediated access to the most strategically actionable information in Guevara's text. The target reader's experience should not be complicated by considerations of the text's provenance. Concision is crucial, and though it preserves more detail than is found in Peterson's extreme condensation, the Praeger translation is still significantly shorter than the original. As we will see, practical and ideological thinking are constantly visible when we chart the aggressive reduction of the original text.¹¹

The book announces its opposition to the original work it purports to present in an introduction by Peterson, which begins the project of rewriting *La guerra de guerrillas* that is continued in the translation itself. Peterson characterizes the translated text as "a plea to recognize clearly how Communist revolutionary guerrilla warfare delivered Cuba, and what it portends beyond" (xxviii). By doing so, he reveals that the translation reverses the original's communicative orientation. As Venuti explains, "translation detaches the source text from the diverse contexts that make it uniquely meaningful and functional in the language and culture where it originated" and subsequently constructs a text anchored to new "meanings, values, and functions" (*Contra Instrumentalism* 44). When these new "meanings, values, and functions" are opposite those that informed the original, the translation becomes an act of reversal. The original celebrates what Cuba promises, while the translation fears what it "portends." Peterson goes on to caution that adverse conditions in the Third World make more Cubas possible: "throughout the world, politically unstable, illiterate, poverty-stricken countries present fertile ground for Communist revolutionary warfare" (xxi). He explains that the author sees the revolutionary task as equally political and military, warning the reader to respect Che's ability to drum up support among a local population to quickly strengthen his forces (xvii). He goes on to analyze Guevara's tactical ideas with the kind of careful attention expected given the fundamental strategic motivation of the book. He urges the reader to fear and respect the revolutionary's intellectual stature (xxxii), though he goes on to contradict himself on this matter, as we will see. He worries that by publishing 50,000 copies of *La guerra de guerrillas* the Revolutionary government will reach a broad audience throughout Latin America (xxxi-xxxii). Peterson does not mention that the present volume is a mirror image of the Cuban government's strategy. Further, it is crucial to understand that there is a difference between respecting the global strategic threat Guevara's ideas pose and making an effort to understand

those ideas on their own terms. The Praeger edition is thoroughly shaped by the former intention, a fact that becomes clearer upon analyzing the translation.

At the end of his introduction, Peterson anticipates that a frustrated expectation of directness and concision might discourage the reader of a translation that recreates Guevara's writing style rather than processing it for the sake of the kind of economy the English language prefers. He opines that the *guerrillero's* writing style is "verbose and flowery" and arguments are slow in reaching their culmination (xxxii). Despite what Peterson sees as a dissonance between author's style and reader's expectations, he advises attention to the text's formal properties as a way of understanding how the author has inspired loyalty in Cuba through strong appeals to the emotions of his audiences (xxxii). Peterson sneaks into his discussion the elitist argument that since many in Latin America lack formal education, the region is more highly prone to emotional manipulation (xxxii). Further, he misreads what he perceives to be the Spanish text's long-windedness as indicative of pure emotivity in Guevara's writing. Though there are moments in which Guevara employs rhetorical tools uniquely at his disposal as a speaker of Spanish to inspire his reader, his text is not abnormally excited in tone. Peterson ignores the fundamental fact that the norms of Spanish prose dictate an emphasis on clarity, whereas English prose privileges concision, even at the potential expense of transparency. *La guerra de guerrillas* generally employs standard expository language, which, in direct translation to English, will inevitably feel verbose and redundant. One crucial characteristic of written Spanish is its tendency toward hypotaxis, its preference for explicit connections among discourse elements that make such links as causality and conditionality clear. M. Stanley Whitley summarizes the difference thus:

English speakers tend to state a point directly and then develop it with parataxis, that is, loose joining of simple clauses with coordinating conjunctions and sentence adverbials. Spanish speakers, however, tend toward a less abrupt start and prefer to link ideas through hypotaxis, that is, embedded clauses with subordinating conjunctions.

(341)

What is considered good English prose style will often draw on the concentration of informational flow that can be derived from parataxis, or the method of placing discourse elements parallel to each other without making the connection between them explicit. In the end, Guevara's prose does not read as florid, but rather as standard expository prose that employs personalization, humor, metaphorical inventiveness, and emotive elevation of themes. Contradicting himself, Peterson denigrates Guevara's intellect by underestimating the quality of his writing. The

intense valuation of concision, originating in his native language and amplified by his military training, underlies this interpretive move.

As his introduction continues, Peterson swerves, directing the reader's attention away from stylistic characteristics of the original to return to the translation's dominant agendas of condensation, simplification, and strategic operationalization. He asserts that the aesthetic and affective qualities of the Spanish-language text necessitate a "fairly free translation" in "reasonably concise English" (xxxii). That a distillation of the Spanish prose is necessary is, of course, not an objective statement; the implicit belief is that a translation must serve the needs of its readers. Put another way, Peterson's assertion is based on an underlying target-reader and target-culture orientation. Though he seems to spur his audience to think about the text as reflecting its source cultural situation, he poses the translation as beholden to military norms regarding the parameters of an informative text. Lawrence Venuti indicates that there is a general tendency in the Anglophone world "to read translations mainly for meaning, to reduce the stylistic features of the translation" (*Invisibility* 1). In the Praeger edition we find this inclination amplified by the addition of the norms of military communication. In the end, the Praeger translation is faithful to its military strategic aims. Not only must the reader be presented with a text that transmits information clearly, they also need that information to be assimilable in a minimum of time, so that the most efficient use of intellectual manpower is achieved. As I. L. Petrochenkova notes, in the U.S. military the ideal written text "presents only factual information and is characterized by pithiness and succinctness, the use of standard official language means which are characteristic of the Army as a military institution and underlines its institutional character" (82).

Beyond the issue of verbosity or concision, characteristics of Guevara's writing that signal his pathos (which is present in the text at crucial moments, though not constantly overflowing it, as Peterson asserts) must be suppressed if the translation is to serve its strategic function, even if an indirect sense of the original's rhetorical qualities is evoked in Peterson's introduction. The book as a whole seeks to avoid the unintended consequence of inspiring revolutionary sympathies in Anglophone readers, an agenda it achieves through a variety of means: the introduction's forceful reframing of signification, the neutralizing of certain aesthetic and emotional valences active in the Spanish, and blunt omission. Where these strategies are at work, a clear agenda is visible: to both defeat the communist enemy on the battlefield and suppress the dissemination and popularization of that enemy's way of thinking.

Vivid evidence of the impact of Peterson's suppression of many of the original text's expressive elements can be found in Hanson W. Baldwin's review of the book for the *New York Times*. Committing the fundamental error of confusing translation with original text, Baldwin dismisses Guevara's writing style as "abrupt and undistinguished" and opines that

“the introduction by Maj. Harries-Clichy Peterson is more provocative and stimulating” (35). The power of translation and its paratextual framing to re-fashion the image of the author of the original according to its own purposes cannot be underlined more strikingly than by reading Baldwin’s confident dismissal of Che Guevara’s intellectual and authorial powers.

The book’s agenda of concision is immediately visible upon perusing the text’s intertitles. “Esencia de la lucha guerrillera” (13) (Essence of guerrilla struggle) becomes “Essence” (3). “Principio, desarrollo y fin de una guerra de guerrillas” (69) (Beginning, development, and end of a guerrilla war) is rendered concisely, and more vaguely, as “Over-all Pattern” (49). The speed of the reader’s information processing is given primacy, though a contrastive analysis brings to the fore that concision comes always with the danger of ambiguity and underemphasis. A cursory examination of the text also reveals the absence of the illustrations that appear in the original and in many English translations. These images are considered less strategically useful; no important technical information is likely conveyed, from a military standpoint, by black and white images of improvised shelters and Molotov cocktail launchers. The edition does insert an illustration of the guerrilla strategy of the “minuet,” a method for surrounding and frustrating an enemy squadron (14), and a basic graphic representation of the organizational structure of guerrilla bands (39), this latter example employed to replace a wordy explanation in the original.

Turning to the structures of the language used in the translation, the reader notes the ruthless elimination of discourse connectors. Phrases like “lo primero que hay que establecer es” (15) (what must be established first), and “tenemos que llegar a la conclusión inevitable de que” (15) (we must arrive at the inevitable conclusion that) are consistently suppressed. Where these excisions are made, pithy declarative sentences are left behind, and Guevara comes across as more aphoristic than he is in Spanish. At times, the extreme concision of the English renders a staccato, rather than eloquent, effect: “The maximum possible mobility is required. Strike lightning-swift blows, preferably at night. Withdraw in a different direction” (23). Missing from the translation are the verbal tendons that interconnect the text’s parts. Removing these structures goes beyond reducing the text’s word count. Since explicit interconnection of sections of a text tends to direct the reader’s attention back to previously read passages or to anticipate discussions to come, it interferes with reading speed, a crucial value from the point of view of this particular translation.

In addition to connective structures, the Praeger text also removes specificity. Tracking cases in which the original uses the phrase “por ejemplo” (for example), reveals frequent omissions in the English version. At times, the translator perceives Guevara’s examples less as useful data

points and more as rhetorical elaborations. Ideological motivations come into view when noting the blurring or erasure of specificity: Che is often cut short where he is building up an inspiring description of the guerrilla fighter's admirable psychological and moral strength. A vivid instance occurs where Guevara describes the *guerrillero's* inevitable austerity:

a la austeridad obligada por difíciles condiciones de la guerra debe sumar la austeridad nacida de un rígido autocontrol que impida un solo exceso, un solo desliz, en ocasión en que las circunstancias pudieran permitirlo. El soldado guerrillero debe ser un asceta.

(39)

(to the austerity obliged by the difficult conditions of war we must add the austerity that is born of a rigid self-control that prevents any and all excesses or indiscretions on occasions that might permit them. The guerrilla soldier must be an ascetic.)

The translation renders the entirety of this passage as “he must be an ascetic” (31), removing the emphatic character of Che's language. The excision of the dramatic buildup of the first sentence removes the emphasis on the difficulty of the task and of maintaining the inner strength required. The political and personal communicativeness of the text ends up diluted, as informational or emotive valences of the original text that clash with the value system that structures the translation are filtered out. Where this kind of translational intervention occurs, a target reader has been firmly conceptualized and inscribed, in a virtual way, in the translation itself. A fundamental cacophony results, characterized by Guevara's assertions and the translation's ideologically motivated negations, by the emotion that swells in the original and its suppression in the English. A similar process occurs where Guevara describes the *guerrillero* as a social reformer whose inspiration comes from a profound empathy with the suffering of the poor and oppressed:

la situación de los habitantes del lugar se ha hecho carne en su espíritu, parte de su vida, y comprende la justicia y la necesidad vital de una serie de cambios cuya importancia teórica le llegaba antes, pero cuya urgencia práctica estaba escondida la mayor parte de las veces.

(40)

(the situation of the inhabitants of the place has become flesh in his spirit, part of his life, and [the guerrilla fighter] understands justice and the vital need for a series of changes whose importance were understood previously on a theoretical plane, but whose practical urgency was hidden most of the time.)

This detailed exploration of the experiential and conceptual dimensions of ideological development is rendered in a few phrases in the translation: “his ideas, his plans, and lessons from experience ... [his] spiritual dedication” (31). The device of distilling sentences into elements in a list, which occurs frequently in the translation, collapses the unfolding of ideas in the text. In this case, what is strikingly absent is the process of change and learning within the mind of the revolutionary, the description of which makes them more human and relatable. A translation that respected the detail of Che’s description would be more likely to register positively with readers, who are offered the opportunity to identify with the personal process described.

The Praeger translation also does ideological work in its treatment of register. By flattening out what Peterson describes as Guevara’s “flowery” language, the translation drains the text of its affective dimension. Where Che writes of the character traits that make a guerrilla fighter “able to fulfill completely the mission entrusted to them” (“poder cumplir a cabalidad la misión encomendada” [41]), the translation offers: “to do his job” (32). The translation concerns itself with factual content and actively suppresses the tonal and pragmatic dimensions of the phrase. Guevara raises the register of his language to communicate to the reader the sacredness of the mission; the translation lowers it to dilute the uplifting and inspiring nature of the original.

The Praeger translation’s treatment of the crucial section of the text where Guevara deals with the question of women’s status in a band of guerrilla fighters sets off complex and contradictory effects. On the one hand, the rendering avoids errors other translators make and keeps the intention of the original in focus. For example, the phrase “un papel relevante,” which Morray’s translation upends by rendering it as “a relief role,” appears in the Praeger edition as “an outstanding role” (57). Where Morray unintentionally undermines Guevara’s praise by rendering “resistente” as “resistant,” the Praeger version is “resilient” (57). In both instances, semantic choices preserve the relative progressivism of the author’s statements about women’s capacities as warriors. In contrast, the Praeger translation reveals sexist bias in its treatment of Guevara’s description of women “fighting alongside men” (“combatir al lado de los hombres” [83]), rendering the phrase as “fighting with the troops” (57). Rather than juxtapose women with men, the English version contraposes women with soldiers. Furthermore, the agenda of achieving an extreme condensation of Guevara’s language erases the details the author provides to illustrate women’s strategic functions in a war zone. As many of these functions are those that are traditionally assigned to women, Guevara’s characterization of *guerrilleras* falls short of contemporary expectations of progressive thinking. Nonetheless, from his historical and cultural vantage point, he expresses an admiration of the cooking, sewing, nursing, social work, and teaching skills he has

witnessed women display (83–4). As is so often the case, the Praeger edition provides a perfunctory list of these functions, rather than the detailed and appreciative treatment Che gives them (58). Suppression of this detail contributes to an erasure of both women’s activity at a crucial moment of history and an influential man’s authentic, if not fully feminist, appraisal of that activity. The section describing women’s roles is one of the most extensively reduced of all the chapters in *La guerra de guerrillas*, given that the Praeger translation reflects a tactical mindset that assumes that in counterrevolutionary warfare women will not be met with on the battlefield. Furthermore, a description of her role behind the scenes of combat is of less interest not necessarily because of her gender, but most likely because the translation as a whole is less interested in Che’s discussion of activities off the battlefield and among local populations. The translation is made to conform strictly to a narrow tactical agenda, and as such, not only is a recognition of women’s work lost. A whole texture of social historical detail is also suppressed, such that a reader looking for information about Cuban revolutionary society is led to believe that *La guerra de guerrillas* is bereft of much useful detail. When translations pursue narrowly defined agendas, they unleash effects on the transmission of information and ideas that persist as long as editions circulate. A vivid example can be found where Guevara allows for the existence of responsible romantic relationships among male and female fighters, even asserting the appropriateness of soldiers marrying one another under the correct conditions (84). The fact that the Praeger translation takes no interest in the issue suppresses understanding of an issue that many readers would likely find interesting and that might lead to further sociocultural inquiry.

Socialist “Man” from Left and Right

Guevara’s *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* was originally a letter to Carlos Quijano, editor of the Uruguayan weekly *Marcha*, where it was subsequently published. Guevara composed the text in 1965 in Algeria, shortly before traveling to the Congo to lead a small group of rebels. His chief concern in the text is to explain his thinking on the relationship between individual and collective. By participating in the just struggles of an egalitarian society, people living under socialism are more free, not less. The ideal government, embodied by the one led by Castro, derives its legitimacy from responding directly to the deepest ambitions of the masses. Within these masses, “a new man” (“el hombre nuevo” [11]) must proliferate, one whose ambition is the good of society rather than the satisfaction of his own desires. As Miguel Martínez-Sáenz explains, Guevara argues that as much as government policy can work toward shaping this new consciousness, each person must take responsibility for educating themselves in socialism:

while individuals' consciousness underwent a change because of changes in external conditions, it remained ultimately their responsibility to assimilate the new consciousness and re-create themselves. The external conditions made the new consciousness possible. It did not follow, however, that if external conditions were changed all people exposed to these changes would "realize" themselves.

(25)

Guevara asserts that education and the arts play a crucial role in facilitating the development of a positive synthesis between individuality and social responsibility. In his artistic activity, the new man will not bow to formulas like those of socialist realism, but rather express his allegiance with the collective through new artistic forms. Where *Guerra de guerrillas* explores the possibility of military victory over an oppressive power and planting the seeds of socialism in the trenches, *El socialismo y el hombre* addresses the problem of continuing to water those seeds when the enemy is defeated and the new society is under construction. Commenting on Che's thinking regarding the transition from military victory to peacetime social struggle, Milena Hernández asserts: "una sublevación popular victoriosa permite derrotar a un gobierno derechista, pero el triunfo pleno de la revolución social implica necesariamente desplazar a las clases dominantes del poder e inaugurar una transformación histórica de la sociedad" (48) (a victorious popular uprising makes it possible to overthrow a right-wing government, but the total victory of a social revolution necessarily requires removing the dominant classes from power and inaugurating a historic transformation of society).

Originally published in 1965, *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* has appeared with steady regularity in English, both in slim separate volumes and in anthologies. Presses with a variety of agendas have offered versions. Though anti-communist entities, both military and civilian, decided it was tactically useful to translate the entirety of his instructional manual on guerrilla warfare, Che's influential statement on organizing a socialist society has attracted less attention from its opponents, a fact most likely indicating a keener interest in defeating socialism on the battlefield than in the arena of ideas. One rare example of an oppositional presentation of the text is the translation of an excerpt from the essay in Paul Sigmund's 1972 source text anthology *The Ideologies of Developing Nations*, published by Praeger. Not only have academic and leftist publishers shown much more intense interest in the essay; the Cuban government put out its own English translation in 1968. We will examine this version, followed by two leftist presentations, and conclude with an analysis of the Praeger excerpt. Generic mutability is an issue that recurs as we examine the original and its multiple manifestations in English. The original text starts as a letter, and through publication becomes a magazine article, then a book-length essay. In translation, Che's work variously

retains marks of its epistolary character, gets shaped into a textbook, or gets shortened into an anthology entry with excisions made for thematic simplicity.

In 1968, the year after Guevara's death, the Cuban government published *Che Guevara*, which presented English translations of "El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba" and four other texts. The title page identifies the year of publication as the "Year of the Heroic Guerrilla," of whom Guevara is the paradigmatic manifestation. The book responds to the danger Castro identified in his speech at Guevara's funeral on October 18, 1967: "los enemigos creen haber derrotado sus ideas, haber derrotado su concepción guerrillera, haber derrotado sus puntos de vista sobre la lucha revolucionaria armada" (our enemies believe they have defeated his ideas, defeated his conception of guerrilla warfare, defeated his points of view on armed revolutionary struggle). In the face of this danger, Castro assures the world: "su grito de guerra, llegará no a un oído receptivo, ¡llegará a millones de oídos receptivos! Y no una mano, sino que ¡millones de manos, inspiradas en su ejemplo, se extenderán para empuñar las armas!" (his battle cry will reach not just one receptive ear, but millions of receptive ears! And not just one hand, but millions of hands, inspired by his example, will reach out to seize their weapons!). Because of the trade embargo, the book most likely made its way with greater difficulty to readers in the U.S. than it did to English speakers elsewhere.

The spartan volume includes no preface or introduction, bibliography, or notes, and the translator or translators go unnamed. Aside from the title page inscription linking the publication of the book to the official designation of 1968 as a year of homage to fallen heroes, added intertitles are the only paratext. As Genette comments, titles that appear above subdivisions of a text are paratexts, just as the title of the text as a whole is (294). Titles can function "thematically" or "rhematically," either simply announcing the content of the upcoming section or indicating what the author's take on that content will be (78). The intertitles in the Cuban edition of "Socialism and Man in Cuba" fulfill both functions, identifying for example the theme of freedom and indicating Guevara's proclamation on that theme, as in "We are More Free Because We are More Fulfilled" (22). The intertitles make the book read like an instructional text, enacting a second generic transmutation of Guevara's original piece of writing: from letter, to essay, and now to textbook. The titling of the subsections functions in three modes: the topic-announcing fragment ("The Process of Individual Self-education" [10]), the declarative sentence ("Work Must Acquire a New Condition" [13]), and the implied imperative ("Compete Fiercely with the Past" [8]). Whether the translator invented them, or an editor gave instruction to add them, is not a question the book's collectivist ideological orientation finds it necessary to clarify. The intertitles appear as impersonal and indisputable emanations from the text itself, appearing

as if out of transcendent inevitability. Nonetheless, human intention is at work behind them in that they mark the translation's orientation toward ideological pedagogy and away from the emotive and aesthetic dimensions of Guevara's Spanish.

The lack of an introduction or footnotes is keenly felt as the reader enters into "Socialism and Man in Cuba" and reads Che's salutation to Carlos Quijano. The use of "comrade" for "compañero" inscribes the text in the language of international Communism and of the Cold War. The Spanish term evokes friendship, comradeship, and commitment to a common task; the English translation channels this breadth into a more forcefully political enunciation. Che's reference to "Playa Girón" (5), which could be localized to "the Bay of Pigs Invasion," is left in its original form (5), preserving a commitment to a Cuban point of view. Similarly, "la Crisis de Octubre" (5) is translated as "the October Crisis" (5) whereas the event is known as "the Cuban Missile Crisis" in English. The letter closes with the exclamation "patria o muerte" (homeland or death) left in the Spanish (22), leaving the reader with a final reminder of the cultural context of the original and its author. Reminders of the text's Spanish-language origin come where the English reads as stilted because of direct translation choices. "Formación" (20) is rendered as "formation" (14) rather than "education." "Ordenamiento" (7) is "ordinance" (6) rather than "law" or "code." At the conclusion of the text, Che uses a series of aphoristic statements to summarize both the Revolution's accomplishments and what is yet to be done. One metaphor he employs, in which the socialist project is described as bones that are solidly structured but lack flesh and clothing (32) suffers from excessive directness where the translator gives "protein substance" rather than "flesh" and from a lack of semantic appropriateness in "draperies" instead of "clothing" (22).

Though there are many passages where it underlines Che's intellectual strength, the translation's literalness tends to mute his personality and humor. The passive voice appears at times where an active verb would carry across the message more forcefully. Awkward hyphenations also distract the reader and interrupt the flow of discourse. Where it is direct and awkward the translation places a margin of distance between the reader and Che. Where it fails the wit and pathos of Che's rhetoric it is likely to diminish the feeling of identification with the author. The treatment of Che's prose throughout continues the information-sharing agenda announced by the inserted intertitles while neglecting the emotive and interpersonal valences of the text. Though it transmits the content of the essay, the translation obscures Che's personal presence, and as such would be less useful as inspiration for revolutionary action among readers. The text, marked by its complex and unresolved position between languages, cultures, and historical experiences is rich with impetus for analysis, though it falls short as propaganda.

The publisher that has put out the most English-language editions and new printings of *Socialism and Man in Cuba* is Pathfinder, the publishing arm of the Socialist Workers Party, based in New York. In 1971 the publisher issued its revised edition of a 1968 pamphlet titled *Socialism and Man* that had been distributed by the Young Socialist Alliance in New York. Despite the general decline in leftist hopes in Guevara's socialist vision over time, Pathfinder has released multiple printings of three editions of the text, with the most recent in 2018. The 1989 second edition includes the speech Castro gave in 1987 on the twentieth anniversary of Guevara's death, indicating the authorship of the volume as shared between the two men, and the three reprints of the 2009 third edition (which we will examine here) continue this format. The fact that Castro's words are the only explanatory paratext reveals a deliberate choice on the part of Pathfinder to present Che's work as the unmediated expression of Cuban ideas in the face of Cuban realities, even though these are understood according to communist ideology as intertwined with a global proletarian and anticolonial struggle. Giving the impression of the absence of an external editorial voice, the editors seek to give the reader the sense of direct immersion in the book's content. The translation of Castro's speech asserts that Che is "alive" and still "in action" (36). Guevara is "a paradigm, a model, an example" (38). Castro's speech ties Che's economic ideas and social values to the "rectification" campaign, begun in 1986, that sought to strengthen state control of the economy. For the Pathfinder reader, the declaration that the martyred revolutionary lives on is meant to land as contemporarily and locally relevant. The English-language editions aim for the paradigmatic declaration that all Cuban schoolchildren learn—"pioneers for communism, we will be like Che" (37)—to resonate with readers throughout the Anglophone world.

The Pathfinder edition strives to balance fluency with the preservation of original expressive elements and references. Its translation reads more naturally in English than the Cuban edition. Where Guevara employs a formal register, the translation does the same, while also allowing Che's wit and personality to spill into the text where they do so in the original. The translator decides to leave "compañero" in the letter's salutation as such, without italics, in contrast to the ideological processing of the term found in the choice of "comrade" in the Cuban edition. With this non-translation the translator seeks to avoid losing the semantic breadth and affective charge of the Spanish term. This avoidance of loss only occurs, though, for a reader with enough competence in Spanish to appreciate the various dimensions of the word. This act of non-translation at the outset harmonizes with the absence of an English-language editorial voice in the volume, fixing the reader's attention on the cultural situatedness of Che's enunciation. A footnote to the salutation that explains the text's origin as letter draws the reader's attention to the generic duality of the work, rather than transmuting it into something like a school text, as

occurs in the Cuban edition. Balance between cultural origin and readers' informational needs is established with English glosses appearing in brackets; "Playa Girón" appears as "Playa Girón [Bay of Pigs]" (9) and Che's closing cry of "patria o muerte" appears with the clarification: "patria o muerte [homeland or death]" (27).

The Pathfinder version avoids fundamental semantic errors that add noise to the Cuban translation, choosing "training" (19) for "formación," "law" (11) for "ordenamiento," and "clothing" (26) for "ropaje" (32). It also conveys Che's wit in a more natural way. Overall, Che breathes more easily in the Pathfinder translation, and as such, its various editions are more likely to inspire its reader than the version put out by the Cuban government. Further, the inclusion of Castro's speech, which is translated with a similar approach, enhances the motivational charge of the text. Given that the publisher has sold so many copies of the work over the course of multiple editions and printings, it can be speculated that it has had a significantly positive effect on esteem for the Cuban Revolution and strength of socialist conviction in the English-speaking world given the pragmatic strengths of its translation.

The last pro-communist packaging of *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* we will consider takes a radically different approach to both situating the letter-essay in relation to other texts and to translation itself. Edited by U.S. poet Adrienne Rich, the 2005 *Manifesto: Three Classic Essays on How to Change the World* places Guevara's text alongside Marx and Engels's "Communist Manifesto" and Rosa Luxemburg's "Reform or Revolution." Rich asserts that the three texts sustain "urgent conversations from the past that are still being carried on, among new voices, throughout the world" (9). Her agenda is thus not only to place Guevara in relation to other socialist thinkers, but also to bring him to life and make him relevant to the aspirations of anti-war and anti-imperialist activists who have been spurred to action in response to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. She reveals her feeling that Guevara's essay speaks to her personally as a poet when he discusses the complex tension between freedom and social responsibility in art: "[it is] difficult for those who are already artists ... to see the 'invisible cage' in which we work" (8). Nonetheless, she does not explore the difference between her experience of this tension living in the U.S. and that of a Cuban poet for whom there are more serious consequences for mis-gauging the proper balance between individuality and conformity. This silence reminds the reader of the overarching fact that Rich processes and deploys Guevara's text for domestic purposes rather than as a means for the reader to access Cuban realities.¹²

The most evident way Rich has anchored the text in domestic and contemporary values is her treatment of gender. Though she starts from the Pathfinder translation, she makes a striking departure through extensive efforts to make the text gender neutral. The original essay's use of traditional

male-gendered language is pervasive, a fact announced quite pointedly in its title.¹³ Faced with this problem, Rich naturally engages in what Louise von Flotow calls the “interventions” of feminist translation: “women translators have assumed the right to query their source texts from a feminist perspective, to intervene and make changes when the texts depart from this perspective” (24). This intervention is not a unilateral correcting of the original, as Pilar Godayol points out, but rather a complex interaction: “all hermeneutic translation practice as/like a woman carries with it a tug-of-war between text and author, between text and translator”; the way gender is marked in a text represents in the end “a negotiable practice on which we can (re)conduct our own reading” (13). It is clear Rich has grappled with *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba*. The principal negotiation Rich engages in is with the dual issues of socialism and gender. Rich is both Marxist and feminist, and so faces a challenge: Guevara’s Marxist ideas must stay in place, while acquiring a mode of expression appropriate for the twenty-first-century progressive reader. Consequently, she works mostly to modernize Che’s language so that his underlying egalitarianism is not marred by gender-specific language. Pierre Zoberman, writing about the question of gender neutralizing texts, sees a potential danger in this choice:

the translator might, on the one hand, opt to (re-)inscribe gender neutrality by, say, choosing exclusively gender-inclusive phrasings in the target language version in order to address the concerns of (part of) the potential readership in the present. The resulting translation, however, risks not being faithful to the spirit of the text, or more precisely to the implications of the linguistic practices of the historical period in terms of the conception of gender.

(233)

Rich’s choices implicitly reject the second option Zoberman identifies for two reasons. First, and most evidently, because of her political motives she seeks to ensure that Che reads as contemporary and relevant. Second, she interprets his Marxism as demonstrating an all-encompassing commitment to equality. In this sense, she sees gender neutrality as faithful to the “spirit” of Che’s advanced thinking on the status of women.

In some cases, Rich achieves gender neutrality through substitution, as when she gives “the individual was a fundamental factor” (149) rather than “the man.” At other moments, omission achieves the objective, as in the transformation of “a group of men” into “a group” (149). Finally, insertion proves useful where “the man of the future” becomes “the man and woman of the future” (150). Across these different choices, Rich employs an uneven approach to the question of the social constructedness of gender binarism. In some cases, non-binary people are included, whereas in others, such as the use of “man and woman,” gender identities that flout this reduction of possibilities are excluded.

As Marxist, Rich strives to keep Guevara alive in the English-speaking world in the twenty-first century by modernizing him; as a feminist she recognizes that, independent of her present subject matter, how she treats gender in the texts she produces has real effects on the progress of social equality. As Venuti stresses, “all translation ... is an interpretive act that necessarily entails ethical responsibilities and political commitments” (*Contra Universalism* 6). In “Toward a Woman-Centered University,” Rich points out that when the universal male is used in discourse, “grammar reveals the truth” of patriarchy rather than being “a semantic game or trivial accident of language” (126–7). Given the non-triviality of the issue of gender in language, she sees her translation of Guevara as marked by a responsibility, not to the author, but to her present and future readers.

Nonetheless, Rich does not resolve all instances where the masculine substitutes for the general, the most obvious example being the title. “Socialism and the Individual in Cuba” is available to her as a solution, supported by the fact that Guevara uses the noun “el individuo” 18 times in his text. Nonetheless, Rich preserves “Man.” The title is thus afforded a special status, exempt from revision because of its role as fixed historical fact, its antiquated gender specificity indelibly imprinted. The aim of a published translation being instantly recognizable as a version of a known original text can exert pressure against the impulse to modernize; the title of the text represents a threshold between an intratextual space of translational creativity and an intertextual realm in which fossilized forms and established textual lineages are respected. To be found and recognized in the world of textual circulation, *El socialismo y el hombre* must be “Socialism and Man.”

Title notwithstanding, Rich’s version of Guevara’s essay fulfills its goal of modernizing Che. Some of the work of achieving a fluent style was already done by the Pathfinder edition from which she clearly has worked. Her innovation of rewriting gender in the text builds on that prior step. By doing so, she facilitates the positive reception of Che’s ideas by twenty-first-century progressive readers who are likely to perceive a text that uses “man” for “people” as antiquated and thus potentially irrelevant.

First published in 1963, Paul Sigmund’s anthology *The Ideologies of the Developing Nations* includes English versions of three texts by Guevara in its 1972 second revised edition: “Guerrilla Warfare: A Method,” “Socialism and Man in Cuba,” and “Two, Three ... Many Vietnams.”¹⁴ When the book was published, Guevara had been dead for five years, and though outright successes for Marxist guerrillas were few, Che’s specter still loomed large in the minds of anti-communists. Marxist resistance groups had formed throughout Latin America, including the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (1964) and the Fuerzas Populares de Liberación “Farabundo Martí” in El Salvador (1970). Che’s

texts appear in Sigmund's collection after nine writings and speeches by Castro, in a volume that includes such figures as Mao Tse-Tung, Mohandas Gandhi, Léopold Senghor, Nelson Mandela, and Salvador Allende. The anthology carves the globe into the categories of "Asia," "The Islamic World," "Africa," and "Latin America," and its occasion is the postwar emergence of new nations, national identities, and means for postcolonial self-assertion in what is variously called the "Third World" or "developing world." Its chief concern is whether these nations will choose communist or free market capitalist systems to industrialize and increase their agricultural output. A thorough scholarly paratextual apparatus girds the book, consisting of the somewhat redundant inclusion of both the introduction to the 1963 first edition and a new introduction for the 1972 edition, along with a thematically subdivided bibliography. In the introduction to the first edition, Sigmund makes a comprehensive effort to understand what draws certain postcolonial leaders to socialism. "Socialism is preferred for moral as well as economic reasons" (12), he explains. Capitalism inspires hatred in parts of the developing world because of its association with colonialism, though the capitalism that gets denounced is often "stereotyped" (12–13). Sigmund argues that the U.S.S.R. is no less imperialistic than its First World opponents, and many Third World leaders are suspicious of Soviet meddling (12). Though Sigmund warns of the reasons a nation might be pulled into communism's orbit, his introduction offers a preponderance of examples of developing nations that have taken paths that to differing degrees embrace global capitalism. For this reason, Castro's and Guevara's texts are presented as marginal cases.

Sigmund translates all three Guevara texts himself, and his versions are closely guided by the conceptual frame his introduction constructs. Focusing our attention on "Socialism and Man in Cuba," we find a lucid, precise, natural read, without any evidence of biased connotative coloring in its treatment of language. Instead, it is Sigmund's excisions that represent the clearest evidence of translational intervention. Echoes of the Praeger edition of *Guerrilla Warfare* are strong as we observe the agenda that motivates Sigmund's cuts to Guevara's text. In many cases his deletions are motivated by an avoidance of redundancy, which theoretically allows the reader to glean the informational content of the text more efficiently. However, the suppression of redundancy often results in the suppression of emphasis. The quieting of Guevara's drum-beating reiterations forecloses the possibility of appreciating certain emotional or aesthetic qualities of the text. Furthermore, the kinds of repetitions Sigmund chooses to suppress are illustrative. The first excision he makes is of the text's epistolary framing. Because it has cut Che's salutation "estimado compañero," his explanation that he writes from Algeria at a crucial moment before his departure for the Congo, and his closing declaration of "patria o muerte," the text reads like an essay rather than a

letter. What is subsequently blurred is not only the historical situatedness of the text, but the human personality that created it. The second deletion comes where Che launches a pointed attack on the falsity of capitalist populism and the dream of social mobility in the U.S. The edition's purpose is to provide information about socialism, with the implied aim of defeating it rather than absorbing criticisms. Nonetheless, the reader of Sigmund's excerpt is less likely to register a strategically useful impression of how the Cuban Revolution defines itself, and gains strength, from its opposition to the United States. The third excision is significant in a different way. What is erased in this case is Guevara's discussion of the importance of the arts to the development of revolutionary consciousness and his rejection of aesthetic dogmas such as socialist realism. What is implied by this exclusion is an emphasis on socialist ideology itself, rather than the means by which that ideology might be expressed through art. To Sigmund, Guevara's critique of socialist realism most likely feels like an intramural argument, set at a remove from crucial questions of geopolitical power. A key dimension of Che's personality, namely his love of poetry, his interest in aesthetic and philosophical questions, and his generally high level of cultural education, are erased from the text.

Taken together, Sigmund's deletions constitute a motivated rewriting that works to contain the complexity of the original text, which loses its duality as epistolary communication situated at a specific place and time and as canonical published essay. As essay on socialist ideology, the English reads as simpler in its focus than the original; the editing out of assertions of capitalism's lies or discussions of the best outlets for socialist creativity make the text more digestible as strategic Cold War resource. Though the core of his ideas about constructing a socialist society based on each individual contributing uniquely to the common good is clearly transmitted, the author, who is a passionate presence in his own original text, is set at a cold remove from the English-language version. Two desires underwrite Sigmund's rewriting: to focus on information deemed more relevant to the struggle against communism and to depersonalize the text. This latter agenda is based on the hope that Che's charisma can be bracketed off so that the content of his ideas can be deconstructed.

Conclusion

Returning to the three central issues we identified at the beginning of this discussion, we can summarize how certain expectations about the differing approaches of translations produced from left and right agenda positions were fulfilled and others were flouted. On the issue of Che's intellectual accomplishments, we see various translations of *El hombre y el socialismo en Cuba* carefully reconstructing, in formal written English, the well-developed structures of his thought. On the other hand, if we look at Ocean Press's deployment of an extensive paratextual apparatus

alongside its translation of Guevara's warfare manual, we see an effort at displaying the assiduousness with which Guevara approached the task of formulating and communicating his ideas in writing, though at the same time the frequency with which the reader encounters the author's indications of the incompleteness of his own text can end up undermining a positive impression of the man's intellectual work. The Praeger edition of *Guerrilla Warfare* is also marked by self-contradictions; though its introduction announces to the reader that Che is the intellectual leader of the Revolution, the stringent condensation of his writing veils that fact.

Regarding the question of Guevara's pathos, of his ability to connect with and inspire his reader, Morray's translation of *La guerra de guerrillas*, which is important because it has been reproduced in so many different editions, offers a surprisingly inert read. The Cuban government translation of Che's essay on socialism also suffers from a leadenness that makes Guevara speak in a kind of disembodied voice. Counter to its own intentions, the translation does not make his personal presence felt. On the other hand, when we find the Praeger edition intentionally muzzling Che at those moments where his rhetoric is formulated to inspire, the reader is less surprised. In the case of *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba*, a focusing and intensification of Guevara's presence unfolds, beginning with the early Cuban government translation and culminating with Adrienne Rich's version, which attends not only to the need for a charismatic voice in the text, but also to the urgency that the text speak of humanity, not of the anachronistic general "man."

On the final question of the representation of Guevara's relatively progressive stance on women's contributions to revolutionary warfare, we find that a translation's pro- or anti-communist slant is a poor predictor of translation effects. Translators on both sides of the divide make or perpetuate interpretations that end up weakening Guevara's argument in favor of women's participation in guerrilla struggle. Adrienne Rich's translation takes the unique approach of extensively reworking Guevara's language in his essay on socialist society, though even her commitment reaches its limits when it reaches the title, which remains "Socialism and Man in Cuba."

Notes

- 1 Verushka Alvizuri offers the following survey: "El Che vive y gana la batalla de la imagen, al menos en Google. Un millón cien mil imágenes ... un bloguero ha compilado 659 fotografías de Guevara que van desde su infancia en Argentina, hasta su muerte en Bolivia" (Che lives and is winning the battle of the image, at least on Google. 1.1 million images ... a blogger has compiled 659 photographs of Guevara from his childhood in Argentina to his death in Bolivia).
- 2 A brief perusal of online marketplaces reveals a brisk business in t-shirts displaying Korda's image alone or with oppositional text or graphics superimposed. Contrapuntal inflections of the image elaborations include declarations

- such as “He Was Evil, You Stupid College Punk” or a simple red circle with a diagonal slash. The bare black and white image of Che’s face is by far the most popular option for those seeking to express allegiance, though visual and textual transmutations also proliferate on the left, such as a treatment of the Korda image in the style of artist Shepard Fairey’s “Hope” poster for Barack Obama’s presidential campaign, or with an image of the face U.S. democratic socialist politician Bernie Sanders superimposed. For a discussion of capitalist and communist uses of Korda’s photograph, see Hernández-Reguant.
- 3 In *Style and Ideology in Translation* Jeremy Munday undertakes a parallel project to this one, assessing how translators recreate or end up muting style and voice in texts by Subcomandante Marcos (leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation), and Fidel Castro (159–71).
 - 4 For academic presentations of the warfare manual, see Loveman and Davies’s 1985 and 1997 editions. The editors surround Morray’s translation with a preface, introduction, case studies of guerrilla movements in seven other Latin American countries, and a postscript situating the themes of Guevara’s text in relation to recent events. The 1985 postscript is “Guerrilla Warfare and the Crisis of the 1980s”; the later edition’s postscript is “Guerrilla Warfare into the 1990s.” Though objectivity is sought, an implicit sympathy for Che’s ideas can be seen in both volumes.
 - 5 For an account of Che’s and Cuban soldiers’ activities in the Congo, see Gleijeses. For a postmortem on his Bolivia campaign, see Harris.
 - 6 For an analysis of the social factors that impeded women’s participation in the Cuban revolutionary war, see Kampwirth.
 - 7 The *Monthly Review* was founded in 1949 by economists Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman with money donated by literary scholar F. O. Matthiessen. Christopher Phelps offers a detailed retrospective of the *Monthly Review* and the Monthly Review Press on the magazine’s fiftieth anniversary in “A Socialist Magazine in the American Century,” explaining that the latter “tended to publish books that were critical of American foreign policy and unable to find a mainstream outlet” (16). Their first volume was I. F. Stone’s *The Hidden History of the Korean War*. Rafael Rojas notes that the editors and contributors of the *Monthly Review* formed “one of the groups most resolutely supportive of the Cuban Revolution’s 1961 communist turn” within the New York intellectual landscape (10).
 - 8 In his study Morray calls the steps the Cuban Revolution took toward finally declaring itself Marxist-Leninist “the most momentous events in the history of the Hemisphere,” and concludes his analysis with a statement of allegiance with Cuba and opposition to his own government’s policies: “the Revolution must be prepared to defend itself against attack at any moment ... when history records its judgment on the Cuban Socialist Revolution, its achievements will be multiplied by the hardships it was forced to overcome” (173).
 - 9 Key examples of this type of work are Milovan Djilas’s *The New Class: An Analysis of the Communist System* (1957), Howard Fast’s *The Naked God: The Writer and the Communist Party* (1957), and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn’s *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1963).
 - 10 Evidence of the close collaboration between Praeger and military leadership is found in the 1962 volume *The Guerrilla, and how to Fight Him: Selections from the Marine Corps Gazette*, edited by Thomas Nicholls Greene.
 - 11 Jeremy Munday observes that “drastic pruning” is a common characteristic of English translations of Latin American non-fiction texts “from the 1920s onwards” (49).
 - 12 The absence of a reflection on this issue of privilege stands out given that Rich frequently dissects it in her essays. In “Blood, Bread, and Poetry: The Location

- of the Poet,” from 1984, she describes the milder form of marginalization she suffers as a North American poet who writes outside the lines of the dominant ideology: “so far, no slave labor or torture for a political poem—just dead air, the white noise of the media jamming the poet’s words” (228).
- 13 Writing in 2013, poet and translator Margaret Randall, a steadfast supporter of the Revolution, admits that when she read Che Guevara’s *Socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* in the 1960s “so many strong women, myself included, didn’t even notice our absence in such texts! We devoured them, engaging with their analyses of the world in which we lived, completely unaware that they wrote us out of history” (41)
- 14 Guevara expanded upon and slightly modified the assertions he makes in his 1961 manual in “Guerra de guerrillas: un método” (“Guerrilla Warfare: A Method”), published two years later. “Crear dos, tres ... muchos Vietnam” (“Two, Three ... Many Vietnams”) is the title typically given to Guevara’s 1967 message to the Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America, known more commonly as the Tricontinental.

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5 Listening and Reading

Cuban Music on Folkways and Paredon Records

The Smithsonian Folkways online audio archive provides the opportunity to analyze how audio recordings of Cuban music were compiled and packaged for an Anglophone market during the 1970s and 1980s.¹ During this period, two record labels each produced three albums of Cuban music. The first is Folkways, whose catalogue the Smithsonian purchased in 1987, but was not originally created under that institution's aegis. The second is Paredon, whose founders donated its catalogue to the Smithsonian in 1991. Catering to a progressive and educated English-speaking public, both labels included extensive liner notes that presented both verbal and musical modes of translation. The six albums examined in this chapter illustrate the interaction between translation texts and paratexts on the one hand, and a constellation of intended and unintended political implications on the other. Lawrence Venuti points out that communities are formed in reaction to the emergence of translated texts, suggesting that these groups often find things in translations that they deem uniquely useful (20). Folkways creates listening communities that center around knowledge, whereas Paredon aims to create communities of political action. For both Folkways and Paredon, what the listener draws from a given presentation of Cuban music is not limited to the sphere of enjoyment or appreciation, but rather will have an impact on that listener's domestic and transnational actions. The Folkways liner notes are founded on an ideology of multiculturalism that values Cuban music as complex cultural phenomenon and seeks to transmit an understanding of its characteristics and historical development to an Anglophone audience in order to foster the general project of encouraging a deeper understanding of difference. Strategies for packaging and distributing their recordings show that the principal venue in which these effects would take place is the classroom, though Folkways recordings also came to occupy significant space in the collection of the self-defined connoisseur. Though there is a political valence to its stance, one that can inform institutional policies in the English-speaking world that protect and affirm difference, Folkways stops short of taking a forceful position on the revolutionary Cuban political content or context of the music it seeks to interpret for Anglophone listenerships. A general stance of support for

Cuba's socialist policies is at times only indirectly detectable. In contrast, the politics that steers the poetics of translation and the elaboration of explanatory paratext in Paredon booklets is one of global liberation from colonialism and capitalism. Paredon records intend to spur direct political action toward advancing socialism on a global scale, including concrete political work on the part of U.S. listeners to bring about the repeal of their government's embargo on trade with Cuba. Presentation and packaging of its albums obeys a logic of popular political communication, in contrast to the classroom-ready format of Folkways.

Depending on the technological moment and mode of encounter with the six albums studied here, the listener interacts with a text published as an LP booklet, a CD booklet, or a scan of the original LP booklet available for free download from the Smithsonian Folkways website. The listener's negotiation of sound and text is different between the physical and online formats. The listener of a CD or LP interacts with both an ordered presentation of a sequence of musical tracks and a printed text that they can read as they listen. The visitor to the Smithsonian Folkways website can download and read the liner notes independent of the music itself, hear introductory audio clips, and purchase and download either individual tracks or the album as a whole. For the purposes of this study, we will examine the experience an Anglophone listener has as they progress through a given album in its intended sequence through the actions of both listening and reading the liner notes.

On a linguistic level, the reader of the liner notes finds English renderings or glosses of song texts set in the context of explanatory essays. On a musical level, the listener can use the texts to study different types of translation of the musical content to the page through notation of rhythmic patterns and musical lines. This chapter focuses on the ways in which the album liner notes process song lyrics for an Anglophone listener, though, as we will see, Folkways albums privilege the translation of musical over verbal content, leaving a significant amount of the sung language untranslated. This tendency has significant cultural and political implications. The Paredon records transcribe and translate song lyrics more completely. As we will see, this difference emerges from the fact that Folkways is more interested in preserving and documenting sounds, whereas Paredon is eager to transmit political messages.

Though there are other recordings of Cuban music available in the Smithsonian Folkways online archive, the ones chosen for study here belong to two important record labels and allow for a coherent comparison.² The labels produced their Cuban records, with one exception, during a relatively compact period—1970 to 1985—allowing for a focused historical reading of their response to the Cuban Revolution during its second and third decades.³ Both were run by people of demonstrated commitment to leftist causes, nationally and internationally. Nonetheless, the emphasis of Folkways records in general is more ethnomusicological, approaching performances from an academic point of view interested in separating out

its layers. The ethnomusicologist is interested in such phenomena as “the texts of the songs sung, the making and playing of musical instruments, the kinetic activities that occur simultaneously with the music (...) the concepts held by the members of the culture concerning the music they produce” (List 34). For Paredon, the verbal text of the song is paramount, since it is there that the listener will find the expression of a politics of Third World liberation that will inspire them to join the cause. Not only does Paredon’s approach shed less light on the musical particulars of the performances, but also uses lyric translation to underscore political messages in a way that blurs poetic subtlety and ambiguity at times. A further difference between the two labels is that, whereas Cuban music was one of many types recorded for Folkways, Cuba was essential to the birth of Paredon. Founders Barbara Dane and Irwin Silber spent a month there in 1967 at an event that brought together folk singers from around the world, which according to Dane resulted in “a long-term relationship” with the Caribbean nation (Interview with Dunn and Yanke 39). This difference of approach, between anthropological documentation in the case of Folkways and direct advocacy in the case of Paredon, is reflected throughout the materials that accompany the recordings studied, including those elements that involve translation.

Folkways and Paredon’s agendas can be theorized as attempts to impel different modes of listening, four of which interest us here. The first is what Michel Chion calls “semantic listening,” or listening “to interpret a message” (28). The second is what he calls “causal listening,” or listening to a sound in order to gain information about its cause (source)” (25). The third is what Pierre Schaeffer calls “reduced listening,” or “listening to sound as a sound event” (213). The fourth is tactical listening, which Deborah Kapchan defines as “listening to effect pedagogical and political change” (5). Given language differences between singer and listener, semantic listening is precisely what is impossible in the situation that concerns us here, so attention is diverted both to other modes of listening and to the textual supports offered in the album notes. The Folkways records combine an emphasis on causal listening, through its descriptions and photographs of the traditional instruments heard on the recordings, and on reduced listening, through its frequent privileging of the aesthetic enjoyment of musical sound over verbal content. Paredon recordings are intensely focused on compensating for the impossibility of semantic listening through careful lyric translations, and they privilege tactical listening in pursuit of their explicit goal of involving their audience in a transnational political project.

Translation and the Listener–Reader

The analysis carried out here will operate on a specific definition of translation. In contrast to other modes, the acts of rewriting that occur in album liner notes possess unique characteristics. They are processes

that occur wholly within what can be defined as a paratext, assuming that the aural content encoded on the LP, cassette, or CD is understood as the primary text. Gérard Genette's definition of paratext as threshold or liminal space is crucial here (1). When an audio recording is packaged alongside explanatory notes, it would be simplistic to argue that there is a hard and fast separation between the two components. Listeners read the notes before listening, as they listen, and after they have listened. What they read shapes their aesthetic, cultural, affective, and political interpretations of what they hear. This shaping effect of written paratext upon audio recording is even more intense in albums on which people sing in a language the listener does not understand.

The written translation's relationship to sound is twofold. First, the fact that translations of song lyrics in album notes cross the boundary between the oral and the written means that in many cases a transcription within a given language must take place first. As we will see, this stage can introduce doubts, difficulties, and distortions, and even lead to omissions. Assuming it is transcribed, the translated song lyric must then proceed to the stage of textual translation, which encompasses all the same problematics of literary or other forms of translation. The second issue regarding the relationship of this aspect of translation to sound is its complex, interpenetrating connection with music as aural phenomenon. The English rendering does not exist to be contemplated on its own, but rather to help the listener appreciate the full expressive impact of a performance. But to assume that the relationship between the explanatory paratext and the music heard on the recording is one of simple clarification would be naïve. A number of complexities arise in the relationship between what is heard and what is read. One evident example is that it cannot be assumed that only the words of a song in Spanish must be translated for the Anglophone listener. To do so would be to fall prey to the fallacy of music as universal language, the idea that non-verbal musical expression, perhaps because it is understood to be so intimately rooted in emotion, somehow transcends cultural differences. In *Psychology of Music: From Sound to Significance*, Siu-Lan Tan, Peter Pfordresher, and Rom Harré summarize this popular intuition: in contrast to language, "there is something about music that may be inherently universal in its appeal and in our ability to comprehend it" (261). The tentative nature of their statement is significant. Musicologist Bruno Nettl's reply is that

music is universal, but it is comprised of a lot of distinct musics ... while all cultures seem to have something that sounds like music to us, they may not accord it the same boundaries, or the same quality, or accord it the same tasks.

(459)

As will be seen, because of cultural differences, it is often necessary for the liner notes to explain the musical sounds themselves, not just the words. These explanations often do not limit themselves to descriptions of instruments, tones, scales, harmonies, and rhythms, but rather extend to explanations of how musical styles evolved and how they function sociologically (as communication, as ritual celebration, as confirmation of a shared identity). Discussions of these elements in an album's liner notes would seem at first to constitute a separate paratext from the lyric translations, but nonetheless there are connections between English-language renderings of Spanish-language lyrics, and English-language explanations of the Cubanness of the music those lyrics are immersed in.

Another aspect of the medium-crossing nature of translated lyrics is the difficulty inherent in ascertaining where in a musical performance the Spanish words occur if the listener is not proficient at decoding sounds and relating them to written words in a language not their own. Simply perceiving the boundaries between words within a flow of aural stimulus is cognitively taxing, even for intermediate or advanced speakers of a second language.⁴ Where translations are obliged to rearrange word order for the sake of clarity and expressivity, the listener–reader will very often be unaware of the crucial interchange between a sung word and all of the aural elements it relates to: melody, melisma, voice timbre, interactions with instrumental sounds, and the like.

Given these complexities, the temptation to omit lyric translations is significant. It could be argued that the producers of album liner notes require specific motivations for going through the effort of offering lyric translations and hoping the reader will successfully relate what they hear to what they read. As we will see, one strong motivation for facing up to these difficulties can be seen when the producers of an album have ardent political motivations. In this case the messages encoded in the verbal content are crucial. When an album is produced with more musicological motivations, the type of paratext that explains the evolution of instruments and musical styles takes precedence, and verbal content is often left untranslated. The result of this tactic is that a barrier to transcultural understanding remains. Sung Spanish words remain brute sounds to the Anglophone listener. The cultural and political implications of this are problematic, given the unequal nature of Cuba's historical relationship to the Anglophone world, especially the United States. Non-translation can arguably be construed as silencing. In this context, Lynn Thiesmeyer's assertion about the emptiness silencing leaves behind is useful: "silencing takes place where there is discourse. It is most effective when another discourse is used to designate and enforce the area of silenced material and eventually to fill it in" (1–2). The lacuna left behind by the non-translation of verbal content in Folkways liner notes can be interpreted as being both the result of, and a problem solved by, the dominance of a particular kind of musicological discourse that privileges Cuban instrumental sounds over Cuban voices.

Cuban Music Documented: Folkways Records

Folkways Records was founded in 1948 as a means for compiling what founder Moses Asch envisioned as “an encyclopedia of sound” (Olmsted 11). As Steven Petrus and Ronald D. Cohen assert,

the Folkways philosophy was fundamentally egalitarian and the method anthropological. In the spirit of an ethnographer, Asch did not rank individual musicians or cultures in a hierarchy, but rather embraced artists with talent, integrity, and vision and sought to chronicle the expression of all groups.

(84)

Asch explained in a lecture to music librarians in 1956 that the chronicling of the world’s folk music represents “the preservation of the true and lasting culture that makes a people great and gives them a heritage worth saving” (32). The goal was to preserve both what is “best” and what is “most typical ... of the world’s many peoples” (32). Richard Carlin notes that for the typical Folkways listener, the forging of connections between their own culture and the cultures producing the music in the recordings was exhilarating; it was a thrill to be immersed in “worlds where human expression in all its variety could freely interact” (xv). Asch’s progressive politics were mostly implicit in the encyclopedic nature of his mission. As Petrus and Cohen note,

the Folkways catalogue contained little explicitly political material. Asch viewed himself as a product of the Popular Front tradition that celebrated the humanity of all: to record and present the musical expression of common people, he believed, was in effect a political statement.

(84–5)

Asch saw educational settings as the primary venue in which his records would be encountered, and maintained a close relationship with librarians and scholars (Petrus and Cohen 86). Richard Carlin asserts that outside of institutional settings, “Folkways’ recordings appealed to [a] collector mentality,” to “the connoisseur who wanted to build a collection of great recordings” (11). For this type of listener, “Folkways albums were decidedly different; difficult to find in record stores outside of major cities, priced higher than normal albums, treasured, and passed eagerly from listener to listener, their very obscurity making them that much more desirable” (Carlin xvi).

Anthony Olmsted summarizes the intentions behind the extensive booklets that accompany each record:

Moe was very much interested in combining music with text that could explain why the sounds on the record were important. Not just the who, what, when, and where of the recording, but also the ever-important why. Why were the sounds on the record being made in the first place? Explaining the why of the recordings became the catalyst: Why are these people performing? Why are they using those instruments? Why are they performing this song at that time of the year?

(71)

The liner notes to albums of Cuban music begin with an essay that provides historical context, explanations of cultural practices and experiences reflected in the music, and musicological definitions of the instrumentation, rhythms, and singing styles heard on the tracks. The circumstances and technical parameters of the recordings are sometimes discussed as well. Next come notes for each track on the record. Translations appear in these notes, but often in incomplete form. Many verbal elements, whether in track titles or lyrics, are not given an English translation. Though Asch's motivations were progressive, this sidelining of language content is both exoticizing, in the sense that there is a simplification or reduction of the foreign cultural product, and colonizing, in that an effective silencing of the Spanish language voices in the recordings occurs by virtue of the fact that a monolingual Anglophone listenership ends up not receiving many of the verbal messages transmitted. Non-translation in the Folkways recordings leaves the music foreign, and this fact perhaps produces pleasure for an educated audience for whom non-understanding adds a kind of enjoyable friction to the listening experience. Nonetheless, ideas, attitudes, and experiences transmitted through Cuban Spanish dialects in the recordings end up silenced; the experience of the inaccessible foreign for the Anglophone listener is perhaps pleasurable but limits cross-cultural understanding.

Released in 1981, *Carnaval in Cuba* consists of field recordings made by American musician Andrew Schloss during *carnaval* the previous year. Of crucial value is the fact that Schloss includes sounds from both western and eastern Cuba (Havana and Santiago, respectively). Lana Milstein explains the gap this inclusion helps fill:

Most of the literature on Cuba's carnival focuses on Havana, as does the literature on Cuban music in general. Traditions popular in western Cuba, such as rumba and the Yoruba-derived music of Santería, receive much more attention than the distinctive musics of eastern Cuba ... Many resources are available only to a Spanish-speaking audience, and they can be very hard to acquire outside of Santiago.

(225)

Nonetheless, as Judith Bettelheim rightly points out in a critical review of the album, Schloss lacks the scholarly background in Cuban culture that would be needed to fully contextualize both the Cubanness of the music and its role within the complex cultural and political event that is *carnaval* in a country in which both Marxism and syncretic spiritual beliefs are relevant to definitions of national culture (83). The coincidence of *carnaval* in Santiago and the date of Castro's attack on the Moncada barracks in that same city in 1953 underlines the way the event bridges the political and the cultural. Still, Schloss's introductory essay offers the reader some cardinal points to orient their understanding of the grouping of musical artifacts presented on the record, explaining, for example, the important phenomenon of the *comparsa*, which is both a "street band" and its typical rhythm (2).

His notes to the individual recordings present a mix of translation and non-translation. In some cases a coherent set of aesthetic and political values can be detected, but contradictions also appear. In some cases, Schloss's support of the Revolution motivates him to offer the listener more information. For example, "Soy cubano," a song that expresses patriotic pride, is glossed to explain the song's evocation of José Martí and Antonio Maceo (2), two heroes of Cuban independence that the Revolution folded into its narrative of Cuba's arc of historical liberation. As Maya Roy explains, *comparsas* have long been political in Cuba:

At the time of the pseudo-Republic, successive governments repressed anything that might give rise to opposition on the part of those social strata most adversely affected by government policies and its rampant corruption. As it happened, the principal players in the carnivals were precisely the former slaves and their descendants, the mulattos and poor white people who lived side by side on the outskirts. The lyrics of the songs composed for the occasion of what amounted to popular demonstrations reflect the tradition of commentary on current events, either directly or through double meaning.

(36)

As Lani Milstein explains, Santiago's *carnaval* blends centuries-old tradition and recent political change. The end of the sugar harvest for centuries was a time when slaves were given permission to express their culture through music, dance, and dress.

Celebratory days dedicated to important Catholic saints—Santa Cristina (July 24); the city's patron saint, Santiago Apostle (July 25); and Santa Ana (July 26)—coincided. Today Santiago's *carnaval* still unfolds over these days and coincides with the end of the sugar harvest, but it also commemorates Fidel Castro's attack on the Moncada barracks on July 26, 1953.

(223–4)

Thanks to Schloss's skillful recordings and thoughtful selection of examples, the listener can gain a certain experience of this confluence of historical realities on *Carnaval in Cuba* despite certain lapses in the communication of cultural information through translation. *Carnaval* in Santiago is a time to both break the bonds of everyday social life and reaffirm commitment to a collective socialist project. Political critique through music is directed toward enemies of the communist regime from within and without. Given the context of *carnaval*, these critiques are made playfully. The improvised lyrics in "Soy cubano" celebrate not only national heroes, but the joy of music and dancing themselves. The celebratory and the musical are intimately linked to Cubanness in the performance. The lead singer exclaims, between the antiphonal refrain "Soy cubano," how "sabroso" his group's rhythm is, how perfect it is to dance to. *Sabroso* literally means "tasty," but in Cuban Spanish is layered with nuanced connotations of both musical and sensual pleasures. In this performance, the patriotic is immersed in the carnivalesque. Nonetheless, the notes neither transcribe nor explain these aspects of the song's improvised phrases. As a result, the Anglophone listener might mistakenly come away with the impression that the piece presents a dissonant mix of solemn patriotic declarations with raucous sounds, rather than being a statement of the importance of ludic musicality to Cuban identity itself.

Despite this omission, it is clear that Schloss supports the Revolution. His point of view motivates him to include, from a long performance by Los Hermanos Izquierdo, a section in which the singer speaks over a P.A. system to revelers about the heroism of the Revolution and the abjectness of those who have abandoned the country for exile in the United States. Schloss coyly writes that the lines were "chosen because of [their] poignancy" (4). The translation of the words in the notes evidences a desire to highlight and support their political message. Where the speaker decries those Cubans who recently left in the Mariel boatlift of 1980, he speaks of "elementos antisociales," which appear in the liner notes as "antisocialist," rather than "antisocial" elements (4), resulting in a more intense focus on conflicts over ideology rather than a reflection of the speaker's intended denigration of the general moral character of the *marielitos*. This example of amplification of message aside, Schloss's political allegiance with socialist Cuba leads to effective translation choices. For example, his translation renders the definite article "the" in the phrase "abandonar el país" in the possessive: "abandon our country." This move is based on the fact that the definite article is often used in Spanish where possession is implied, and the patriotic motivation behind the singer's verbal performance in denunciation of emigrants supports the choice.

The included section of the piece "La conga de Santiago," played by the *comparsa* La Conga de los Hoyos,⁵ ends with a brief span of call-and-response singing, which the notes transcribe, but do not translate because of the "obscene nature" of the lyrics (4). The singers make fun of a woman

abandoning Cuba via the port of Boca de Camarioca, from which 5,000 Cubans emigrated in 1965, declaring that she left “con la cosa en la boca” (with a thing in her mouth). Their phrase is both a play on the place name and a sexualized insult. The decision to transcribe the Spanish but not translate it is odd; the assumption would seem to be that Spanish speakers would not be as offended by the joke as an Anglophone listener. In the end, the cryptic statement leaves the English speaker intrigued but confused. As Milstein asserts, getting the references and jokes in *conga* choruses is crucial to experiencing the feeling of collective cultural bondedness (246). Translating them would allow the Anglophone listener to draw closer to that feeling, even if total participation in it would be too significantly mediated by the situation of listening to a recording.

In contrast to the raucous commentaries in these previous examples, “Boys’ Duet,” a recording of two boys interpreting a children’s tune on the spot for the recorder’s microphone, is not only apolitical, but lacks much coherent meaning beyond the pleasure of its rhymes, like many children’s songs. The recording is translated in its entirety, which is motivated by the fact that the performance is purely vocal. The inclusion of the track itself reflects the democratic and anthropological impulse behind the record as a whole. Interestingly, whereas most of the performers on the album are anonymous, the boys give their names at the end of the track. Beyond the superficial assertion that the piece was included for variety and charm, it can be inferred that its presence on the record transmits an interest in capturing the creative expression of marginal performers of different kinds.

Released in 1982, the album *The Cuban Danzón: Its Ancestors and Descendants* combines recordings made in the 1950s and 1970s. The academic ring of its title signals the detailed musicological content to be found in the notes. Rhythms are transcribed, song structures are carefully traced, and the booklet charts the historical evolution of the *danzón* from a synthesis of the French *contradanse* with local Cuban elements through to its influence on more modern dance forms. A bibliography and discography at the end encourage further study. This academic approach contrasts with the frequent appearance of political comment in the *Carnaval* album. *Danzón* is designed to teach musical, rather than Revolutionary, history. In his introduction, John Santos anticipates an Anglophone reader’s likely interests and prior knowledge when he explains that contemporary salsa has its roots in *danzón* and compares the development of *danzón* groups to that of ragtime and jazz ensembles (1).⁶ This paratextual anchoring in the domestic perspective of the Anglophone reader serves to make the cultural specificity of the music more absorbable.

Though most recordings are instrumental, an understanding of their song titles, which are generally left untranslated, would have helped the listener have the same experience Spanish speakers do in contemplating what a title might be announcing about the music to follow. Titles like

“La Revoltosa” (The Rowdy One) and “El Bombín de Barreto” (Barreto’s Bowler Hat) reinforce the personality of the musical piece and encourage imaginative engagement. Since they are not translated, the listener, who is interpellated as being more interested in the formal qualities of the music, is left out of the form of cultural participation this interpretive game implies.

The final two tracks on the record, the proto-cha-cha-cha “La Engañadora,” performed by Enrique Jorrín and his orchestra, and “Qué es lo que hay,” by Orquesta Ritmo Oriental, have lyrics that go both untranscribed and untranslated. The detailed notes for the tracks instead focus on the histories of the orchestras and their distinct sounds. “La Engañadora,” which can be translated as “The Deceiver,” tells the story of a young woman whose full figure makes her famous throughout Havana but whose curves turn out to be the product of artificial enhancement. “Qué es lo que hay” offers a friendly primer on how to greet a Cuban on the street, suggesting the eponymous question as the best option. Each song expresses cultural attitudes and experiences and evidence the fundamental Cuban cultural values of humor and friendliness. In each song, the verbal content is interconnected with the music. In “La Engañadora,” the conclusion of the mock-sad story of the woman is that nobody is interested in her after discovering her artificially enhanced curves. The song then launches into a raucous musical section. The music seems to break out in a fit of hilarity over the deliciousness of the story. In “Qué es lo que hay,” repeated variations in Spanish on greetings like “how’s it going” are interspersed with varying syncopated phrases played with virtuosic precision by the orchestra, evoking the sense not only of the joy in meeting an old friend on the street, but of the Cuban value of improvisation and wit in everyday conversation. Jorge Mañach, in his classic anthropological exploration *Indagación del choteo* (1928), identifies parody, humor, inventiveness, and wit as national traits (27). In this way the silencing of the verbal dimension of these songs deprives the listener of a glimpse into a crucial aspect of Cubanness.

The 1985 album *Music of Cuba* comprises recordings made in 1978 and 1979 by Verna Gillis during a trip sponsored by the Center for Cuban Studies in New York. It offers a thorough introduction to the origins of traditional Cuban music, beginning with its roots in West African drumming and progressing through fundamental styles like *rumba*, *conga*, and *son*. In his introduction, John Santos offers a basic history of Cuba, focusing on what he calls “two horrendous examples of inhumanity—the annihilation of the indigenous peoples of the island, and the institution of the abominable slave trade” (1). He helpfully explains how the fusion of African and European musical elements has produced what we think of as Cuban music. In his final paragraph he laments the fact that the embargo has prevented communication between Cubans and U.S. citizens (1). In this respect, his introduction is typical of what we have seen in Folkways

albums to this point: a progressive political standpoint informs both the construction of the album and the explanatory texts that go with it, but is not the driving force behind the project as a whole.

As is the case with the *Danzón* record, Santos's notes to the recordings are thoroughly ethnomusicological. He sketches the cultural and historical origins of Cuban musical forms and offers detailed descriptions of instrumentation, vocal styles, and dance steps. He transcribes rhythmic patterns using traditional western musical notation, which is itself a form of trans-medial and transcultural translation. Throughout, Santos gives terms in the original and explains them within the text. Not only are musicological terms glossed, like *tumbadoras* being explained as "drums of Congolese origin commonly known as *Congas*" (2). Santos also includes and explains terms relating to cultural phenomena; *solares* are "communal black living quarters," and an *orisha* is a "Yoruba deity" (2). The intent of the essay is to teach language in addition to cultural content; the combination of detailed information about both music and culture interpellates a reader who is interested not simply in having an interesting or pleasurable listening experience, but who is motivated to engage in a deeper dialogue with Cuban culture. For U.S. listeners of the album, the difficulty of finding legal ways to travel to Cuba meant that such an intention would likely be frustrated. Santos implies in his remarks about the embargo that the thorough notes he offers might in some way compensate for the interference of the U.S. government in the natural process of intercultural exchange.

Unique to *Music of Cuba* is the extent to which its notes point up the problematics of the transcription and translation of sung words. In the introduction, Santos explains the difficulty of transcribing the lyrics through "phonetic interpretation," given the prevalence of creative self-expression and of the mix of Spanish and Afro-Cuban dialects heard across the different recordings (1). This lack of transcription creates an immediate impediment to an Anglophone understanding of the songs. Further, Santos laments the difficulty of translation once transcription is done. In his note to a *yambú*, a type of *rumba*, he prefaces the transcription and English rendering by apologizing: "the translation into English is difficult, but the general meaning can be understood" (2). Nonetheless, the clarity of the version that is offered belies this tentative tone. The four *pregones*, or street vendors' songs, a surprising and enriching inclusion on the record, go untranscribed and untranslated, and Santos instead offers dull summaries. *Pregones* were traditionally full of wit and humor to charm potential customers. For example, for the fruit vendor's *pregón*, the notes simply indicate "he is selling pineapples, mangos, mameyes, coconuts, melons, and other fruit" (3), whereas in the audio the *pregonero* can be heard calling out to the homemakers Ramona and Tomasa, offering them coconuts and melons full of refreshing water. Transcription and translation of these texts would offer the listener the opportunity to draw closer to the emotional and cultural experience of the music rather

than leaving them feeling like they are looking in on the music from the outside. Further, since *pregones* are purely vocal performances, the Anglophone listener does not have instrumental music to fall back on when the sung words of the recording are unintelligible.⁷

With regards to translation of Afro-Cuban linguistic content, *Music of Cuba* makes confusing choices. The notes to the *yambú* only translate the lyrical portion sung in Spanish. The notes to the two *palos*, or pieces of sacred music with drumming and antiphonal singing, do not attempt to transcribe what is sung on the recording (2). The names of instruments, which come from the Kongo language—*ngoma*, *ngongui*, *guagua*—are also included in explanations of the music (2). The notes to the *santería* songs to the gods *Ogún* and *Shangó* transcribe the lyrics in the original *lucumí*, a liturgical language that evolved from Yoruba, but offer no translation, leaving the song's content impenetrable not only to the Anglophone listener, but also to the majority of Spanish speakers (2–3). In this case, an exoticist residue persists despite the text's careful attempt to transmit cultural information clearly and directly; *lucumí* words appear as brute sonority, their inaccessible meanings treated as secondary.

A recording less rooted in Africanness, the “Canción-Bolero” performed by the Grupo Guitarras Internacionales, comes with a transcription of the Spanish and a translation into English.⁸ The singer pays homage in a romantic mode to both the Cuban countryside and to his beautiful “montunita,” or woman from the mountains (3). The translation clarifies “bohío,” a typically Caribbean word derived from the Taino language, as “small thatched home” (3). Revealing the expectation that the reader has been comparing the original to the English line by line, the second occurrence of the word is left in Spanish in the translation. At a couple of moments the richness of the text is diluted, as is the case with the lines “El sol lanza toldos de oro / De lo alto del cielo” (The sun throws canopies of gold / From the heights of heaven), which the notes render as “The sun sprays its golden rays / From the depths of Heaven” (3). The first line of the translation finds a euphonious internal rhyme in “sprays” and “rays” to echo the assonant rhyme of “toldo” and “oro,” but loses the duality of the image of “toldos”—canopies or awnings—as a phenomenon of both light and shade, suggesting the play of light through the clouds. In the second line, a strange inversion from heights to depths confuses the romantic intensity of the imagery, depths not only being the opposite of heights in spatial terms but also an image closely linked to the idea of hell.

Cuban Music Mobilized: Paredon Records

Singer Barbara Dane and her spouse, the author, publisher, and record producer Irwin Silber, founded Paredon Records in 1969. Already committed leftists and critics of the Vietnam War, Dane and Silber had traveled to Cuba in 1967 to participate in the Encuentro Internacional de

Canción Protesta (International Protest Song Conference). For Dane, the Revolution was “like something you would dream of”; she recalls in a 2014 interview “singing for the young people, going up in the mountains, going everywhere. Being written up in every conceivable publication. I developed a long-term relationship with Cuba and went back several times for conferences and performances” (39). Once she was back in the United States, Dane attempted to share with progressive audiences a number of the international protest songs she learned during her time in Cuba but met resistance from listeners. “And then it suddenly dawned on me,” Dane recalls, “people have to hear the actual creators of these songs in their own languages. We need a record label” (Interview with Dunn and Yanke 41). The first Paredon record, *Canción Protesta*, was recorded at the Encuentro.

Paredon’s debt to Folkways Records is significant. Silber had worked for Moses Asch from 1958 to 1964, and he and Dane went on to produce albums with a similar format. Nonetheless, the founders of the newer record label were determined to implement a different editorial focus. Silber asserts in a 1991 interview that “Folkways was accountable to the anthropologist,” whereas Paredon was bound to the global liberation movements that generated the music heard on the records (46). The label published 50 records from 1970 to 1985 that explicitly or implicitly advocated for liberation struggles abroad and socialism and social equality at home. Booklets similar in format to the Folkways inserts accompanied the recordings. Dane says that her ambition with the liner notes was to present “a whole course” on both the music and its context:

they wouldn’t be in any way superficial or just ... an adjunct to the record, but they would actually be as important in a sense as the record ... usually we’re dealing with an area where somebody would need an introduction to the whole, maybe even the country.

(Interview with Jeff Place 41)

Dane’s idea that the liner notes might be as important as the musical recording itself positions Paredon recordings in relation to readers who are both curious and in need of extensive contextualization in order to extract the messages encoded in the music. This kind of assertion never comes out of Folkways projects, given that the earlier label placed a central focus on sound and positioned its texts as supportive of, rather than coequal with, the music. An extensive introductory essay introduces the listener to the historical, cultural, and political questions dealt with in the music, along with several black and white photographs. This format works within the successful parameters defined by Folkways, though the images in the Paredon liner notes include significantly more cultural and political content: an anti-imperialist march, a woodcut print by Cuban artist Carmelo González depicting the evils of U.S. interventions in Latin

America, a photograph (taken by Dane herself) full of the smiling faces of Cuban youths. And finally, unlike Folkways, the lyrics of each track on the three albums examined here are fully transcribed and translated.

The Paredon booklets offer what Peter Low, in his guide *Translating Song: Lyrics and Texts*, identifies as the ideal format for home listening: “to print the ST [source text] and TT [target text] in parallel or facing-page format, to permit comparisons” (50). Though our focus here is on listeners who lack proficiency in Spanish, it is fair to note the value of this presentation for those who possess some knowledge of the language. Dane played an extensive role in the production of the English renderings, both translating lyrics on her own and collaborating with other translators. Her approach to the process was rigorous, comparing different translations, attending to listeners’ need for cultural clarifications, and editing versions commissioned to other translators (Interview with Jeff Place 42–3). Though the translations in the Paredon inserts generally offer the Anglophone listener a clear sense of the ideological content of the songs, close examination reveals both strengths and weaknesses in the renderings. There is evidence in many cases of a meticulous approach to making the lyrics’ cultural context and political force readable to the English speaker, but there are also a number of examples of a weakening of the rhetorical impact of the Spanish original either through diminution of the intensity of an image or through confusion of its content.

The 1971 album *Cuba Va! Songs of the New Generation of Revolutionary Cuba* presents the work of the Grupo de Experimentación Sonora, or Experimental Sound Collective, a collection of young musicians working under the aegis of the Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry). As Tamara Levitz explains, the group broke boundaries on a number of terrains; they were a diverse group of musicians “forced to converse across genre, class, and racial boundaries on a daily basis in their communal jam sessions” (190). Their songs “fuse elements of Cuban music, progressive rock, Beatles tunes, jazz, avant-garde music, and *nueva canción*” (Levitz 197). *Cuba Va!* is of momentous importance to the documentation of the history of Cuban music. Leo Brouwer, at the time the head of the music section of ICAIC, founded and led the group, which included the young Pablo Milanés, Silvio Rodríguez, and Noel Nicola, who together were the founders of the *Nueva Trova*, or New Song movement, which became an international aesthetic and political phenomenon.⁹ The album demonstrates Dane and Silber’s feeling of personal connection to the Revolution. The project is in large part a family affair: Silber pens the introduction, Dane contributes photographs and collaborates on the translations, and Dane’s son Pablo Menéndez, who had been living and working as a musician in Cuba for five years and was a member of the Grupo de Experimentación Sonora, authored a statement in English on behalf of the group.¹⁰ Though he is not

explicitly credited, Menéndez most likely penned the explanations of the philosophical and ideological content of each track in the section “About the Songs” (7–8), which is written in first person plural to represent the collective voice of the group.

In his introduction Silber interpellates his reader as educated and progressive, but susceptible to two false expectations about revolutionary art: that its interests should be strictly national rather than international, and that it should pour itself into the mold of propagandistic folklorism (3). He counters these anticipated misconceptions with two fundamental assertions. First, the music of the Grupo de Experimentación Sonora reflects both the domestic concerns and international ambitions of revolutionary Cuba: “not only Cuba’s socialist aspirations, but an awareness of Cuba’s relationship to the rest of the world” as aspiring leader of liberation movements in Latin America and beyond (3). Second, Silber prepares the reader for a “shock”: the music heard on the record diverges from Anglophone expectations of revolutionary art (2). The music of the Grupo de Experimentación Sonora represents the inspiration of young artists and not the agenda of “heavy-handed party administrators” (2). In his statement on behalf of the group, Pablo Menéndez identifies the following shared goals: “to be Cuban, to be revolutionary, to reflect the new consciousness of young people formed during this time, to be unrestricted in technique or style and open to all possibilities” (3). These aspirations clearly violate possible expectations that the music would draw on a simplified folklorism to advance its cause. As Levitz explains, the group’s commitment to both communism and expressive freedom landed it in uncertain territory at home in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Denigrated by many in positions of political and cultural power because of their affinities with U.S. and British countercultures, the group experienced both adulation and suspicion (190). True to his goal of political advocacy, Silber does not delve into the ways innovative music was repressed by the Revolution.

By taking into account both Cuba’s domestic “history and geography” and its sense of solidarity with colonized peoples across the Third World, Silber assures the listener that it is possible to listen “the way ... Cuba itself listens to this music” (2). This assertion goes beyond the implicit promises made in the more anthropological notes to the Folkways recordings, which suggest that the reader can draw near and observe, but not necessarily fuse his awareness with that of the foreign others who created the music. In contrast, Paredon’s goal of inspiring its listeners to engage in tactical listening and join a defined political struggle requires the presupposition that a greater depth of cross-cultural empathy is possible. Folkways promises the opportunity to know things about Cuba, whereas Paredon is built on a faith in the political potential of empathy with Cubans. The discourse about Cuban music put forth in Paredon

albums is fittingly more attuned to the emotional charge of the music, where Folkways is more interested in its technical execution.

Given Silber's notion that it is possible for the Anglophone listener to hear *Cuba Va!* as if with Cuban ears, translation has a crucial role to play. Whereas in Folkways inserts, English renderings are so often fragmentary and prone to glosses and summaries, in the Paredon booklets, translation is charged with the task of being a conduit through which the reader might know a cultural other as that other knows itself. Where Folkways implicitly evidences an anthropologist's caution regarding the permeability of the barriers between cultures,¹¹ Paredon asserts that the listener who informs themselves thoroughly enough about the observable conditions of the Revolution and takes a keen enough interest in Cuban cultural self-expression can unite with Cubans and form the kind of bond of international solidarity that is crucial to the advancement of a global Marxist project. It is evident on the surface that the thoroughness of Paredon's translations works to facilitate this process, but the underlying goal of forging empathic bonds between listeners and musicians can also be perceived by examining the moments at which the translations amplify the intensity of image and emotional expression in the original. As will be seen, moments of amplification are at times counterbalanced by translation decisions that unintentionally weaken or blur the intended effect of the original. Looking at the texts as a whole, examples of translational intensification can be seen as compensation for what the translator sees as the inevitability of other renderings that have fallen short. The translation choice that increases the expressive force of the original is a way of grasping an opportunity to ensure an overall balance of effect. Andrew Chesterman says of this kind of compensation that

its validity rests on the understanding that what is translated is a whole text, not any smaller unit of language. If, therefore, the translator chooses to do something (add, omit, change etc.) at one point in the text, this action in itself may be sufficient justification for a compensatory strategy at some other point in the text.

(216)

An example of amplification can be found in the translation of the title track. "Cuba va," which forms both title and refrain, goes untranslated throughout the English rendering of the song, since a nuanced discussion of the phrase occurs in the preceding note: "the title could be translated in a number of ways: Cuba is going ahead, 'right on, Cuba,' Look out Cuba's coming, all of which adds up to the general feeling of optimism and enthusiasm for our revolution!" (7). Evidencing the permeability of the boundary between text and paratext, this exploration of the expressive subtlety of the phrase unpacks its implications, enriching the reader's experience of the translation of the song itself, where they encounter it

again and again in the original. This can be seen as going beyond what is in the original text, where the resonances of the phrase *Cuba va* are to be brought to consciousness through the interpretive work of the reader-listener. Another example of this impulse to aid the reader's interpretation is found in the third verse of the song, which expresses the arduousness of the revolutionary project. The statement is rendered as "It may be that with our bare arms / We'll have to open up the jungle" (9). In this rewriting, insertions are used to both intensify the image of labor and struggle ("bare arms") and convey a sense of expansive accomplishment ("open *up* the jungle"). An emphasis on clarity of political impact guides these translational choices.

In the song "Su nombre, Ho Chi Minh" (Your Name, Ho Chi Minh), a musical setting of a poem by Félix Pita Rodríguez that has also appeared with the title "Su nombre puede ponerse en verso" (Your Name Can Be Written in Verse), a modulation from passive to active voice maintains the force of the homage to the Vietnamese revolutionary, but since the technique is not applied consistently, the effect is attenuated. The speaker of the original tells the hero he can be sung to just as nature can be sung to, whereas the translation inserts poets into the role of singing: "Poets can sing to you / As one sings to the sea, and to the mountains" (12). The insertion of "poets" is indirectly justified by the fact that the song is an interpretation of a poem. What results is a reminder of the song's literary origins, an effect that ultimately enriches the English language reader's experience. In the following line, though, instead of continuing with this choice, the translator reverts to depersonalization with "as one sings." Given the positive effect of bringing poets into the action of the song, the translation "Poets can sing to you / As they sing to the sea, and to the mountains" would have been more effective. There is also an inevitable loss in the fact that the English does not have two registers of "you," as Spanish does. The original addresses Ho Chi Minh in the formal and respectful *usted* rather than *tú*. Nonetheless, compensation for this lack of a formal "you" can be found dispersed throughout the translation in choices that maintain a tone of reverence and respect.

Compensation is also called for, but lacking, in the refrain to Pablo Milanés's "Los años mozos," translated as "The Young Years," where the singer plays on the difference between the two Spanish words for "to be," one of which is generally used to denote defining traits, while the other describes conditions or situations. A word-for-word translation of these lines might be: "The young years passed / And now one must know that it is necessary to be and to be." The sense transmitted in this play on words is that upon reaching a point of personal and ideological maturity, one realizes the need to be both true to one's inherent nature and be present, positively engaged with social circumstances. The revolutionary must be true to eternal values while also adapting to life's realities. Lacking an equivalent bifurcation between senses of "to be" in English,

another resource in the English language must be drawn upon. The translation renders the lines as “what we must be, / and that we must be” (13). Rather than a distinction between the inner and absolute on the one hand, and the social and circumstantial on the other, the translation misreads the play on words as evoking a distinction between identity and simple existence or survival. The effect is a kind of pixilation of the expressive subtlety of the Spanish.

Four years after *Cuba Va!*, Paredon released *Cuba: Songs for Our America* by the singer-songwriter Carlos Puebla with his group Los Tradicionales. Writing and performing songs since the 1930s, and committed to the socialist cause from the start, he became known as “El Cantor de la Revolución,” or “Singer of the Revolution.” As Robin Moore notes, “in the first years of the revolution, compositions by Puebla in support of government initiatives received heavy airplay, effectively becoming anthems of political change” (59). Gary Anderson and Barbara Dane’s biography of Puebla in the liner notes declares: “with his music he defended the landless peasant, the unemployed worker, and teachers without schools” (2). The authors’ passion for the Revolution is transparent throughout the essay, whose final paragraph begins “long may Carlos Puebla and his Traditionals continue to write and sing the songs of the new Cuba” (2). Puebla was given the freedom to make the selection of songs for the album, and he seized the opportunity to send a message to listeners in the United States. Most of the songs denounce the injustices of the U.S. at home and abroad. He cries out for independence for Puerto Rico, denounces the Vietnam War, exhorts Panama to rid itself of American colonial domination, and criticizes social injustices perpetuated against the poor and people of color in the United States.

Reading Laura Ingler Pérez’s translations, the Anglophone reader gets a clear sense of the songs’ content, though as is the case with *Cuba Va!*, there are moments where the songs’ force of expression is either attenuated or exaggerated. “Ya está despertando el negro,” translated as “Now the Black Man is Awakening,” describes both the oppression of African Americans in the U.S. and their process of reclaiming justice. Engels Pérez renders “cielo” as “sky,” rather than “heaven,” in “El negro quiere en la tierra / su pedacito de cielo” (8). Her version, “The black man only asks on this earth, / for his little piece of sky” (8), reduces the scope of the man’s ambition, not only with the weak image of “little piece of sky,” but also with the qualifier “only.” In the English version, Afrodescendants make a modest request, whereas the translation, “on this earth the black man wants / his little piece of heaven” would have restored the play on the terrestrial and the divine, respected the transcendental intensity of “cielo,” and reflected the expression of desire, not request, in “quiere” (wants).

This dilution of impact is strongly contrasted by Engels Pérez’s choice to pivot from translating “negro” as “black man” to rendering it as “nigger” where Puebla’s song depicts white racism.

Y mientras el negro es manso
 y se está tranquilo el negro
 el rico lo califica
 como pobre negro bueno.

(9)

As long as the black man is quiet,
 as long as he keeps in his place,
 the rich man classifies him
 as a “good, poor nigger.”

(9)

The word “negro” in Spanish is generally not considered insulting. Though context can make its impact pejorative, it is not equivalent to “nigger.” Engels Pérez draws on the context provided by the phrase the word appears in to make the interpretive judgement to use this strongest of all words in the English language and maintain the intensity of Puebla’s critique. A subtler example of intensification is the rendering of “se está despertando” (is awakening) (9) as “has awakened” (9) in the closing line of the song. In this way, the translation traces an arc from the title, which is rendered in the present progressive, to the close of the song, where the present perfect announces the completion of a process. African Americans are no longer coming to grips with the necessity of fighting back; they have already made up their minds. Though there are examples where the impact of the English version does not measure up to the scathing tone of the original, gestures like these represent an effort to ensure the piece as a whole makes a blunt impact on the conscience of American listeners.

The four songs advocating for nationhood for Puerto Rico are also meant as a provocation to the consciousness of a U.S. listenership. In the bolero “Canto a Puerto Rico,” Puebla points up the U.S. possession’s dual identity as Caribbean and as part of the U.S. (6), suggesting both his conviction that Cuba and Puerto Rico are cultural kin and his lament that the island remains under foreign domination. Engler Pérez gives “how your voice vibrates” (7) as Puebla’s admiring exclamation in response to Puerto Ricans’ advocacy. Her version combines elements of both strengthening and dilution. The verb in the original is in the subjunctive mood, which would typically be rendered as “may your voice vibrate.” In place of an exhortation to lift a collective voice, the English declares that it is already crying out. The effect is to imply existing revolutionary action rather than potential. In contrast to this fortification through grammatical modulation, the semantic choice of “to vibrate” rather than “to resound” leaves the reader with a feeble impression. The alliteration of “voice vibrates” does not compensate for this shortcoming, given that the sound of the letter “v” lacks the impact Puebla implies. “May your

voice resound” would have captured both the exhortation and the sonority of the imagined Puerto Rican voice more aptly. Nonetheless, it can be argued that Engler Pérez’s use of the indicative in a sense works to counterbalance the weakening of effect found in the verb “vibrate” by suggesting collective strength and action.

Though it is the song that speaks most directly to the U.S. listener, the translation of “Hombre de Norteamérica,” translated as “People of North America,” is unfortunately the rendering whose oblique semantic choices most weaken the ideological and emotional impact of the original. Again, Puebla uses apostrophic address to heighten the dramatic impact of his pronouncements, singing to the poor and oppressed citizen of the U.S. who has begun to fight for justice. He declares in the chorus: “el mundo te contempla” (7). The verb “contemplar” signifies close examination and expectant watching. The translation, “the world is looking at you” (7), leaves the reader with the strange sense of being negatively judged despite being interpellated as a warrior who has begun to strive for freedom. The first verse laments that the oppressor has forbidden “hasta el llanto del crimen” (7); those who suffer are prohibited from even lamenting their victimhood with tears. The translation weakens the circumstances with the phrase “even the right to complain” (7), a version that removes both the intensity of the oppressor’s crime and the degree of suffering it has caused. A particularly diminishing effect is felt when a song’s strong closing is poorly rendered, and such is the case with Engler Pérez’s version of the final verse:

Y florecerá la risa
donde el sol está llorando,
que por algo está brotando
el sudor de tu camisa.

(7)

These lines could be directly translated as:

And laughter will flower
where the sun is weeping,
since sweat is blooming
from your shirt for good reason.

Engler Pérez confuses the distinction between the image of the sun’s tears and the revolutionary’s sweat:

And smiles will one day bloom
where the sun is now crying
tears that somehow break forth
as the sweat of your shirt.

(7)

The crux of the confusion is the fact that Engler Pérez misses both the separation of ideas that occurs at the comma and misunderstands Puebla's use of the phrase "por algo," which she reads literally as "because of something." Puebla uses the phrase idiomatically to convey the idea that a real reason or purpose is known to exist. In this way, she misrepresents Puebla's implication that the resistance movements in the United States are destined to make significant gains and instead produces a scenario of surreal bleakness.

The 1982 release *Rabo de nube (Tail of a Tornado): Songs of the New Cuba* offers listeners ten songs by Silvio Rodríguez, one of the most important singer-songwriters of the *Nueva Trova* or New Song movement in Cuba. His songs have been appreciated throughout the Spanish-speaking world as poetic texts, appearing at times, like Bob Dylan's, in poetry anthologies. Uruguayan poet Mario Benedetti has commented that his lyrics are so literary that they "are valid as poetry even without the basic support of the music ... Silvio is a poet who sings, and even more, he is one of the most talented poets of his generation" ("conservan su validez poética aun sin el básico soporte de la música... Silvio es un poeta que canta, y más aún: que es uno de los poetas más talentosos de su generación" [8]).

Rodríguez's individual poetic genius notwithstanding, the emphasis of the Paredon introductory notes falls heavily on the *Nueva Trova* movement in general and the way it gives voice to the sociopolitical realities of Cuba rather than to Rodríguez as individual artist. This emphasis stems from the socialist habit of thinking in collective rather than individual terms. The introduction to the liner notes states that the musical movement should not be understood as a collection of "isolated individual perspectives ... the Troubador's experiences are also common ones, shared by millions" (2). Concomitant with this sidelining of Rodríguez's individuality as artist in favor of a discussion of national issues, the translations of his songs in the liner notes at times offer a poor reflection of the poetic originality and intensity of his words in favor of images and statements that can be clearly and effortlessly read in leftist political terms.

Of the three Paredon records examined here, *Rabo de nube* is accompanied by the richest textual supplement. The introduction is written by scholar of oral cultures Rina Benmayor, who takes her readership's cultural background into account as she discusses connections between the *Nueva Trova* and the music of Bob Dylan and the Beatles. The Anglophone reader is also likely to understand what she means when she contrasts the New Song with "homogenized and commercial" popular music (2). Unlike the mindless mass-produced music of the U.S., in New Song compositions "the lyrics seek new poetic structures and struggle to free themselves from romantic cliché by employing abstract imagery and poetic references that correspond to the growing

literary sophistication of the now highly literate population of Cuba” (2). Benmayor’s characterization exalts both Cuban aesthetic and educational achievements and implicitly contrasts them with the state of cultural affairs in the U.S.

As we have seen in other Paredon projects, one of the principal agendas is to challenge U.S. listeners to question both the actions of their government and the flaws in their own materialistic culture. This agenda is continued in the second prefatory text, “Cuba: An Introduction.” The author, who is not credited, advances a lacerating critique of American neocolonial aggression as a “genuine threat to world peace” (5). Cuba is posed as a model to be emulated, as “living proof that only complete political, economic and cultural independence from U.S. imperialism and the abolition of the profit system can meet the needs of Latin America’s hungry and exploited millions” (5). The introduction closes by transitioning to an appeal to U.S. citizens to work toward the abrogation of the embargo (5). The album appears in this light as a call to challenge American foreign policy toward Cuba. Toward this end, the notes are followed by a list of “Organizations and Publications Dealing with Cuba” as well as instructions on how to subscribe to the official Cuban revolutionary newspaper *Granma* from the U.S., in spite of recent U.S. government attempts to block mailings of official Cuban publications (12). Here the kind of concrete action Paredon aims to spur is vividly illustrated.

The next text to appear in the notes is Dane’s translation of a “Resolution of the Artists and Writers of Cuba,” originally published in the official cultural journal *Casa de las Américas* in 1981. In the statement, members of the Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba (National Union of Cuban Writers and Artists) decry “the escalation of international tensions by the present U.S. administration headed by Ronald Reagan” and affirm that “to defend [the Revolution] is to defend culture!” (6). In a message of significant impact for the American reader, the artists promise to take up arms against any U.S. aggression, both a direct challenge and an illustration of the very different, active role of artists in revolutionary Cuba.

The translations of Rodríguez’s songs were written in teams. The opening track “Vamos a andar” was translated by Rina Benmayor and Juan Flores, with editorial help from Barbara Dane and Pablo Menendez (12). Whereas a direct rendering of the title would be “Let us Walk,” the translators make an insertion to amplify the political message: “Let Us Walk Together” (6), making explicit the collectivist sentiment latent in the use of the first person plural. The song, which Rodríguez dedicated to the 12th World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow (Sanz 262), calls on an international collective to move forward in the struggle for both economic and social equality:

Vamos a andar
con todas las banderas
trenzadas, de manera
que no haya soledad

(6)*

A direct translation might be:

Let us walk
with all flags
intertwined, so that
there might be no solitude

The notes give the verse as:

Let us walk together
with all our banners braided
Leaving no-one
To stand alone!

(6)

The translation simplifies the image such that it transmits a clear and direct political message. Whereas Rodríguez's evocation of the experience of solitude is both social and psychological, the translation exteriorizes the concept in a standard way with the image of standing alone. By making the image more concrete, the rendering diminishes the scope of Rodríguez's hyperbolic exclamation. The effect is a statement that reads as propagandistic where Rodríguez's text counterbalances political statement with poetic intensity. Who but a poet could muse about the total disappearance of solitude? Whereas the insertion of "together" in the title is a clarification that hews to the intention of the song, the diminishment of Rodríguez's language in this case clearly introduces a translational intention to simplify and activate the original for the purposes of advocacy.

The struggle is both exterior and interior; the speaker calls on the participant in the movement toward liberation to purify his own character in a manner that evokes Che Guevara's concept of the "new man." Guevara concludes that the individual must "embody the highest virtues and aspirations of the people" (227) if he wishes to be a leader in a socialist society. Rodríguez evokes Guevara's focus on the imperative of inner development with such phrases as "matando el egoísmo" (killing selfishness). The translation, "leaving selfishness behind" (6), again has

* "Vamos a andar" © by Silvio Rodríguez. © Ojalá, S.L. Madrid. Spain. All rights reserved. International Copyright secured.

a diminishing effect. The poetic intensity of Rodríguez's words is transmuted into a more concrete and formulaic language. The epic nature of the struggle to rid oneself of the reflex to think first of one's own desires is evoked in the triumphant "matando," whereas the English rendering implies that selfishness is something that is easily abandoned.

"Sueño con serpientes" (I Dream of Serpents/A Dream About Serpents)** is one of Rodríguez's most lapidary and layered compositions. Though it is anchored in a socialist consciousness, a fact signaled by the artist's epigraphic reading of lines by Bertold Brecht, the song is not a straightforward political statement. Rodríguez's imagery is classical, Biblical, and surreal. The song uses modern language as it draws on medieval archetypes, posing its speaker as a vanquisher of dragons in the guise of both knight and troubadour. As Joseba Sanz suggests, the song can be read as dramatizing the artist's multiple internal wars against inauthenticity, commercialism, and ego (186). The speaker of "Sueño" shares a dream in which he finds himself in a sea surrounded by "longo, transparent" ("largas, transparentes" [10]) serpents, one of which, after a struggle, swallows him. In the third verse, the speaker arrives at the serpent's stomach, where he defeats it by singing "a truth in verse" ("un verso, una verdad" [10]). The monster—which represents ugliness, violence, and hatred—is defeated by poetry. This triumph is attenuated by its dissonant juxtaposition of each verse with the Medusan associations of the refrain "la mato y aparece una mayor" ("I kill it and a larger one appears" [10]). The victory of love, beauty, and truth over evil is suggested by this contrast to be temporary; the struggle is epic and eternal.

The reader of the translation follows the outlines of Rodríguez's story without difficulty, but shades of subtlety and intensity are lost. In his battle with the serpent, the speaker wields three weapons, the first of which is a clover that sprouts from his temple ("un trébol de mi sien" [10]). With this image, Rodríguez evokes the freshness, naturalness, and spontaneity of poetry and song, traits that, when shoved down the gullet of the sea serpent, cause it to choke ("se atora" [10]). The translation renders the "trébol" as "trident" (10), a choice most likely influenced by the marine setting of the song. This decision veers the narrative away from the triumph of poetry and peace in the direction of a violent male clash. The three leaves of the clover that springs from the troubadour's mind refer in part to the three verses of the song itself, which Rodríguez sings as a hymn to poetry, philosophy, and peace, rather than to physical battle. The other two weapons the singer wields, a dove ("una paloma" [10]) and a truth ("una verdad" [10]) harmonize with the image of the clover, whereas the introduction of the weapon with which Poseidon stirs up storms and unleashes earthquakes adds a dissonant note. Though the

** "Sueño con serpientes" © by Silvio Rodríguez. © Ojalá, S.L. Madrid. Spain. All rights reserved. International Copyright secured.

translation avoids a similar imagistic swerve with regards to the speaker's second weapon, a dove, the rendering hews stiffly to the syntax of the original: "le doy de masticar una paloma" (10) appears as "I give it to chew a dove" (10). Though Rodríguez's image is surprising, it is rendered in natural language; "I give it a dove to chew on" would preserve this effect.

In the third verse, where the troubadour calmly vanquishes the serpent, Rodríguez shades his surreal imagery with a lightly humorous tone that is lost in the flatness of the English translation.

Esta al fin me engulle y mientras por su esófago
 Paseo, voy pensando en qué vendrá:
 Pero se destruye cuando llego a su estómago
 Y planteo con su verso una verdad.

(10)

The liner notes read:

This one finally devours me, and as through its esophagus
 I pass, I am thinking of what is to come.
 But I destroy it when I arrive in its stomach
 And I present it with a verse of truth.

(10)

Word order again poses a problem; the first and second lines in English stumble as they attempt to follow the lithe syntax of the original. Further, there is a lightness of tone to the verb "paseo," which is used in varying contexts to denote going for a stroll or on a ride for aimless pleasure. Where in the original the speaker takes a tour of the beast's insides, the English renders the process in physiological language ("I pass"). "Paseo" stands out at the end of a musical phrase; the faintly plaintive melody rises on the first syllable, falls (appropriately, as the speaker is descending) on the third syllable, then pauses briefly. It is a crucial moment in the song, a detail rich with tension between calamity and transcendence. Furthermore, on his serene descent through the serpent's upper digestive system, Rodríguez employs a touch of humor as he has his troubadour meditate on his approaching destination. Looking at the text as a whole, it becomes clear that the speaker's tranquility is the product of his confidence in his own art; he knows that at the appropriate moment he can use his song to put forth the truth and vanquish the soulless creature who has swallowed him. Employing a contraction to render "qué vendrá" as "what's to come" would have been useful in carrying across this levity. "What is to come" reads as more unambiguously ominous. Though the agenda of the album is explicitly political, it is worth noting that erasing subtleties like these ends up weakening the effect of the project. Through

subtlety of poetic technique Rodríguez uses the speaker of “Sueño con serpientes” to embody the ideal state of being for a committed artist: uncannily assured of his own grasp of not just the techniques of his art form, but of the truth itself. This assurance persists even in the face of the Gorgonian recurrence of evil’s threat.

As Robin Moore has observed,

the lyrics of Rodríguez’s songs are especially daring, incorporating surrealist imagery and powerful extended metaphors so that the literal meaning of the text is far from transparent. Indeed, many consider him to be a poet first and a musician second.

(145)

The translations that appear in *Rabo de nube* dim this picture in two ways. First, the prefatory material dissolves Rodríguez as individual artist first into the general current of the *Nueva Trova* movement and then into the broader cultural and political history of the Cuban Revolution. Second, the translations of his songs, though competent, flatten his language. The pressure to render his texts as direct political statement can be perceived at various moments where the English versions render his poetic originality clumsily or inaccurately. As Lefevere asserts, poetic choices in translation are always shaped by ideology, and in the case of Paredon, political impulse can be seen crowding out both the ambiguity and the aesthetic pleasures of sung texts.

Conclusion

In the texts that accompany the recordings we have explored here, ideology is at the forefront, motivating omissions, insertions, and modifications of varying sorts. Omissions occur frequently throughout the Folkways albums, where the verbal content of Cuban music is taken to be secondary to its sonorous qualities. Though musicology should not be construed as a discipline that neglects the verbal, we have seen here how the musicological instinct to catalogue the components of a musical performance can crowd out the lyrics. This said, it must be recognized that the founder and the vast majority of collaborators on Folkways albums were sophisticated and progressive intellectuals interested in world cultures; effects of simplification or erasure of facets of Cuban cultural expression were not motivated by an explicit ideology of cultural colonization. In the case of Paredon, what gets omitted from their liner notes is both the musical character of the performances and sufficient attention to the poetic subtleties of the artists’ lyrics. As the Smithsonian archive’s summary states, “Paredon Records was part of a wave of cultural expression that accompanied the worldwide struggle for economic, racial, and social justice and national liberation of the mid-twentieth century” (“Paredon Records”).

This wave washes over the shades of meaning in the lyrics of Rodríguez, Puebla, Milanés, and others' lyrics, smoothing out some of their complexities in favor of an English translation that clearly and directly serves the record label's political mission.

These interactions between belief systems and translational strategies parallel what is seen in the other means of cultural expression explored in this study—literature, political writing, and film—though the trans-medial situation of the album liner note is unique. As we have seen, the translation of lyrics enters into a complex relationship with the aural experience of the recording itself and with other paratextual supports for the recording, like introductory essays, photographs, and descriptions of instruments. Taken together, these elements generate a prism of effects for the Anglophone reader-listener, creating an experience of varying degrees of intensity and coherence.

Notes

- 1 Not to be confused with the original Folkways Record label, which the Smithsonian acquired in 1987, this archive, found at <http://folkways.si.edu>, includes American and global music recorded under labels such as Monitor, Arhoolie, Cook, Folkways, and Paredon. These last two labels are the focus of the present study.
- 2 Among these, three albums of music collected by Cuban ethnographer Lydia Cabrera—*Matanzas, Cuba, ca. 1957*, *Havana, Cuba, ca. 1957*, and *Havana & Matanzas, Cuba, ca. 1957*—would be of particular interest for further study.
- 3 *Cult Music of Cuba*, released on the Folkways label in 1951, falls outside the post-revolutionary period, and will not be treated in this discussion.
- 4 As psycholinguist Anne Cutler explains, “speech is continuous and word boundaries are frequently unclear,” even to native speakers (73). The process by which a native speaker ascertains word boundaries conjugates phonetic awareness with lexical knowledge in a dizzyingly complex and exquisitely ordered process. “Information cascades continuously through levels of processing, allowing higher-level probabilities to influence how much lower-level information may be needed for a decision” between possible words heard (Cutler 411).
- 5 This group plays the crucial role of inaugurating *carnaval* festivities with a parade that lasts five hours and is followed by a general celebration (Milstein 226).
- 6 For a history of the Cuban *danzón*, see Roy 79–102.
- 7 A wealth of information on the Cuban *pregón* can be found in Díaz Ayala.
- 8 Walter Aaron Clark explains that, though the Cuban version employs the complex layering of rhythms that reveal its African influences, the bolero's roots are Spanish (152).
- 9 For a history of the movement, see Robin Moore's chapter “Transformations in Nueva Trova” in *Music and Revolution: Cultural Change in Socialist Cuba* (135–69).
- 10 Menéndez played a crucial role in contributing to the group's musical heterogeneity, bringing a sensibility informed by U.S. blues, psychedelic rock and roll, and Motown (Levitz 191).

- 11 Even schools of anthropological thought that advocate participant observation stop short of Silber's assertion of the possibility of experiencing culture as if no distance existed between self and other. Lynne Hume and Jane Mulcock explain that in spite of what can be learned through direct participation in culture, "the practice of ethnography also assumes the importance of maintaining enough intellectual distance to ensure that researchers are able to undertake a critical analysis of the events in which they are participating" (xi).

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6 Watching and Reading

Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's Films Subtitled

Film subtitles not only place the graphically represented English word in juxtaposition with an aural experience (spoken dialogue, music, sound) but also in relation to the continuously morphing film image. The intersemiotic relationships translated language enters into when superimposed on filmic images is complex. As a result, the Anglophone viewer experiences a Cuban film differently from the Spanish speaker generally or the Cuban viewer specifically. Adding to the complexity already inherent in the way subtitling interacts with the various communicative channels of a film, we find that subtitles vary between distinct video releases. Researching the four films studied here has revealed that the English-speaking viewer's experience will vary depending on the version they see. Meaningful effects on the viewer's processing of the film as multilayered artwork occur at the level of characterization, character relationships, humor, and emotional connections among characters.

Marie-Noelle Guillot notes that subtitling provides a particularly powerful means for mediating "exposure to linguistic and cultural otherness" (607). This mediation occurs through transformations and omissions of both spoken and written language content. In this chapter we will pay attention to the mechanisms by which subtitling facilitates or obfuscates the English-speaking viewer's appreciation of filmmaker Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's vision of the Revolution and his role as artist within it. As we will see, Gutiérrez Alea's works walk a tightrope between allegiance to communism and belief in freedom of expression. On the one hand, the Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) he works within was founded with the express purpose of advancing the Revolution's agendas. As Jessica Gibbs explains, officialdom viewed cinema as a powerful tool for communicating an ideological vision that interpellated citizens as "part of a larger movement towards self-determination and liberation;" nonetheless, "Cuban filmmakers operated within ill-defined and fluctuating limits" (173–4), and Gutiérrez Alea explored where those limits were throughout his career. For the Anglophone viewer reading subtitles as they watch the films, there are moments at which this risky process unfolds in vivid clarity, whereas in other instances the

tension is blurred. At times omissions and refractions obscure the drama of Gutiérrez Alea's careful messages of critique from within.

Subtitling Multimodality

Films are multimodal works of art. Each of the visual and auditory components of a film—image, text on screen, dialogue, sound, and music—signifies in its own way and interacts with the other. Music can enhance the emotional impact of an image. The visual presentation of a setting is supplemented by ambient sound. The sound of spoken dialogue is expected to synchronize with the image of the interlocutor on screen. As Jorge Díaz-Cintas and Aline Remael assert,

films are texts of great semiotic complexity in which different sign systems co-operate to create a coherent story ... subtitles have to become part of this semiotic system. They are an addition to the finished film, and if they are to function effectively, they must interact with and rely on all the film's channels.

(45)

These connections among communicative channels in a film produce crucial cognitive and emotional effects on the viewer. Whether subtitling is conducive to the reaction a filmmaker wishes to evoke is of crucial importance to one of the overarching questions of this study, namely what perceptions the Anglophone viewer is likely to have of issues facing Cuban society and government.

Subtitling can operate on two of a film's communicative channels. The first and most obvious of these is spoken dialogue or narration. As Henrik Gottlieb indicates, this is a complex trans-semiotic process of "crossing over from speech to writing" (86). The second channel subtitles can respond to is text that appears on screen. Subtitles can add, omit, clarify, or modulate information that is heard or seen in text. As it does so, it has complex effects not just on a single expressive element, but also on the relationship between separate elements. As Aline Remael and Nina Reviers explain, "the explicit or implicit interaction between the translated mode and the other modes may also be altered, sometimes unintentionally" (262). A Cuban image in one of Gutiérrez Alea's films, like the tables outside Havana's Coppelia ice-cream parlor or the USS Maine Monument that looms over the same city's oceanside *malecón*, are no longer signifying in a direct way to a Cuban viewer. They are now interacting with words in English that appear on screen to represent a tentative conversation between two strangers or the bemused inner dialogue of an introspective and alienated protagonist. Marie-Noelle Guillot highlights the importance of paying critical attention to "the co-presence of a visual and aural component associated with a particular language or culture, and written text in another language

for which expectations may be different” (610). When the sound of spoken Spanish accompanies images of English words, a strange effect occurs. The viewer is simultaneously submerged in a foreign world and connected to their domestic context through the appearance of the English language on the screen. A similar simultaneity of difference and familiarity occurs when Spanish words appear in a newspaper headline or poster and English words meant to represent them appear below; there is a dual experience of estrangement and accommodation for the Anglophone viewer.

Overall, the viewer’s cognitive capacities are challenged as reading accompanies watching and listening at a pace the viewer does not choose. As Tatsuya Fukushima and David Major note,

the process of subtitle reading poses a heavier burden on the audience than book reading because subtitle reading is essentially a receptive process where the viewers are not in charge of their pace of reading ... while book reading presupposes the reader’s control of the pace of processing.

(60)

Guillot identifies another cognitive demand made of the viewer: the increased need for suspension of disbelief on the part of the viewer of a subtitled film, given that the reader of subtitles is more immediately aware that they are reading a translation than the reader of a translated text (622). Further, the viewer of a foreign film tends to need more guidance in relation to cultural content, and techniques a filmmaker uses to create repetitions and echoes often need to be respected rather than condensed by a subtitler in order to keep an already challenged viewer cognitively and affectively anchored. The analysis to follow will note where these needs are not met in the subtitling of Gutiérrez Alea’s films.

As is the case with text translation, the subtitle fulfills the contradictory expectations of transparent presentation of the foreign on the one hand, and domestic intelligibility on the other. What is unique is not only that the subtitle transmutes both spoken words and text that appears diagetically (like the title of a book a character is holding) or non-diagetically (as in credits), but that it does so at the same time other information is being directed at the viewer, like music, ambient sound, and the non-linguistic components of the film image. Even the sound of voices speaking unintelligibly in Spanish presents the Anglophone viewer with information like volume and tone of voice. The viewer’s reading of the subtitle occurs in rapid alternation with their consideration of these other sources of fast flowing and richly inflected information.

The intersemiotic complexity of subtitling contrasts with the simplified experience a dubbed film presents. Dubbing removes the spoken foreign language from the film, and the subtitle is absent, along with the complex semiotic reactions it releases when it butts up against the other expressive

modes of the film. As Susan Bassnett-McGuire comments, “dubbing erases the original voices, and restricts access to other languages. Subtitling, in contrast, makes a comparative perspective possible, as audiences are allowed to access both source and target systems” (136–7). Fukushima and Major assert that “overdubs, a covert form of translation ... give the audience a superficial impression as though the overdubbed film were the original,” whereas subtitling, is “overt” (60). The presence of both the original spoken language and text in a new language on the screen presents the viewer with a more complex semiotic texture.

Subtitling may allow for greater complexity of interactions among expressive modes and between languages and cultures, but it is subject to unique constraints. First and most obviously, translated text must appear at the same time corresponding information is presented in the film. As Díaz-Cintas and Remael put it, “subtitling ... is constrained by the respect it owes to synchrony” (9). Furthermore, they explain that the issue of how much space the text can occupy on the screen without being obtrusive is crucial: “the dimensions of the actual screen are finite and the target text will have to accommodate to the width of the screen ... a subtitle will have some 32 to 41 characters per line in a maximum of two lines” (9). As a result, omission and condensation of information is common. As we will see, these reductive operations are not without cost.

Subtitling the Social, Cultural, and Political

In “Pragmatics and Audiovisual Translation,” Louisa Desilla highlights the delicate nature of subtitling’s “careful relay of pragmatic meaning across cultures” (“Pragmatics” 255). Not only must the subtitler reflect the way social interactions are encoded in language, but also monitor the successful translation of the verbal representation of social meanings across language and culture boundaries. These challenges are felt most acutely when subtitling dialogue, where “discourse markers, interjections, hesitations, dysfluencies, false starts” tend to get scrubbed away (Bruti 194). This “cleaning up of expressive markers” acts directly “on the interpersonal dimension, as [those markers] contribute to the illocutionary force of an utterance and represent a sort of socio-pragmatic reflection of the forces at play” (Bruti 197). Erasure of pragmatic subtleties in dialogue can result not only in the obscuration of power relations between characters, as Bruti notes (194), but also drain conversations of their affective intimacy. As we will see in the films examined here, subtitles can either preserve or dilute the sense not only of a character’s drive to dominate, but also of the richness of filial or amorous feeling layered into the nuances of their speech.

Because of technical limitations, subtitles typically do not have recourse to immediate paratextual support when communicating the expressive richness of the original Spanish is difficult. Díaz Cintas and Remael explain that

the use of explanatory notes to the translation, such as glosses, footnotes or a prologue, has always been anathema to subtitling. The translator may well have understood a particular play on words or recognized an obscure reference but be unable to pass on the information because of the media's limitations.

(57)

It is particularly challenging for the subtitler when a character or narrator makes a sly, nuanced, or multilayered cultural reference. The translator must come up with a concise explicitation (an explanation that expands beyond the bounds of the original's concision) or adaptation (an Anglophone replacement for the specific Cuban phenomenon). They do so based on an educated guess about the viewer's background knowledge of the "producing culture" (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 150).

Fukushima and Major assert that the goal of subtitles is potentially self-contradicting: "the ultimate goal of a film translator is to produce the kind of translation that preserves the cultural identity of the source language while it is optimally accessible to the prospective audience at the same time" (59). In the name of accessibility, subtitles can release many effects. First, as Guillot emphasizes, stereotypes can end up reinforced when certain features of foreign communicative rituals are represented in text on the screen (610). The most salient of the many simplistic preconceptions an Anglophone viewer might bring to Gutiérrez Alea's films is either an overly idealized or demonized image of the Revolution. This image is likely the result of a fusion between domestic cultural experiences and a fragmented mosaic of information about life in Cuba received through mass media.

The four films studied here show both what Gibbs describes as a filmmaker "claiming the right to criticise constructively from within" (190) and a revolutionary artist defending socialist principles. Scholars have emphasized both the critical and the constructive in his work; Diane Marting, for example, asserts that the critical dimension of Gutiérrez Alea's films aims at the "prodding of Cuba along the Revolutionary path" (86). In both his celebratory and critical modes, Gutiérrez Alea's work can challenge the simplistic ideas of the English-speaking viewer, especially as he tackles issues that go beyond the surface images of a glorious or nefarious Revolution, examining instances of tension or precarious balance within society. In *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment*) (1968), he probes the psyche of a bourgeois intellectual struggling to adapt to a changing society. In *La muerte de un burócrata* (*Death of a Bureaucrat*) (1966) and *Guantanamo* (1995), he poses the question of the proper limits of bureaucracy and careerist competition in the Cuban government. Finally, in *Fresa y chocolate* (*Strawberry and Chocolate*) (1994), he stages the possibility of a reconciliation between the *machista* ethos of the country's militarized resistance to U.S. neocolonialism and

what that ethos perceives to be the dangerous femininity of artists and homosexual men. The English subtitles allow the Anglophone viewer to appreciate the complexity of Gutiérrez Alea's treatment of these themes to varying degrees.

The Dual Protagonist in *Memories of Underdevelopment*

Based on Edmundo Desnoes's eponymous novel, the 1968 film *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment*) is generally considered Gutiérrez Alea's greatest artistic achievement.¹ It centers on protagonist and narrator Sergio, a privileged would-be writer. Set during the lead-up to the Cuban Missile Crisis, the film plumbs Sergio's psyche through a pastiche of filmic techniques, including new wave stylization, cinema verité, and documentary. Astrid Santana Fernández de Castro describes *Memorias* as a concatenation of self-reference, structural fragmentation, pastiche, and fusion of fiction with documentary (9). The astute deployment of these techniques allows the film to throw into sharp relief both the subjectivity of the narrator-protagonist and the social reality that surrounds him (Fernández de Castro 9). As Matt Losada observes, documentary footage is deployed to confront Sergio's narcissism, to "bracket Sergio's solipsistic existence and call into question his stubborn will to ignorance" (61). The titles of books he peruses are also employed to provide a critical context for the protagonist's social attitudes.

The film is fundamentally concerned with two dimensions of Sergio's character: his ambivalence toward the socialist transformation of Cuban society and his objectifying attitude toward women. Both characteristics implicate him as behind the times, as morally ill-equipped to participate in the defense of the Revolution's social gains. Gutiérrez Alea underlines the existential urgency of full participation in the Revolution by closing the film with footage of preparations to defend the island against nuclear attack. Despite the candor of this closing gesture, the film generally avoids propagandistic facility. As Michael Chanan argues, viewers are meant to feel ambivalent about Sergio; he fails to adapt to revolutionary society but is also valuable in his capacity to diagnose its need for greater intellectual and cultural rigor (291). Though his behavior toward the young woman he carries on an affair with is heartless and selfish, his assertion that her superficiality is evidence of a societal state of intellectual "underdevelopment" is valid, as he complains: "todo el talento de los cubanos se gasta en adaptarse al momento. La gente no es consistente. Y siempre necesitan que alguien piense por ellos" (all of Cubans' talents are spent in adapting to the moment. People aren't consistent. And they always need someone to do their thinking for them).

Though it uses him to point out Cuba's broader intellectual and cultural deficiencies, the film repeatedly points up Sergio's individual

flaws. Though he fancies himself an intellectual, his thinking is stunted by the lack of a moral compass, and in the end, his selfishness dooms him in the face of profound external threats to Cuba's integrity. As Cubans from all sectors of society gear up to defend their homeland during the missile crisis in October 1962, an increasingly unhinged Sergio rattles uselessly around his penthouse apartment. As Matt Losada describes, Sergio at the end of the film "is left in solitude, a living remnant of an earlier time" (61). Gutiérrez Alea's message at the close of the film is clear: defending the homeland requires stiffer moral stuff than this decadent protagonist is capable of. Nonetheless, Sergio's diagnosis of the intellectual fragility of Cuban culture is allowed to resound in the viewer's mind, amplified by the film title's underlining of the concept of underdevelopment. As Nancy Berthier summarizes, *Memorias* asks three fundamental questions: "What is Revolution? What is an intellectual? How compatible are they?" (99).

Memories of Underdevelopment made a significant impact on viewers in the U.S. despite official efforts in that country to keep the film from being seen. It was first screened in New York in 1972 at the New Directors/New Films series sponsored by the Museum of Modern Art and the Film Society of Lincoln Center. A month later the film was confiscated by federal agents before it could be shown at a festival. It was finally screened at a small New York theater in 1973, gaining the attention of film connoisseurs in part through its inclusion in the *New York Times* film critic Vincent Canby's list of ten best films of that year. Canby calls the film "remarkable" and lauds its skill at "dramatizing alienation" (101). The film violated stereotypical ideas about Cuban culture among U.S. intelligentsia. Peter Schjeldahl says of the film in his 1973 review: "It is a miracle. It is also something of a shock"; confessing that he expected a more nakedly propagandistic work, he remarks that "'Memories,' though deeply political, happens to be the reverse: a beautifully understated film, sophisticated and cosmopolitan in style, fascinating in its subtlety and complexity" (141).

The present analysis will compare two versions, a 2008 DVD release by the British distributor Mr. Bongo and the 2017 restoration available through the Criterion Collection on DVD and through their streaming platform. The English subtitles that appear on the Mr. Bongo version do not always communicate the film's underlining of Sergio's two fundamental character flaws—his snobbish inability to see himself as equal to other Cubans and his objectifying attitude toward women. The subtitles bring about this effect through the operations they carry out on both spoken and printed language. Nonetheless, as we will see, there are moments where Sergio's flaws are clearly visible to the Anglophone viewer, either through effective subtitling, or through non-verbal presentations of information where no translation is needed. In addition to its greatly improved image and sound, the version available through Criterion leaves fewer holes in the film's depiction of Sergio's character. It

also supplies a paratextual support for the film in the form of interviews, a documentary, and essays. These parallel texts offer the English-speaking viewer a more detailed understanding of both the film's political arguments and its expressive techniques, thereby taking some pressure off the subtitles when it comes to transmitting the full texture of information Gutiérrez Alea offers. Though Díaz Cintas and Remael highlight the typical absence of paratext to accompany subtitles, a packaging like the one offered by Criterion represents a kind of exception; though it is not directly superimposed onto the visual presentation of the film the way subtitles are, it stands alongside both film and subtitles, focusing concepts and supplying pertinent information.

Losada describes *Memorias* as “the story of a man whose life trajectory is suddenly interrupted by a reality-shattering social revolution” (61). This commentary on Sergio's inability or refusal to accept the Revolution's value of social equality is blurred at times when cultural phenomena he or another character mention go unglossed and the Anglophone viewer is unlikely to catch the encoded message. One instance of this effect occurs where Sergio laments, in voiceover narration, the loss of Havana's El Encanto department store to a fire. “Encanto” has a broad semantic range, meaning charm, beauty, enchantment, or spell. When the vast store burned down, Sergio's focus was on the superficial experiences of bourgeois charm that were lost. Juxtaposing his lament with footage of the fire itself, the filmmaker responds contrapuntally to his own protagonist, chiding him for lamenting the destruction of a source of bourgeois pleasure, where he should be expressing outrage that anti-communist terrorists were the ones responsible for the conflagration. The fact that the fire was an act of terrorism would be fresh in the minds of any Cuban viewer, whereas the lack of a way, within the synchronic technical demands of the medium for the subtitler, to gloss the symbolism of El Encanto means that the Anglophone viewer feels much less acutely the ugliness of Sergio's bourgeois attitude.

After Sergio laments Havana's demotion to provincial status as the social leveling effects of the Revolution begin to be felt, the film again provides a visual retort, in the form of a poster with the likeness of José Martí along with a popular paraphrase of his iconic declaration of the importance of cultural pride: “Nuestro vino es agrio, pero es nuestro vino” (Our wine is bitter, but it is our wine). The subtitles fail to translate this visual reply to Sergio's snobbery. A similar attenuation of the film's pro-Revolutionary thrust occurs when we glimpse, from behind Sergio in the back seat of a car, a roadside billboard reading “Playa Girón 1er Aniversario” (Bay of Pigs 1st Anniversary). Continuing a visual motif in the film, the glass of the windshield represents Sergio's separation from his country's collective mobilization against U.S. attack.² Again the subtitles neglect the text that appears on screen. The omission is significant because English speakers do not recognize “Playa Girón” as the beach

where one of the two regiments of CIA-backed counterrevolutionaries landed in April of 1961. When this recognition does not occur, the viewer not only fails to see how the film pushes Sergio up against the uncomfortable realities of recent events, but also misses the way it confronts the U.S. viewer with the issue of their nation's aggression.

There are also moments when the omission of Sergio's spoken words softens the film's unforgiving revelation of his moral deficiencies. In one of the work's most politically and philosophically layered sequences, Sergio takes the bored Elena, a young woman with whom he is carrying on an exploitative affair, to the museum that occupies Ernest Hemingway's former house outside Havana. Standing under a pair of antelope antlers mounted to a wall, Sergio muses on the American author's obsession with the theme of bravery. The protagonist concludes that he is incapable of true courage, and the voiceover narration that communicates this fact is translated, though the despondent exclamation that punctuates his thought—"Soy un idiota" (I'm an idiot)—is not. It is significant that he does not declare himself a coward at this moment, but rather denigrates his own intelligence. His insult is potent in its condemnation of both his cravenness and his confusion. Sergio denounces himself as flawed straight down through every layer of his self. In the scene that follows, he ironically doubles Hemingway, hiding in the tower the author used to escape his many visitors and write. Instead of dodging admiring readers, he hides from Elena, who searches and calls for him from below, eventually giving up and hitching a ride back home. What should be resonating in the mind of the viewer is not just the cowardice of such behavior, but also its idiocy.

The misogyny implicit in this kind of treatment of a younger woman with whom Sergio purports to have a relationship is the protagonist's other fundamental flaw, one that can be viewed as interpenetrating with his lack of solidarity with the social justice agenda of the Revolution. The subtitles in the Mr. Bongo release of the film generally carry across this information clearly. There are also moments when translation is unnecessary, as when Sergio inspects a copy of Nabokov's *Lolita* from the shelf of a bookstore; Gutiérrez Alea's teasing gesture comes across without need for explanation. There is also no need to clarify the wordless juxtaposition of Sergio ignoring the distressed Elena pounding on his penthouse door and images of what he is watching on television: a black woman being arrested at a civil rights protest in the U.S. Both the condemnation of the protagonist and the jab at Cuba's nemesis to the north hit their mark.

Nonetheless, subtitling choices at times soften the edges of Sergio's misogyny. Juxtaposed with an image of women in swimsuits walking alongside a pool, Sergio's voiceover laments how the Cuban woman "passes abruptly from maturity to rotteness" ("pasa bruscamente de la madurez a la podredumbre"). In the subtitles, Sergio simply comments

that “Cuban women lose their looks.” The dehumanizing metaphor that treats women like pieces of fruit to be consumed or thrown away is erased. Though space constraints at times force difficult decisions, this is not a case in which a fuller rendering of Sergio’s language is impossible. The way the subtitle cleans up his words not only softens Sergio’s disrespect for women but also obscures the connection between this attitude and his intellectual arrogance by erasing the formality of the language he uses to make his comment.

Though Sergio’s voiceover narration is often where we find evidence of his misogyny, it is in the playback of an audio recording that we experience it most intensely. At two points in the film we hear his surreptitious recording of an argument with his wife Laura. The audience hears Sergio escalate from insulting her, to tormenting her by informing her that he is recording their fight, to physically accosting her. The subtitles omit a significant amount of verbal information, leaving the Anglophone viewer with a less intense experience of Sergio’s maliciousness. When Laura returns his insults, he responds by shouting sarcastically “¡Eso es muy bueno, muy bueno!” (Good one, good one!), but the subtitles remain silent. At the height of their argument, Laura screams “¡Suéltame!” (Let me go!), but her words are not translated either. This second example is even more significant, given that the first time the viewer is confronted with this audio recording, there is no corresponding visual representation of Sergio’s physical aggression. Instead, the audio is offered in juxtaposition to the jarring image of the protagonist playing with his absent wife’s clothes and lipstick. By failing to clearly communicate the physical nature of his aggression, the subtitles obscure the scene’s foreshadowing of the moment when he overpowers Elena’s initial refusals of his sexual advances.

Ironic juxtaposition is a third means by which the film denounces Sergio’s inhuman treatment of women. Similar to the visual retorts to Sergio’s point of view, Gutiérrez Alea uses a radio report to provide aural commentary on the protagonist’s character. After having sex with Laura, Sergio assuages his guilt about the questionable degree of consent in their encounter by sending her home with a bag of his wife’s stylish dresses. After this sordid exchange is complete and Elena has left, he stands alone, smoking a cigarette while the radio brings news of an attempted coup against Venezuelan President Rómulo Betancourt. Sergio’s petty and selfish games with Elena contrast poorly with the radio announcer’s recounting of the dramatic action unfolding abroad. The subtitles do not translate the radio reports, leaving the viewer only with the sound of chatter, breaking the film’s rhythm of returning again and again to situations in which Sergio is made to look pathetic and small in contrast to the heroic thrust of history.

The George Lucas Family Foundation and The Film Foundation’s World Cinema Project funded an extensive restoration of *Memories of Underdevelopment*, making possible a release on Blu-Ray in 2017.

This restoration was subsequently made available through the Criterion Collection on both disc and its streaming platform. Not only are image and audio quality improved significantly over the Mr. Bongo version, but the subtitles have been revised as well. These subtitles engage in fewer omissions, translate more carefully, and avoid the typographical errors found in the earlier release as well. In this sense the subtitles mirror the restoration of the original film itself, pulling our image of Sergio into tighter focus, offering finer details, and cleaning up textual noise. Despite this, our sense of the protagonist's flaws is attenuated at crucial moments. The magnitude of the effect of the subtitles' shortcomings is arguable, depending on whether or not we assume that the Anglophone viewer has watched and read the multiple English-language supplements offered by Criterion: explanatory essays, interviews with Gutiérrez Alea, Desnoes, and film critics, and a documentary on Gutiérrez Alea's career. These paratexts help the viewer appreciate Sergio's complexity. In his video lecture "The Revolutionary Subjectivity of *Memories of Underdevelopment*," for example, film scholar Jeff Smith underlines the film's unflinching presentation of its protagonist's moral flaws.

The Criterion release fills in the gaps left by the prior version's failure to present the film's visual counterpoints to Sergio's bourgeois frivolity. A political poster's paraphrase of lines from José Martí's *Nuestra América*—"Nuestro vino es agrio, pero es nuestro vino"—is represented onscreen as "Our wine is bitter, but it's ours." This rendering carries across not just the message, but also uses a contraction to signal the original's demotic and assertive tone. The radio report on political violence in Venezuela that throws Sergio's exploitative pursuit of Elena into such unflattering relief is translated partially, offering a better sense of the scene's critical representation of his character. And when Sergio calls himself an idiot while standing in Hemingway's house, the subtitles reflect his piercing self-denunciation.

Interestingly, there is a moment at which the visual restoration of the film offers an opportunity for verbal translation that the Criterion subtitles pass on. As we hear Sergio offer his thoughts on the contrast between how Cuban and Italian women flirt, we observe him in a bookstore purchasing a book whose title, while illegible in the Mr. Bongo release, has been brought into focus in the restoration: *Moral burguesa y revolución* (Bourgeois Morality and Revolution) by the Argentinian Marxist philosopher León Rozitchner. In the chapter "La verdad del grupo está en el asesino" (The Truth of the Group is in the Murderer) Rozitchner analyzes the televised testimonies of the captured counterrevolutionaries of the Bay of Pigs invasion, concluding that the members of the group reflect the fundamental roles people play in consciously or unconsciously perpetuating the ideological violence of capitalist society as a whole.³ In a powerful sequence, Gutiérrez Alea juxtaposes Sergio reading the chapter in voiceover with still images of the Bay of Pigs invaders and audio from

their public trials. By missing the opportunity to present the title of the book at the moment Sergio buys it, the subtitles hide the irony of the book's juxtaposition to Sergio's lack of socialist consciousness.

The Criterion subtitles also present Sergio's misogyny more clearly. The recorded argument with Laura is rendered in greater detail, correcting the omissions that blur both Sergio's psychological attacks and their effects on his wife. Where the protagonist laments what he sees as the decline of the Cuban female body in middle age, the subtitles translate his phrase accurately: "Cuban women suddenly go from maturity to rottenness." The subtitles render Elena's accusation "te aprovechaste," literally "you took advantage of me," as "you ruined me," underlining the fact that Sergio's dalliance with her was much more destructive of her than of him, given the persistence of patriarchal sexual double standards in Cuban society in the 1960s. What might seem at first glance like an exaggeration of the original is justified, given the importance that the viewer recognize the impact Sergio's actions have had on Elena. Nonetheless, the greatly improved subtitles fail to take advantage of every opportunity to correct the previous version's omissions. Both versions fail to translate the two words a younger Sergio, in flashback, scribbles on a puerile drawing of a naked female form while sitting bored in class: "se vende" (for sale).

Silent Signs in *Death of a Bureaucrat*

If *Memorias del subdesarrollo* is Gutiérrez Alea's greatest filmic achievement, *La muerte de un burócrata*, made two years earlier in 1966, is his funniest. A slapstick parody of the absurdity of excessive bureaucracy, the film is a comic assault on what Diane Marting calls "rigid rules and cardboard people" (94). Stylistically, Gutiérrez Alea pays tribute to classic predecessors like Chaplin's *Modern Times*, Harold Lloyd's *Safety Last*, and Luis Buñuel's *Un chien andalou*. Its protagonist is the nephew of a sculptor who was buried with his union card to symbolize his lifelong solidarity with Cuba's workers. When his aunt goes to collect his pension, she is told that her husband's union card must be presented for her claim to be processed. The duration of the film narrates the increasingly desperate ploys hatched by the nephew to retrieve the card and re-enter the body.⁴

Gutiérrez Alea's relentless assault on bureaucratic inertia walks a political tightrope, staying safely away from any kind of wholesale attack on socialism. His intention is ultimately to improve, not undermine the Revolutionary government. No less an eminent authority than Che Guevara identified administrative rigidity as a fundamental hurdle in 1963. Socialism should naturally find a way to function without it, he argued: "bureaucratism, obviously, is not the offspring of socialist society, nor is it a necessary component of it" (179). Though he stands on solid ideological ground in this respect, the intensity of Gutiérrez Alea's attack

on small-minded functionaries represents the expressive daring that is characteristic of his oeuvre, especially given that the people he pokes fun at are powerful. What Linda Craig calls the film's "comic undermining of the puffed up figures of authority" (527) was not without possible consequence.

Craig argues that *La muerte de un burócrata*

was the earliest film from the revolutionary project to truly address a transnational audience, in part because bureaucracy is indeed a global phenomenon, but the film also transcends the local by means of its comedy, and of its capacity to unsettle the spectator. It was the film that brought the revolutionary Cuban film project into the international arena.

(519)

As *New York Times* critic Vincent Canby suggests in his 1979 review, the Anglophone viewer is likely to appreciate the film's treatment of its theme: "'Death of a Bureaucrat' is likely to work on the gut responses of anyone who has ever stood in lines at bureaus dealing in driver's licenses, rent control, gas, water, electricity, or—perish the thought—complaints" (C12). Marting asserts that "the officialism portrayed differs little from corporate and capitalist bureaucracy worldwide" (97). The English-speaking viewer who comes to the film with a hostile attitude toward the Revolution would most likely enjoy the content of *Death of a Bureaucrat*, though bureaucracy is universally hated and the film approaches its parodic project with such winning playfulness, that sympathizers most likely would be untroubled. The film's allusions to universally known film classics offer the viewer even greater satisfaction than its propositional content regarding the asphyxiating effects of red tape on society. The fact that both content and technique are relatable to the English-speaking viewer would seem to take the pressure off the subtitles, especially given that the film does not rely heavily on cultural or expressive subtleties in its dialogue.

Nonetheless, the subtitled film version we will examine here, released by Mexican distributor Zafra Video in 2006, is significantly less funny than the original. The principal reason for this is its failure to represent the myriad jokes Gutiérrez Alea sneaks into his film through ironic juxtapositions between the action occurring on screen and text that is printed in credits, on posters, and on signs.⁵ Since these elements work to amplify the parodic message of the plot, their neglect not only diminishes the Anglophone viewer's fun; it presents them with a weaker sense of the filmmaker's ideological tightrope walk. Securely ensconced in the institutionalized filmmaking apparatus of the ICAIC, Gutiérrez Alea produces a film that attacks bureaucratic arrogance with a merciless insistence throughout the film, layering the parodic effects that are derived

from the distinct expressive elements at his disposal. As we will see, since so many textual jokes end up lost on the Anglophone viewer, an effect opposite to the one observed in the subtitling of *Memories* occurs: the English-speaking viewer comes away from the film with a weaker sense of Gutiérrez Alea's criticism of the Revolutionary government.

One of the film's most ingenious parodic tricks is to pose its opening credits in the guise of an endless bureaucratic memo. The subtitles start off attentive to the significance of this gesture, preserving the ridiculously high-flown tone of official language. Where the credits seek to "dar a conocer" (to make known), the subtitles use "proclaim" to preserve the feeling of the phrase. Nonetheless, as the credits progress, the subtitles neglect the increasingly absurd rubber-stamped directives that begin to appear on the page: "PREGUNTARLE A GONZALEZ" (ASK GONZALEZ), "PARA ARCHIVO" (TO BE FILED). One of these untranslated phrases, "NIHIL OBSTAT," should indeed be left in the original Latin, since rendering it in English would risk loosening it from its association with Catholic censorship and thus from the fact of Gutiérrez Alea's risky broaching of the issue of authoritarian control of information.

When the protagonist first approaches the offices of the cemetery where his uncle is buried, the figure of a gaunt man holding a long scythe sitting on a bench outside is a macabre visual joke that needs no translation. Nonetheless, the subtitles miss two highly significant signs seen near him. The first is a motivational poster measuring progress toward the cemetery's efficiency goals: "Metas del semestre: Traslados; Entierros; Exhumaciones; Reparaciones" (Six-month Goals: Transfers, Burials, Exhumations, Repairs). This moment is part of a motif: where the action on the screen seems transitional, Gutiérrez Alea sneaks in jokes about the inhumanity of bureaucracy. Funnier, and more politically dangerous, is the poster that the seated grim reaper figure partly obscures: "Yo estoy emulando. ¿Y usted?" (I am competing/emulating. And you?). *Emulación socialista* is the Cuban version of a system of competition inaugurated in the Soviet Union to increase efficiency by playing equally on people's competitiveness and their commitment to collective goals. The superior performances of the winners of periodic prizes were to be emulated by other workers.⁶ Through a play on the word "emulación," Gutiérrez Alea daringly juxtaposes communist ideology with a comic representation of death. The sign seems to be spoken by the man with the scythe who, instead of emulating model workers, is seen innocently emulating the Grim Reaper. The implied equation of bureaucracy and death illustrates the film's endless circle: the death of the protagonist's uncle unleashes the absurdity of bureaucracy, and bureaucracy in turn becomes death, not just abstractly, in the sense of the withering of the human spirit, but concretely, in the demise of the cemetery director at the hands of the enraged protagonist near the close of the film. Late in the film, the ironic declaration "Muerte a la burocracia" (Death to Bureaucracy) appears

three times, on posters and on a prop, reiterating with mordant humor this complex and politically dangerous interplay of concepts.

Dotting the walls of the offices, halls, and waiting rooms of the bureaucratic hell the protagonist circles downward into are signs and posters evoking the ethic of *emulación socialista*. Their texts go untranslated one after another, draining a good deal of the fun from the film. “Erradiquemos el ausentismo” (Let Us Eradicate Absenteeism) is a poster that the nephew has not completed because, ironically, his unending battle with bureaucrats has called him away from work. Another sign indicates that one bureaucrat has been honored as “Trabajador de vanguardia del mes” (Vanguard Worker of the Month) as we witness him abandon his post precisely at quitting time with sunglasses on and an inner tube over his arm, as if heading straight for the beach. The most absurd and hilarious parody of *emulación* is glimpsed on a banner that appears in a couple of shots as the nephew sneaks through a suite of offices, hoping to get his hands on an official stamp to expedite his aunt’s documents. The banner proudly declares that the ironically named DEPATRAN, or Departamento de Aceleración de Trámites (Department of Paperwork Acceleration, translated less humorously by the subtitles as “Procedure Activation Department”) has won first place in a ping pong tournament. Gutiérrez Alea’s use of these ironic signs is accretive; as they come one after another, there is a magnification of their absurd relationship to the protagonist’s increasingly desperate floundering in a morass of self-important desk jockeys. Little by little the signs’ humorous effect increases. For the Anglophone viewer the film for this reason is significantly less funny and less dangerously critical of the Revolutionary government apparatus than it is for the Cuban viewer.

Journeys toward Intimacy in *Guantanamera*

Gutiérrez Alea revisits the theme of soulless bureaucracy at the end of his career in *Guantanamera*, a road movie that gradually unfolds a contrast between the heartless arrogance of Adolfo, a functionary who has been recently demoted to the position of undertaker, and an assortment of more sympathetic characters, including his wife Georgina, a former university economics instructor. Over the course of a comically complicated journey across Cuba from the eastern city of Guantánamo to Havana, Adolfo steamrolls everyone in his path as he schemes to get back in the good graces of his superiors by resolving turf conflicts and saving gasoline as the body of Georgina’s aunt is transported to the capital for burial.⁷ Along the way, Georgina both comes to a painful realization that her marriage is empty of true affection and rediscovers love in the form of Mariano, a former student turned truck driver, whom she encounters along the road with the contrived frequency typical of romantic comedy. Their burgeoning love affair contrasts with Adolfo’s cold egotism, as does

the noble devotion of fellow passenger Cándido, an elderly man who has quietly loved Yoyita his whole life. The film's ending punishes Adolfo's meanness and exalts romantic love; as Paul Schroeder explains,

Guantanamera is ultimately an optimistic film, with its parable of death and immortality reflected in the final scene of Gina and [Mariano] riding together into the symbolically charged rain, as an upbeat version of the song "Guantanamera" comments on their love. (128)

For Teresa Hoefert de Turégano, the film's ending allows for a balance between criticism of the Revolution's inhumane rigidity and defense of its essential principles: "love prevails, and the new couple also signifies an enlightened, positive road in the Revolution" (22).

Unlike the films studied to this point, the English-subtitled version of *Guantanamera* released by New Yorker films in the year 2000 consistently translates onscreen text. Nonetheless, the snippets of Spanish language that appear on the screen are not as central to the expressive structure of the film as are the social and emotional subtleties of its dialogue.⁸ In his final film Gutiérrez Alea offers the viewer a lush texture of emotionally charged conversation among colleagues, spouses, friends, and lovers. This emphasis is crucial to the filmmaker's critical comment on bureaucracy. The flush of love or anger, the delicate ways in which we show how well we know our friend or how much we want to know more about someone we are attracted to, show themselves to be preferable to Adolfo's frigid and calculating arrogance. Louisa Desilla points out that there is "a sentiment among film writers and critics alike that dialogue is maximally effective when indirect and subtle, partly owing to the great expressive powers of the moving image" ("Reading" 195). Yet what is spoken with subtlety is often what is most difficult to subtitle. The subtitlers give evidence that they have paid attention to the importance of the interpersonal shading of dialogue, and the choices they make to carry across the nuances of the film's dialogue are generally effective, with some exceptions.

The subtitles capture informal language well, though in doing so, they are obliged to choose from among English's many regional colloquialities. When Georgina, in a scene that tenderly shows her mutual affection with the grieving Cándido, offers "¿Vamos a tomar un buchito de café?" what appears on screen is "¿Shall we have a drop of coffee?" Within the parameters of British English, the translation is an effective rendering of the intimacy encoded in "buchito." The Spanish term literally means something like "a little swig," and is used quite commonly to communicate affection toward the person being invited to the culturally important ritual of coffee drinking in Cuba. Both the "shall" and the "drop" in the subtitles sound formal to the U.S. English ear. The U.S. viewer experiences

phrases like these as foreign; the domesticating intent of the translation is diminished, in a sense reminding the viewer of the foreign origin of the original. An example from the opposite end of the affective spectrum is Adolfo's exasperated "¡Al fin, carajo!" when his wife, Cándido, and the driver, Tony, arrive after separating from the funeral caravan to take a woman in labor and her husband to the hospital. The subtitles appropriately have him say "About bloody time!" Though the phrase captures Adolfo's arrogant rudeness nicely, again the U.S. viewer feels a subtle foreignness, which echoes throughout the film, where instead of "truck" they encounter "lorry," and where "programme" and "favour" are spelled as such. This foreignness butts up against the texture of Cuban culture presented in the film, creating a strange, if subtle, dissonance for the U.S. viewer.

Terms of both endearment and derision figure prominently in the dialogue, adding detail and texture to relationships that evolve or devolve over time. The subtitles attend to this crucial feature, though at times nuances are lost. In an attempt to share his wisdom about women with Mariano, his friend Ramón explains that life is easier for a man when he settles down with a less attractive woman, as he himself has done with "mi gorda." The phrase literally means "my fat woman," but is a typical term of affection that the subtitles competently render as "my old lady." Given that Ramón's wife, whom we meet in a prior scene, is indeed rotund, the note of physical candor in the Spanish is lost. This shift is significant, given the way the Spanish phrase evokes a combination of loving honesty and sexism (the way Ramón speaks of women in general in his lesson to Mariano is casually chauvinistic). In another example, humorous effect is lost when one of Mariano's spurned lovers calls him a "maricón," a pejorative term for a homosexual. The subtitles make the strange choice of the term "asshole," an insult that misses the irony of the woman's usage in relation to Mariano's decidedly heterosexual womanizing. The Spanish term encodes an attempt to overturn a standard gendered power dynamic by using a term with culturally derived power to diminish a man's status. As a final example, when Adolfo attacks his wife with the accusation that it was her fault that their daughter left Cuba for Miami, Georgina responds with a derisive "¡ay chico!" The subtitles offer the weaker "Oh, Adolfo."⁹ Though the emotional charge of the interaction unfolding on the screen is clear to the viewer, what is lost is the belittling exasperation of Georgina's use of "chico," or "boy."

In contrast to the venom that flows between husband and wife, a crucial conversation between Georgina and Mariano plays on the Spanish language's distinction between formal and informal forms of second person singular address. As we have noted, Silvia Bruti describes the effects on the social and affective dimensions of language when subtitles scrub away certain language elements for the sake of concision (197). We observe this effect at work as, eager to hear what Georgina has been

doing since the time she was his instructor, Mariano addresses her in the polite *usted* form: “¿usted sigue dando clases?” (are you still teaching?) Georgina corrects him: “no me trates más de usted” (don’t call me by *usted* anymore). The subtitles give “do you still teach” and “don’t be so formal.” Though Georgina’s response communicates her message, the English version of Mariano’s question is not marked with any kind of formality, causing a gap in the Anglophone viewer’s understanding of the negotiation of intimacy happening through the characters’ metalinguistic dialogue. When the slightly flustered Mariano rephrases his question in the informal *tú* form, the subtitles fail to register the change, extending the breach between the feeling of awkward exploration of boundaries and relationships in the original and the flatness of the English subtitling.

Near the end of the film, Mariano and Ramón find Cándido despondently walking the road from Matanzas to Havana. They stop to give him a ride, and throughout their conversation both men use the affectionate “mi viejo” (literally “my old man”) with Cándido. As the scene progresses, the phrase is heard four times, each instance marking an increase in the affection both men feel for their nobly suffering elder. The subtitles attempt a schematic impression of this subtle current of human feeling by transitioning from “old timer” in the first occurrence to “old man” in the third. Nonetheless, the second and fourth instances of “mi viejo” go untranslated. Given the scene’s place late in the film, when Gutiérrez Alea has gradually built up a sense of contrast between Adolfo’s inhumanity and other characters’ affectionate, if imperfect, feelings of connection to others, more careful attention to the pragmatics of a phrase like “mi viejo” is important.

Songs and Sights in *Strawberry and Chocolate*

The last film we will consider is Gutiérrez Alea’s most internationally successful, *Fresa y chocolate* (*Strawberry and Chocolate*). It is tonally similar to *Guantanamera*, balancing societal critique with touching celebrations of romance and friendship. Though the film also reproaches inflexible bureaucrats, its criticism falls more heavily on the problem of homophobia. As Cristina Venegas explains, the hounding and marginalizing of gay men in the 1970s was often justified as a strategy for protecting the Revolution from a threat to an enshrined notion of masculinity centered around the macho iconography of Che Guevara (33). Though the film also dramatizes the triumph of human relationships over this cult of revolutionary masculinity, its final scene is bittersweet, given that the gay character Diego decides he must leave Cuba to live freely. Based on Senel Paz’s story “El lobo, el bosque y el hombre nuevo,” the film traces the complicated development of a friendship between David, a naive young man passionately committed to the Revolution, and Diego, an older gay aesthete and intellectual. Set in 1979, when a more repressive

social atmosphere reigned in Cuba, the film presents two characters, David and his roommate Miguel, who represent old macho attitudes that the Revolution has not done enough to dispel. The character of Diego, though he is interpreted somewhat stereotypically by the straight actor Jorge Perugorria, was a groundbreaker, given that an openly gay man had never been shown as central to the plot of a Cuban film before (Wilkinson 17).¹⁰ Diego attempts to seduce David, who, shaken and disgusted, tells his roommate, leaving out the uncomfortable details of the attempted seduction. The roommate encourages David to spy on Diego to dig up dirt about him and his artist friend to denounce them to the authorities. Nonetheless, repeated conversations with Diego gradually change David's thinking. The younger man, it turns out, is an aspiring writer, and the highly literate Diego takes on the role of mentor. Diego's emotionally unstable neighbor Nancy, a member of a Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, repeats this transition from spying to befriending, but in her case the object of her interest is David. Despite his jealousy, Diego magnanimously blesses the newly blossoming relationship between the two, and both romantic and platonic love triumph. Nonetheless, Diego's spirit is nearly broken by the Revolution's oppression, which befalls him because he represents three dangerous categories: artist, homosexual, and Catholic. Diego decides he must leave Cuba to live an authentic life.

As Michael Chanan explains, the film "is not just about the homophobia of the Cuban Communist Party, but also a critique of its aesthetic puritanism, and the suppression of artistic voices considered by authority as deviant" (467). Fearful of censorship, Gutiérrez Alea allowed a "making of" documentary to be filmed that would offer evidence of his work, and copies of footage were kept at a studio in Mexico (Venegas 47). Though there is a degree of political daring in *Strawberry and Chocolate*, Jorge Ruffinelli explains that it was seen in Cuba as a critique of the Revolution's errors rather than of the Revolution itself (62). And, as Venegas points out, the fact that the film's action takes place a decade and a half in the past provides a degree of political protection to Gutiérrez Alea: "the temporal distance of the events narrated displaces mistakes by the revolutionary leadership and bureaucratic henchmen onto the past while highlighting the collective history of these events and the combined emotional response of anger and betrayal" (34).

Strawberry and Chocolate was an international success, winning awards in Europe and representing Cuba for the first time as a nominee for an Academy Award in the U.S. (Venegas 46). It became Gutiérrez Alea's best-known film in that country in part because its dramatization of a reconciliation between homophobe and gay man was deeply appealing to a national psyche that in the 1990s was beginning a process of working through its own history of homophobia. Jonathan Demme's contemporaneous film *Philadelphia*, for example, tells a similar story of reconciliation between gay man and homophobe.¹¹ Referring

to the incompleteness of a U.S. cultural movement away from anti-gay stigmatization, Steven Seidman argues that U.S. films of the 1990s that assert equality for LGBTQ people tend to fall short of total acceptance of their true human individuality (45). Gutiérrez Alea's film could be interpreted as fulfilling the need for gay cinematic characters that are not only fully developed and sympathetic, but who also are not required to conform to the dominant culture in non-sexual ways as a means of compensating for their non-heterosexuality. In the friendship that develops between the principal gay and straight characters, the former is not domesticated or controlled, but rather allowed to stand apart from the social status quo. As Christina García observes, theirs is a friendship that allows for "irreconcilable differences ... challeng[ing] the notion of community as shared property or identity" (224).

As we have seen in the case of *Memories of Underdevelopment*, there is a significant difference between two subtitled versions of *Strawberry and Chocolate*. Examining the two will show how variable the experience of English-speaking audiences can be, based on which release they view. The first version we will examine is from the German distributor Arthaus Films, the second by U.S. production and distribution firm Miramax. Both omission of song lyrics and inconsistency in the translation of the homophobic slur drain a significant amount of the film's expressiveness in the Arthaus subtitles. The subtitles in the Miramax give more careful attention to both elements.

Songs are used throughout the film to amplify the effect of images and to express a character's personality, emotions, and intentions. They are sung both digetically and non-digetically, with differing effects. The Arthaus release mostly ignores words that are sung, beginning early in the film when David sits at a streetside bar with a self-pitying look on his face after his ex-girlfriend's wedding. Ernesto Lecuona's song "Se fue" (She Left Me) is heard as interpreted by a male singer from a space that could be interpreted as diegetic (the singer is off-camera, singing at the bar) or non-digetic (as part of the soundtrack). This sense of both proximity and distance allows Gutiérrez Alea to strike a note of both sympathy and ironic commentary on David's adolescent heartsickness. This ironic stance is enhanced by the tragic and hyperromantic tone of the lyrics. The song does not compete with dialogue or narration, so ample space is available for the subtitles to bring home to the viewer that David's suffering is being shown from a critical distance that dramatizes his immaturity. This stance is crucial in laying the groundwork for a narrative of maturation, through which David eventually rediscovers romantic love in the older Nancy. Appropriately, late in the film, as their romance is blossoming, Gutiérrez Alea uses a song to represent the inversion of the situation commented on with the Lecuona piece. Here, the subtitles on the Arthaus release are again silent. This time, the lovers dance by candlelight to a bolero by the king of Cuban crooners, Beny Moré. The lyrics reflect the gradual unfolding of the characters' relationship by expressing

the presentiment, despite doubts, that one's love is required, echoing the gradual and complicated process by which David and Nancy have arrived at the moment of fulfilment.

When David first sees Nancy, he and Diego are ascending a staircase toward Diego's apartment. Diego pulls David aside to hide them both from her as she descends toward them, singing the José Feliciano song "Por seguir tus huellas" (To Follow You), in which a jilted lover laments that his beloved wants him dead since she sees him as bad for her image. The words amplify the image of Nancy waving a kitchen knife as she sings, suggesting something dangerous to the clearly intrigued David, who immediately asks Diego who she is. Diego's answer, "La Vigilancia," which the subtitles render as "She's with the Vigilance Board," suggests one layer of danger. As a member of a local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, Nancy appears at first to be a threat to the reputations of both men—Diego because he is socially transgressive, and David, because he values his status as a committed revolutionary, which he is risking by being associated with Diego. As we get to know Nancy better, we realize that she is friends with Diego, and, far from being a threat to David, quickly grows infatuated with him. Nancy's declaration that she is damaging someone's reputation makes her into a double of Diego, a man with whom David is hesitant to associate for political reasons. Nancy's song and the knife she carries in retrospect also come to suggest her own unluckiness in love and her emotional instability, which lead her to a couple of attempts at suicide. This complex romantic and political play on the notion of public reputation is erased through non-translation.

The doubling of Diego and Nancy in relation to David is restaged through a song shortly afterward, during the men's first awkward conversation in Diego's apartment. Diego puts on a record of Maria Callas, and after passionately praising her voice, he transitions into a more playful tone, singing in a style that mocks the Cuban soprano María Remolá: "vecina, llegó la cebolla" (oh, neighbor woman, the onions are here!) and David cracks a smile for the first time. Omitting this information, the subtitles not only remove a dramatic element the filmmaker has used for various purposes. First, by understanding Diego's humor, the viewer develops greater sympathy for him. Second, David's smile indicates both the possibility of a friendship and the fact that he recognizes the scarcity of food, a cause for significant public impatience with the communist system he is so committed to. Finally, Diego's lyrics are literally brought to life when Nancy barges into the apartment, asking if the onions have arrived. A flustered David, who has been snooping on Diego's shelves, hides two photos of a naked man behind his back and answers no. The two romantic options offered up to David, one homosexual and one heterosexual, are brought into comically tense confrontation thanks to Diego's bit of verbal play. A similar moment where Diego's singing marks a warming of his relationship with David comes where, on his way to the kitchen

to make coffee, he breaks into Bola de Nieve's iconic song "Ay Mamá Inés," which is also known by the title "Todos los negros tomamos café" (All Us Blacks Drink Coffee). No subtitle appears, reflecting the judgment that the fact of Diego's singing and David's subsequent smile are enough information for the viewer. What gets erased is an interesting moment of dissonance between the lyrics and their onscreen singer, who is white. The disjunction signals irony and play. Bola de Nieve was a gay black singer, whose nickname "snowball" celebrated the roundness of his face in ironic juxtaposition to the dark tone of his skin; Diego is a gay white man. Diego's identification with him is both dissonant (in terms of race) and consonant (in terms of sexuality). Though a simple subtitle would not clue the English-speaking viewer into this matrix of significations, it could be deployed to signal Diego as boundary-crossing, as the queer figure who plays with the difference or non-difference between black and white as he does with the parallel categories of the properly masculine man and the one who defies gender norms.

In addition to the omission of sung words, the Arthaus release neglects a crucial task—deciding on a consistent way of rendering the homophobic slur "maricón" in its many occurrences throughout the film. Whether the word is spoken venomously by David and his roommate, or by Diego himself, the subtitles should make the Anglophone viewer aware that a pejorative is in use. Even when Diego uses the term to describe himself, he employs it as a subtle provocation of David when attempting to describe how he "became a fag," and the insulting tone of "maricón" should be carried across. The subtitler's choices throughout the film are haphazard, ranging from "fag" to "sissy" to "homosexual." The effect of this connotative blurring is an attenuation of the directness with which Gutiérrez Alea confronts the problem of homophobia, which in turn consists of a softening of the impression of the filmmaker's daring in both confronting an uncomfortable topic and pointing out the synergy of homophobia and militarism in the Revolution's *machista* ethos.

The Miramax release, for its part, translates lyrics sung by characters, while neglecting those that are extradiegetic or could be interpreted as such, like the Lecuona song that underlines David's heartbreak and the Moré bolero that echoes his new relationship with Nancy. These omissions, like the ones found on the Arthaus release, remove a layering of emotional resonance, but were not judged by the subtitlers as detrimental to the progress of the story. When Nancy descends the staircase singing José Feliciano song, the Miramax release translates her: "they say you want me dead for harming your reputation." The connections between Nancy's knife and her words, and, more broadly among themes of violence, threat, and love, are underscored here, where the Arthaus version neglects the song. In its shift from "you say" to "they say," the subtitle underscores the phenomenon of gossip, which is crucial to the story and is so closely associated with Nancy herself. By doing so, it sets up an immediate connection when Diego

explains to the intrigued David that she is “the Neighborhood Vigilance.” Having Nancy sing a piece of gossip also creates an irony not present in the original: Nancy’s song is made to share gossip in its English version, whereas throughout the film music is used or suggested as a means for preventing the neighbors from overhearing political or personal conversations. Diego’s comical improvisation of “vecina, llegó la cebolla” is also translated for the viewer in the Miramax release: “come out, neighbors! Onions have finally arrived to the market.” Though it does so awkwardly, the subtitle communicates Diego’s humor and supports the representation of a thawing with David. The addition of “to the market” focuses the cultural and economic situation described, as well. Nonetheless, its shift from “vecina” (female neighbor) to “neighbors,” blurs the specific connection to Nancy, who enters soon after, asking about the onions. The Miramax also contrasts the Arthaus version in translating “todos los negros tomamos café”: “all us blacks drink coffee.” Not only does this choice signal the element of self-representational play involved in Diego’s quoting of the song, it does so in a mildly ungrammatical English that facilitates the sense of the playful nature of both the song and Diego’s behavior.

Regarding the term *maricón*, the Miramax version is more focused, giving “fag” or “faggot” in almost all instances. In this way, the film’s depiction of the venomousness of homophobia in late 1970s Cuba is supported by the text on the screen. Where Diego uses the term provocatively, calling attention to the issue of bigotry, the Miramax subtitles recognize and reflect the fact that the term is being used disparagingly, even if its violence is attenuated, processed, and made ironic when the word escapes a gay character’s lips. Nonetheless, there are two crucial moments where the subtitles soften “maricón.” The first comes where Diego, with his typical wit, warns David to follow his calling to become a writer by describing a man who failed to follow his insufficiently masculine passion for the piano as: 60 years old, a “maricón,” and unable to play piano. The subtitle gives “queer,” a slight attenuation of the hatred behind “fag” or “faggot,” to reflect Diego’s light tone. The second instance of taking the edge off “maricón” comes at the end of the film at a moment of bittersweet closeness between the two friends, where Diego remarks: “qué bello eres, David. El único defecto que tienes es que no eres maricón.” The subtitle reads: “you’re so beautiful. The only problem is you’re not gay.” Here, the subtitles choose a neutral term, signaling the removal of homophobia as an obstacle in the two characters’ relationship. Diego’s frankness comes across, along with his gentle humor, and the film’s broader message of the need for reconciliation is given subtle support.

Conclusion

The fact that Gutiérrez Alea’s films have been widely available with English subtitles has contributed to the filmmaker’s extensive impact on Anglophone audiences, supported by positive reviews by influential

critics and the publication of scholarly analyses that emphasize different dimensions of his works. For the most part, subtitles have helped make the four films considered here intelligible to these audiences, though there is considerable variability in the experience English speakers have been offered. Though our analysis has seemed at times to dwell on the subtleties that silence or muffle certain communicative or expressive effects in the films, attention to such details is warranted by three factors: the multilayered presentation of information in Gutiérrez Alea's films, the difficulty of following certain chains of signification in a film rooted in a foreign culture, and the limited time the viewer has to read a subtitle and register its content in relation to the other visual and aural channels of communication. Though it might seem that we have overemphasized the failure to translate the content of a poster on a wall or to render the interpersonal valence of a particular turn of phrase, it should be recognized that narrative film is an accretive process of signification, building up messages or emotional effects over time through repetitions and resonances. We have paid special attention to the moments when these communicative chains have been broken because those moments can have significant impact on the ability of a viewer, who is already cognitively taxed by the task of interpreting a fast-moving, multimodal presentation that straddles two cultural and linguistic worlds, to form a clear picture of the filmmaker's intent. As we have noted, paratexts are usually unavailable, at least as an element included in the presentation of the film, except in the case of Criterion's Blu-Ray or streaming formats, which encourage the viewer to link to explanatory text and video. Each of the thematic axes we have identified, the political and the humanistic, are reshaped by subtitling's interventions and omissions, either interfering with the buildup of a coherent message or with the viewer's full affective experience of the film.

Notes

- 1 Desnoes and Gutiérrez Alea collaborated on the adaptation from novel to script. For insights into their collaboration, see Camacho.
- 2 Sergio looking through panes of glass or into mirrors is a prominent motif in the film, evoking in the first case his separation from the social changes around him, and in the second, his self-absorption. The most potent image of this type is the telescope on the balcony of Sergio's penthouse apartment. At the conclusion of the film, as the Missile Crisis stirs the entire nation into action, the telescope presents an ironic commentary on the protagonist's uselessness. Though it seems like it should be used to keep watch for the enemy, we witness Sergio tilting it upward to glance at the moon. The next morning it sits unused, and the camera, representing the film's revolutionary point of view, surveys Havana cityscape, inspecting the preparation of military equipment in anticipation of a U.S. attack.
- 3 These figures are: "the religious man, the businessman, the military officer, the torturer, the dilettante, the rationalist philosopher, the politician, and the

- sons of good families” (“el religioso, el hombre de la libre-empresa, el militar, el torturador, el dilentante, el filósofo racionalista, el político y los hijos de buenas familias”) (93–94).
- 4 The film was a symbolic revenge against bureaucrats who stymied the making of the film *Una pelea cubana contra los demonios*, which would not be completed until 1972 (Schroeder 12–13).
 - 5 Jorge Díaz Cintas and Aline Remael alert subtitlers to the fact that humor often arises from the interaction between what is heard and what is seen (214–15), suggesting that the fact is at times ignored.
 - 6 Helen Yaffe explains that “socialist emulation is fraternal competition between workers, either as individuals or collectives, in the productive sector. It was first used in normal work situations – stimulating productivity in regular paid work. However, with the emergence of voluntary labour in industry, emulation became a principal method for institutionalising moral incentives” (204).
 - 7 Edna Rodríguez-Mangual reads the east to west trajectory of the film as symbolic of Cuba’s incremental movements in the direction of western capitalism after the fall of the Soviet Union (56).
 - 8 Another expressive element that the subtitles render effectively are the verses of the iconic song “Guantanamera” that are adapted to the events of the plot and comment on them. Michael Chanan describes the song as “a kind of Greek—or Brechtian—chorus” (476).
 - 9 As Paul Schroeder explains, the reference to a daughter in exile is autobiographical (128). Gutiérrez Alea’s daughter Audrey left Cuba to live in Miami and Buenos Aires.
 - 10 José Quiroga offers a blunt statement on the issue of representation in Cuba: “a number of years back, in a conference on postmodern discourse at Yale, a famous Cuban writer still residing on the island addressed foreigners’ concerns that [*Fresa y chocolate*] portrayed a stereotypical view of gay men with the following line: ‘In a homophobic country, I pray for us to at least appear as stereotypes’” (133).
 - 11 In a striking parallel, Maria Callas figures in both *Strawberry and Chocolate* and *Philadelphia* as a symbolic means for representing the possibility of affective bonds between gay and straight character. In both films, the straight character witnesses the gay character as he is overcome with emotion at the beauty of Callas’s voice.

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7 Conclusion

Cuba occupies an outsized place in the imagination of the English-speaking world. For many, to contemplate Cuba is to ponder difference. Politically, the country provokes fascination on the left and ire or fear on the right. Taking 1959 as a crucial inflection point from which we can begin our inquiry, our central concern has been what experiences of Cuban culture and politics have been available to English speakers across an array of cultural media over time. Our fundamental contention has been that translation must be the focus of any attempt to map flows of cultural information across linguistic and national boundaries, given that its complex and unstable operations are responsible for so many Anglophone impressions of Cuba. The intention has been to set a more solid foundation for inquiry into the question of where the constantly morphing, yet consistently fascinated, images of Cuba have come from. We have observed significant variability in the points of contact created by translations, which can be theorized to have facilitated a certain breadth of Anglophone impressions of Cuban cultural history. Concrete, traceable differences in translation and editing practices have introduced refractions and multiple images of authors', musicians', and filmmakers' intentions or techniques. This range of translational approaches has likely seeded the development of a multiplicity of Cubas in the Anglophone imagination.

Where there is room for further inquiry is on the question of a presence that tends to be all too ghostly in a study like the present one: the audience or reader. An audience response study could be undertaken, oriented by the groundwork of the present study, to survey actual English speakers' reactions to given translations. Though the present examination has not attempted this kind of research, in certain reviews we have found concrete evidence of the impact translational decisions have had on the reception of works. Reviewers, even when they occupy influential platforms such as the *New York Times*, do not represent the experience of all readers, listeners, or viewers, though their reactions should be given a certain amount of weight given the sway they can exert over opinion. When a military expert for the *Times* denigrates Che Guevara's authorial style,

and implicitly, his intellect, based on a heavily expurgated and simplified translation, the refracting effect that occurs as the author's work crosses over into the English-speaking world is vividly illustrated. Nonetheless, we have only been able to make cautious speculations regarding the preconceptions, agendas, and desires of the English speakers who have interacted with the translations. These are based on heuristics that most likely do not capture the granularity of audiences' experiences, though they are based on a reasoned attempt to parse out such factors as interest in cultural uniqueness, ideological bias, or expectations shaped by notions of genre.

To summarize our findings investigating the translation of Cuban poetry, we have found that the Anglophone reader who samples a variety of anthologies is presented a deep and at times disorienting dive into Cuban culture and history. The 11 anthologies analyzed show marked differences. Variation can be seen between two given collections that appear in the same period, and also over time between collections organized by the same editor at different moments in Cuba's history and in their own intellectual evolution. Readers predominantly interested in Cuba rather than the genre of poetry have access to anthologies aimed at transmitting a coherent image of Cuban society, while those most interested in poetics can find collections that stress uniqueness of expression and form. The construction of the volumes varies greatly, from the rushed renderings produced with a sense of political and historical urgency, like Nathaniel Tarn's *Con Cuba*, to anthologies like Randall's *Estos cantos* and *Breaking the Silences*, which are richly embroidered with introduction, analysis, photographs, and author interviews. In both cases, the editor's political commitments shape the anthology significantly, to the extent that the collection offers both an image of Cuba and a sense of the way the country has fired the passions of Anglophone intellectuals. In other examples, politics is backgrounded in favor of philosophical or poetological agendas aimed at domestic Anglophone intellectual and creative contexts; in these collections, Cuba is understood to participate in global cultural exchanges, and its uniqueness is not what the reader is most urgently confronted with.

Translation strategies among collections of Cuban poetry in English are also greatly varied. Anthologies at times employ approaches that smooth over stylistic features of the original to fulfil the aesthetic expectations of the target reader. We also find techniques that alternate between strengthening and weakening a poem's political message. Instances of non- and self-translation evidence the nonlinear routes Cuban poetic works take as they make their way into the Anglophone world. The editors of *Burnt Sugar* justify non-translation as necessary when faced with language uses, like musicality and code-switching, that deviate from a standardized idea of the relationship between signifier and signified. Announced in the editors' introduction, these assertions have the dual

effect of circumscribing the possibilities of translations and signaling to the Anglophone reader that there are forms of expression to which access is barred. Self-translation, on the other hand, stretches the standard understanding of translation by troubling the distinction between author and translator, writing and re-writing.

Our survey of Cuban science fiction has shown that the genre has been less available to English speakers than poetry. The two main channels of access for English-speakers interested in Cuban scientific and futuristic speculation—an anthology of works in Spanish and Portuguese and the series of book-length works available through Restless Books—have offered glimpses of a vast and variegated terrain. Nonetheless, the reader interested in science fiction as a means to gain insights into Cuban culture or Cuban communism is likely to be frustrated by Bell and Molina-Gavilán’s anthology *Cosmos Latinos* because it selects texts based on conceptual complexity and quality of literary technique rather than criteria of representativeness. The translations in *Cosmos Latinos* attend to the overarching assertion of the primacy of style, struggling with challenging examples of original language use in the texts. Restless, on the other hand, markets its books as means for understanding political and social problematics on the island. Its translations offer the kind of understanding of challenging Cuban realities that is advertised in the publisher’s promotional statements, while also tackling significant obstacles in recreating the stylistic personalities of Cuban sci-fi authors.

By situating the works in the conceptual frameworks designed by Carl Malmgren and other theorists, we have worked from the assumption that science fiction operates according to global parameters of readerly expectation. For the most part, the examples studied here bear that assumption out, as each work can be placed in one of Malmgren’s categories. Nonetheless, they present challenges to the English-speaking reader, like the swerve of Chaviano’s text away from standard science fiction technological detail and toward a parodic conflation of the Bible with the romance novel. Readers looking to use science fiction as a means for gathering information about Cuban culture and politics are confronted with a refusal to simplify literature into cultural representation in the anthology *Cosmos Latinos*. Situating their collection against the grain of the marketing of magical realism as a kind of cultural heuristic and easy readerly experience of otherness, Bell and Molina Gavilán present works based on their importance to the Cuban sci-fi canon and their stylistic innovations. In the story “The Cosmonaut,” the reader is challenged even more deeply by the question of access to the cultural other, and translation is placed in the position of questioning itself. In the case of Restless books, challenges to the audience tend to be political, as the Anglophone reader registers that they are part of the evil capitalist empire of Rojas’s *A Legend of the Future* or that they are the exploitative foreigner in Yoss’s *A Planet for Rent*. Given the complex and at times

disorienting experiences available to Anglophone readers in the limited scope of translations available, the reader is likely to feel the need for more English-language renderings of Cuban science fiction in more editorial formats, to fill in the map of this complex topography.

The political agendas behind translation are on vivid display in the case of English-language versions of Che Guevara's writings. Tracing the translations of *La guerra de guerrillas* and *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba*, we find not just how common it is to present the texts with a clear ideological agenda, but also how consistent local translation choices are with the projects announced in paratexts. This consonance occurs, for example, when Adrienne Rich indicates the contemporary relevance of Che's work in her introduction and works to modernize his text in her translation. Similarly, where a text is presented as the work of the enemy, operations like aggressive excisions and dampening of the emotive power of the writing occur. Nonetheless, translation and paratext are sometimes at odds. Though J. P. Morray shows sympathy for Guevara's ideas, his rendering of *La guerra de guerrillas* in some ways holds the author back from transmitting his human presence through the text. With regards to Guevara's advanced opinion (for his time and place) of women's effectiveness in war, some of Morray's choices project a more sexist author. The negative impact on a positive presentation of Che's personality is multiplied over time as subsequent presentations either reprint his translation or work from it as a base text, leaving intact such problematic choices as describing women's "relief role" on the battlefield.

The Che translations we have considered illustrate the varied operations and profound signifying effects of paratexts. First, we have seen such texts operating at different distances in relation to the translation itself, from outward-facing promotional language that glorifies Che, to introductions that prime the reader for either a sympathetic or a hostile reading, to, most intimately, footnotes that indicate where the author marked and commented on his own text. These distinct distances at which paratexts operate release varied effects on the reader's reception of the translated text, alternately attracting their attention, stoking their ideological passions, portraying Che as eternally relevant, or introducing information with potentially ambivalent effects on the reader, such as Ocean's worshipful but revealing inclusion of Guevara's margin notes to *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba*.

For the most part, translators and translation itself are made invisible in treatments of Guevara's text, whether from the right or from the left. Translators are anonymous, and prefaces either barely treat translation issues or make brief mention of it. Given the politically charged nature in which Guevara has been translated, these obscurations of translation as complex and unstable process of re-signification are to be expected. A translation is more easily weaponized when it is taken to be the original. Whether the presentation of Che is hostile or hagiographic, the illusion

of unmediated access to the author's original voice serves the agenda of spurring political or military action better than an honest account of the translator's difficulties as they work across languages, cultures, and historical moments. This illusion, as we have seen, stands in ironic contrast to the fact that a sense of Che's charismatic personal presence in the translations is often weakened in the English rendering.

The factors that shape the translation of literary or political writing are also at work in the presentation of Cuban music to an English-speaking listenership, though the duality of signification and expression at work in music with sung words alters the channels these influences pass through and complicates our understanding of how translations transmit or recreate content. The textual rendering of music lyrics in a new language is a form of translation that fits Genette's assertion of translation as paratext; as the listener reads along, they interact with a text that serves as ancillary to the aural experience, rather than a wholistic recreation of the interweaving of the sonorous and the verbal in the original. Lyric translations in liner notes are a uniquely crucial form of paratext, heavily used by listeners who are interested in experiencing an approximation of a Spanish speaker's encounter with the music.

As we examine two record labels' treatments, we find one to be more interested in musical sound and the other to be more focused on songs' verbal content. As has been the case in purely written texts, a divergence in translation approach is guided by a difference in ideological position. Unlike the clear bifurcations between pro- and anti-communist presentations of a text, in the case of the Folkways and Paredon labels we find record companies that are both informed by leftist sympathies. The distinction between them lies in the fact that for the more ethnomusicological Folkways, the agenda is acceptance of cultural diversity, whereas for the intensely committed and Cuba-focused Paredon, the mission is the defeat of global capitalism and neoimperialism. The listening experiences the labels aim to facilitate are different: Folkways is intended for academic study and for enjoyment by cosmopolitan connoisseurs, whereas Paredon aims to encourage acts of listening that move out of the comfortable space of aesthetic enjoyment and into the more dangerous arena of direct political action.

Nonetheless, local translation choices can work counter to a record label's overarching goals. Where Folkways liner notes neglect sung words, they diminish an album's ability to provide cross-cultural education, omitting information about politics and culture, and, ultimately rendering aspects of Cuban musical performances impenetrably foreign. Paredon, on the other hand, has the tendency to smooth over textures of subtlety and linguistic artistry with the goal of ensuring that the Anglophone listener takes in a clear and actionable ideological message.

Cuban films have gained a significant amount of attention in the Anglophone world through film festivals, classrooms, and the backing

of such broadly distributed films as Gutiérrez Alea's *Fresa y chocolate*. To map the ways in which Gutiérrez Alea's filmic expression has been packaged and presented for English-speaking audiences, we have attended to the semiotic complexities of subtitling. Like the translation of music lyrics, subtitling executes a paratextual function, placed adjacent to the audiovisual totality of the original work to aid in its comprehension. Subtitling, unlike the other forms of translation considered here, is fundamentally shaped by the strict demands of synchronicity with film image and sound and the limited space in which translated text can be presented. Omission, the technique subtitlers so often take recourse to in order to deal with these technical demands, has significant effects on the translingual presentation of Gutiérrez Alea's films, especially in cases where verbal information appears on screen or in song rather than being transmitted through dialogue or narration. An implicit prioritization of these latter elements of a filmic presentation is at work where subtitles abstain from translating what appears on a poster or what a character sings as she shuffles down a flight of stairs. Alterations in the connotative shading and interpersonal dynamics of language also come into play, altering the balance of the director's expressive constructions.

As we have seen, Gutiérrez Alea persistently walks a fine line between loyalty and criticism. Depending on the film and on distinct releases of the same work, subtitles obscure or illuminate this delicate tension. There is an inevitable feeling of loss when one observes how subtitles prevent the viewer from appreciating the richness of a film's expressive layering through song or printed text on screen. Nonetheless, to view the subtitling of Gutiérrez Alea's work this way would ignore the fact that Anglophone viewers are given access to the films' broader aims, even if through a blurred translational lens. In contrast to the other modes of translation studied here, prefatorial or annotative paratexts are much less common in the packaging of the director's work, with the exception of the Criterion presentation, which adds complex layers of scholarly analysis and historical contextualization.

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