

*Traduttori Traditori: The Tasks of the Creative “Traitor” and the Problematic of
Translation (Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, José Martí, and Octavio Paz)*

by

Katherine Brown

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Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Emil Volek, Chair
Carlos Javier García-Fernández
Jesús Rosales

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ABSTRACT

Every act of communication, and therefore, reading, are in themselves acts of translation and interpretation, as the reader creates a mental representation or reconstruction of the text, extrapolating meaning from it. Interlinguistic translation adds another dimension to these hermeneutic processes, and in the movement through space and time, constant re-interpretation, new translations, and, often, modern theories and perspectives, can interfere with or bring clarity to the meaning of the original text, as well as add to the myth-creation of the writers themselves.

This study centers on some of the great literary figures in poetic and essayistic production in the world of Spanish-speaking letters: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, José Martí, and Octavio Paz. These figures represent not only important literary movements going from the baroque to *modernismo*, to the *vanguardia* and to the creation of the self-conscious “modern” poet, but also are among the most well known Spanish-language writers in the English-speaking world. They are all self-aware creators, who, in distinct ways, join poetry, critical essays and theory that are at once an extension of and revolve around their personal poetics, projected toward the currents of their respective epochs.

Finding problematic moments in translation theory and practice, and studying them in the context of the analysis of these great literary figures, at the same time contributes to a new understanding of translation theory itself. These ‘case studies’ expose certain key moments of existing translations, moments that later contribute to critical and interpretive dialogue in a type of hermeneutic spiral of influence. They also show the importance of translation as a contribution to cultural changes and literary

movements. This ultimately aids in the understanding of the important points of contact between the many worlds occupied by these great writers and the ways in which they, and in turn, their translators, recreate the contexts in which they were produced.

Dedicated to my parents, Steve and Meg Brown, not only for bringing me into this world,
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CHAPTER ONE:

An Introduction to the Problematic of Translation, the Hermeneutics of Translation, and the Need for Case Studies

The purpose of my research is to analyze the literary and cultural impact not only of translations themselves, but also of the diverse dimensions of translations, as they emerge in the reception of certain authors in different cultures or eras. My study will center on some of the great literary figures in poetic and essayistic production in the world of Spanish-speaking letters: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, José Martí, and Octavio Paz. These figures represent not only important literary movements going from the Baroque to *modernismo*, to the *vanguardia* and to the creation of the self-conscious “modern” poet, but also are among the most well known Spanish-language writers in the English-speaking world, outside of the pigeon-holed magical realism of Gabriel García Márquez or Isabel Allende.

These are all self-aware creators, who, in distinct ways, join poetry, critical essays and theory that are at once an extension of and revolve around their personal poetics, projected toward the currents of their respective epochs. Their theorizations remain tied to the contexts in which they were produced, and as readers, we read and reconstruct their works, usually within distinct contexts from the original ones. Every act of communication and of reading, in themselves, are actually acts of translation and interpretation, as the reader creates a mental representation or reconstruction of the text, extrapolating meaning from it. Many theorists on translation, including Octavio Paz and José Ortega y Gasset also see the act of poetic creation and expression as an act of

translation. Interlinguistic translation adds another dimension to these hermeneutic processes, and in the movement through space and time, constant re-interpretation, new translations, and, often, modern theories and perspectives, can interfere with or bring clarity to the meaning of the original text, as well as add to the myth-creation of the writers themselves.

Theoretical Framework

While early translation theories were prescriptive and mostly concerned with the duties of the translator of religious texts (and often, polemics on the taboos of translating the ‘words of God’), the more contemporary hermeneutics eventually develop from two fundamental texts coming from semiotic theories of translation: Roman Jakobson’s “Linguistics and Poetics”, commentaries from a conference in 1958 but published in 1960, and “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” from 1959. Jakobson’s approach to the text as a communicative act marks a rupture with previous prescriptive conceptions of translation theory. He represents two axes of linguistic functions related to the communicative act: the text, or message, encoded by the transmitter (author) and decoded by the receiver (reader); and the context, contact (or mode of transmission, like the genre of poetry or essay) and linguistic code, which remain inseparable from the message or text. Cultural referents are part of the context and linguistic code. Jakobson’s triadic model becomes dynamic by lending itself an aspect of historicity, and puts the translator in the double role of receiver and transmitter, decoding and re-codifying a message under different contexts, linguistic codes and sometimes modes of contact (e.g., intralinguistic or intersemiotic translation).

The most problematic areas in literary translation become the multiplicity of contexts and the various roles of the translator in relation to the text. A secondary problematic are the spatio-temporal variants of the linguistic codes: in this case I focus not only on two distinct languages, but also on regional and chronological differences within the same language. All languages are diachronic in nature, so even reading a text in one's native tongue is a type of 'historical' translation. The paradoxical nature of language is that the past is actually sprung from the present, created and reconstructed by language. Borges has demonstrated, for example in his story "Pierre Menard, autor del *Quijote*", George Steiner's assertion that "occurring at successive moments in time, even repetition guarantees no logically neutral equivalence" (Steiner 295).

Jakobson offers a model that is a good starting point for understanding the communicative functions of a text (and language in general), but it must be amplified. The success of a translation depends not only upon its formal transmission but also upon the influence on and interference with its social reception. In that way we move toward reader-response theories that adopt a descriptive approach that doesn't seek a priori formulas. Reader-response is in itself a cognitive "translation" in the sense that every reading is an interpretation of the text. Hans-Georg Gadamer recognizes the multifaceted aspect, for example, of linguistic, cultural and extra-textual context codes upon declaring that there exists an authentic dialogue between the present and the past within every interaction between the message and a new receiver. Gadamer also asserts that there is no final or definitive meaning of a text, but that meaning is instead created as a history of meanings.

In *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* Roman Ingarden touches on the process of determining a text's meaning as a process of concretization of the text's world upon being read. In this sense, he takes Jakobson's receiver, who already had a slightly active role in decoding the message, and gives her more subjective power by being responsible for concretizing the world of the text. The receiver achieves this by explaining or making explicit the "indeterminacies" to aesthetically apprehend the artwork and concretize the schematic objects that are present (Ingarden 53). Walter Benjamin highlights another facet of this problem when he notes that each text is really truncated in its intention, and that the task of the translator is to "complete" the text. Similarly, Rabassa says that, according to Borges, the translator should not translate what Borges said, but what Borges *meant to say*; Ferré finds that the translator acts as a "telescopic lens" for the writer, extending and clarifying the original text.

In Ingarden, the indeterminacies and schematic objects represent fixed historical values and norms, which produce metaphysical values in the consciousness of the reader. In *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Wolfgang Iser adds an aspect of historicity and gives context to Ingarden's ideas: for Iser, the reader is transcendental and can understand the norms and values of other eras because, for him, the indeterminacies are part of the structure of the text's repertoire, and of the communication between the text and the reader/translator. So, Ingarden is "referring to a one-way incline from text to reader and not a two-way relationship", while Iser gives dynamism to that relationship by conceiving the intentional object of the text that guides the reader in its own construction, instead of the text as a series of schematized objects (Iser 173).

Steiner notes, “Every interlingual transfer, says Quine, is ruled by a principle of indeterminacy” (310). The translator, as reader, identifies these indeterminacies and her role can become explicative. In fact, the original text’s indeterminacies and tensions are going to be a guiding force not only in the translator’s form of textual concretization (that is, interlinguistic transfer or transformation), but also in the divergences and new critical and interpretive spirals spawned from those new concretizations and new indeterminacies in the translated text. How translators approach these indeterminacies, in all aspects of the text and its cultural context(s) can be guided by any number of factors. Gregory Rabassa sees translation in this sense as an adaptation of a text, a process in which the translator should depend upon his instinct, and can never be completely sure of his decisions (“No Two Snowflakes”). Rosario Ferré leans toward the idea that the context will always remain as something exotic due to the impossibility of translating a (Latin American, in this case) culture that has not passed through an Industrial Revolution nor a technological one, into one as pragmatic as that of the United States is (“Destiny”). That is, there will always exist some aspect of foreignness and archaisms in any translation, precisely because language and culture are dynamic through space and time.

The paradoxical unstable yet communicative nature of language is what makes so many studies on translation seem inconclusive, unconvincing or artificially prescriptive and aprioristic. Steiner claims, “the idea of exhaustive diagnostic formalization in respect of language is a fiction” (459). Translation must always be theorized in relation to language theories: either as overlapping and equivalent theories, or with a dependence of translation theory upon theories of language. The hermeneutic ‘motion’ described by Steiner in *After Babel* is a good approach upon which I relied heavily, as it allows for one

or all four aspects to be analyzed in relation to translation, and is not prescriptive (i.e. it is not a ‘formula’ or steps that must be followed chronologically). The four stages he names are: an active, initiative trust on the part of the translator that the text *is* understandable and translatable; aggression, or understanding and appropriation; incorporative movement or the “dialectic of embodiment”; and reciprocity or restitution, or restoring the “balance of forces” (Steiner 312–19). Some, such as Ortega y Gasset, would argue for the dialectic of embodiment to not tend toward pure ‘domestication’ or ‘importation’, that the translator oblige the reader to come into the world of the original text (“Traducción” 449). Within all of these hermeneutic motions are various elements, decisions to be made, analyses to undertake, and terminology to employ, much of which revolves around binaries, like ‘domestication’ vs. ‘foreignization’, ‘contemporary’ vs. ‘anachronistic’, etcetera. National politics, identity politics, cultural philosophies, and literary trends often guide these decisions, whether consciously or subconsciously, and changes in translation theory reflect that.

Translation theory is bound by the limitations of its unstable and paradoxical existence as a meta-language, as are language theories and philosophy in general. As there is no complete systematization of language, there is no systematic model for translation either. A hermeneutic process, descriptive studies, or those that are both inductive and deductive, are approximations that allow the text to guide its own exegesis, without ignoring the author or rendering the reader inert. This is true of translation studies as well, which usually rely upon case studies, as each instance of literary translation has its own particularities while being plagued by some universal difficulties

inherent to language and communication in general. All axes of Jakobson's model are in motion and the translator represents one of their points of conversion.

Analysis and Practice

I analyze the English translations of two of Sor Juana's most famous texts, *El sueño* (*The Dream*) and the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (*Response to Sor Filotea de la Cruz*), utilizing a modified version of Jakobson's model, along with existing criticism and interpretations—such as *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o las trampas de la fe* (1982) by Octavio Paz and some feminist readings that imbue the words written from a Baroque cell with modern meanings. One can see their varying effects on the receiver/translator and some specific incidences of variations among the translations, and some harmful deviations from the original poem in key moments, recognizing at the same time the difficulty of translating a text between linguistic and cultural codes with a difference of some 300 years.

Roman Jakobson counts intralinguistic translation as one of the three forms of translation; Eco argues against that idea, supporting himself with the idea that a reformulation of words in the same semiotic system is simply that, a way of rewriting the signs without being a transmutation of the substance (Eco 123–30). In a conceptual poem with a Baroque syntax, like *El sueño*, I argue that intralinguistic translation *is* a form of actual translation and not just a replacement of signs within the same semiotic code. That is, the syntax is not only a linguistic element, but also produces certain semantic and aesthetic effects that can obfuscate or create different meanings. One must untangle the signs, restructure them, and then transmit the content, or *mood* of the poem. That is what

Georgina Sábat de Rivers does with her Spanish prose version of *El sueño*, which I use as a starting point. On top of the syntactic level, in this poem exists an intricate allegorical dimension of its signs, which further complicates the possible referents—complications that appear to confuse the translators, if they even perceive them.

In the case of José Martí, the English translations of his essays can seem like the process of analyzing—deconstructing and reconstructing—a poem in prose due to his dependence upon obscure metaphors and an affected syntax. His Baroque inheritance, his Romantic sensibilities and his *modernista* aesthetics combine to create a text that is really challenging to a modern reader or translator. In this context I study his famous and oft-translated text *Nuestra América (Our America)*, written within the lived cultural context of his 15-year stay in New York, which mixes with the dreamed-of cultural context: an independent Cuba.

My approximation to his texts is through a series of existing translations and one of mine, that is to say, through both analysis and practice. I demonstrate Martí's poetic sensibilities, his often enigmatic writing, as well as how meaning has been transmuted in translations and through time, even within its original linguistic code (Spanish) according to subsequent historical and political changes. Due to the pathos of his essays, full of images that sometimes border on the avant-garde and are converted into sound bytes (they were written to be read aloud, and Martí was a skilled orator), literary criticism has let itself be led astray by the first indication of “macondismo” that will come to dominate after the Latin American Boom. The changing referents converge in the figure of Martí, converted into prophet, martyr and Cuban and Latin American mythology, as

demonstrated, for example, by Enrique Krauze in *Redentores: Ideas y poder en América Latina (Redeemers: Ideas and Power in Latin America)*.

Translation also has implications in the shaping of culture, literary movements, and perceptions about *mimesis*. A young Octavio Paz read a version of *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot, translated by Enrique Manguía with the title “El Páramo” and published in *Contemporáneos* in 1930, a magazine par excellence of the Mexican Vanguard. It is simultaneously an inter- and intralinguistic translation: he has changed the medium to prose that highlights the polyphony of voices, creating a heteroglossia, and the imagist symbolism that will influence in the Mexican Vanguard, and later in Paz’s own poetics. As Pedro Serrano points out in his work, *La construcción del poeta moderno. T.S. Eliot y Octavio Paz*, interlinguistic and intercultural influences create the self-aware modern poet, exemplified in Spanish letters in the figure of Octavio Paz, among others. Without translation, the reciprocal linguistic and extra-linguistic, inter- and extra-textual would not be possible for each of these poets. Of even more interest is the fact that translation is the only vehicle by which new poetics can be transmitted to readers in differing contexts, linguistic codes and cultures, in a hermeneutic circle, or better said, in an “open” or spiraling hermeneutics, in the sense that there is repetition but with changing factors. With Paz I have presented a certain influence of Anglo-Saxon imagism upon and its displacement within Mexican letters, the intersection of that influence with Paz’s theories and practices on translation as poetic creation and vice versa.

Relevance, Significance and Broader Impact

Virginia Woolf said in her famous essay, “A Room of One’s Own”: *For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice.* This quote at once represents a certain humility on the part of the author and, although at the risk of homogenizing, gives writers the power to represent overarching cultural trends, or zeitgeist of their respective eras, which would in turn speak to certain works’ lasting social and cultural impact based upon the ease with which readers identify with the message. In a way, it could also represent a guiding principle in literary translation: one cannot take the text as a solitary birth from a vacuum, but as a product of the thinking and voices of the people represented in that text. It can be a product in the sense of an affirmation of or a deviation from the “years of thinking in common,” but in either case, they are inextricably linked. The context can never be forgotten in the analysis, interpretation, or translation of a text.

In translation theories, there is a continual recognition of the impossibility of a “perfect translation,” acknowledging that the idea of a “perfect translation” is quite absurd. At a structural level, the grammatical/linguistic structures and diverse “extra-linguistic elements” (the context, which includes intra- and extra-textual elements) that imbue the verbal signs with multiple meanings and referents do not correspond between different expressive systems and cultural contexts. Many of said elements are transmuted or lost in a translation between distinct linguistic systems, which therefore can affect the reception of the text in a new linguistic code and socio-cultural context.

By finding those problematic moments in translation theory and practice, and studying them in the context of the analysis of these great literary figures, I am at the same time contributing to a new understanding of translation theory itself. I am also exposing the instances of misreading of emblematic poets and their works in certain key moments of existing translations, moments that later contribute to criticism and interpretation in a type of hermeneutic spiral of influence. While these authors are not necessarily underrepresented in the Spanish-speaking world, they certainly are in the English-speaking one, whose filter has been smudged by layers of misunderstandings and the occasional deliberate misreading or innocent misinterpretation. In other words, I am broadening the participation of underrepresented perspectives on Latin American writers of various epochs and the trajectory of literary transformation as a whole by loosely following a chronology of the main literary movements in Latin America, culminating in the global, intercultural nature of poetics and of the modern poet. I am attempting, in certain cases, to correct a misrepresentation, highlight socio-cultural impact, and, ultimately, aid in the understanding of the important points of contact between the many worlds occupied by these great writers and the ways in which they, and in turn, their translators, recreate the contexts in which they were produced.

CHAPTER TWO:

Translation as Critical Dialogue: *El sueño* and *La respuesta a Sor Filotea*

by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

What is translation? On a platter
A poet's pale and glaring head,
A parrot's screech, a monkey's chatter,
A profanation of the dead.
(Vladimir Nabokov, "On Translating 'Eugene Onegin'")

The mysterious (for want of solid biographical information) and polemic (for the unending critical tug-of-war for interpretation and meaning) life of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz provokes diverse interpretations of her Baroque, labyrinthine texts, seemingly incomprehensible to modern sensibilities. While one could argue that she has just as much, if not more, fame among literary critics as a Góngora, Darío, or Borges, for example, little of her enormous corpus of work has actually been translated to English, and then with few versions before the explosion of postmodern interest in her beginning in the 1980's. Her poetic masterpiece, *Primero sueño/El sueño*—"the only text she wrote of her own volition" and not for commission, according to the poet herself in her *Respuesta*—, began to appear in English during the second half of the twentieth century. The seminal *Respuesta* did not appear with a full rendering in English until 1982, as stated by Margaret Sayers Peden in her translation from that year. This can be attributed to the "rediscovery" of Sor Juana in Spanish-speaking letters in the twentieth century that aroused a late interest in English-language scholars. In the case of the poem, various other barriers include: 1) baroque hyperbaton presents quite a syntactic challenge to

translators; 2) the conceptualist metaphors and imagery produce a similarly difficult semantic challenge; 3) the oneiric, mythological and philosophical landscape, along with the various treatises on the knowledge of the epoch, can confuse the modern reader, therefore offering a double challenge to the translator (who is at once reader and creator, emissary and recipient).

Much of the nascent critical interest also fell upon the late epistolary life of Sor Juana, especially her *Carta atenagórica*, the *Carta de Sor Filotea* (written by Bishop Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, it was published as the prologue to the *Carta atenagórica*), and her *Respuesta a Sor Filotea*. Since the publication of *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o las trampas de la fe* (1982) by Octavio Paz—a poetic analysis and pseudo-biography that slides between reality and fiction and greatly affects subsequent studies—there has been much speculation about the final years of Sor Juana’s life, her literary silence, her alleged final conversion, and her battles with the Spanish Church powers around her.

This critical “rediscovery” of Sor Juana emerges amidst a web of modernizing criticism (Volek, “Las tretas”) and causes a displacement of the texts’ referents in new readers, who may in turn become committed to this often wrongful vision of the life, affecting approaches to and interpretations of the texts of the Hieronymite intellectual. This process exists in a sort of hermeneutic spiral, and could equally be postulated as a misunderstanding of the texts and therefore of the life. As Emil Volek points out in his article, “Las tretas de los signos: teoría y crítica de Sor Juana,” each critical variant must maintain a metanarrative that supports its claims, an error-prone undertaking because “construir biografías a partir de textos altamente codificados es perseguir vanas sombras

verbales” (324). According to Volek, these critical variants all profess to work toward an authentic vision of the Tenth Muse, and tend to create their metanarrative from one of three perspectives: militant Catholicism, modernizing, or feminist. The latter two can share traits: secularizing/modernizing her figure, and a narrative whose dénouement presents Sor Juana in a state of persecution or martyrdom for the last, literarily silent years of her life.¹ The former could be said to have begun with her first biographer, Diego Calleja, who never met her and could more truthfully be called her hagiographer rather than biographer (Harss 2). The militantly Catholic vision of Sor Juana is interested in the same idealization (idolization?), and traces her life toward a *camino de perfección*, or as a straight ascending line toward sainthood, as opposed to the descent into martyrdom found in the other two modes of thought (Volek, “Las tretas” 330–31). These perspectives in turn inform approaches to her texts; for example, the *Respuesta* can be seen as a sincere confession (militant Catholicism), a self-defense of her “rebellion” set within the framework of a *Bildungsroman* (modernizing criticism), or as confessional within a testimony or testament metanarrative (feminist criticism) (Volek, “Las tretas” 338).

Margaret Sayers Peden’s introduction to her translation of the *Respuesta*—in a book titled *A Woman of Genius: The Intellectual Autobiography of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*—points to it as a principal source of biographical information (5). Rosa Perelmuter, in her 1983 article “La estructura retórica de la *Respuesta a Sor Filotea*,” echoes the idea that it is indeed a “valiosa fuente de información biográfica” (147), therefore accepting the narrative voice of the essayistic letter to be 1) reliable and 2) identical to that of Sor

¹ I would add Queer theory to this list, which like feminist criticism offers a modernizing, secularizing view that tends to focus on the nun’s supposed “erotic” poetic production as well as her perceived ambiguity regarding gender identity.

Juana herself. However, her own article seems to undo that very assertion by dismantling the notion that this was spontaneous or natural (read: sincere, confessional), and emphasizing that it was instead a deeply meditated rebuttal that utilized oratorical—specifically, forensic discourse—, rhetorical and epistolary conventions of the time. In the end, she notes, “No se debe hablar, pues, de la ‘espontaneidad’, ‘naturalidad’, y ‘sencillez’ de la *Respuesta*...” (158). Volek points out that Sor Juana writes the epistle within a simulacrum of symmetrical communication, allowing her to produce a document that becomes her testament (“La señora” 343). That gives her voice a space, but Sor Juana would have been aware of operating within that simulacrum, therefore maintaining distance from the rhetorical/narrative “yo” of the letter. Testament is not biography, and misreadings, to borrow a term from Harold Bloom, paired with misunderstanding can add to the web of critical confusion. For example, unconventional thoughts and worldviews (her testament) does not a rebellion (actions, biographical happenings) make.² I will delve further into the importance of baroque epistolary rhetoric in the *Respuesta* when I more closely explore translations of the text. I point out these contradictions and complexities now to show that from the days of her earliest biographer, mythologizing elements are in place, and over the years various new “discoveries,” bifurcations from, and aggregations to Calleja’s original hagiographic tale have had a snowball effect (Volek’s *bola de nieve*),

² These misinterpretations can be seen in the book used ubiquitously by undergraduate Spanish students, *Aproximaciones al estudio de la literatura hispanoamericana* (Ed. Edward H Friedman, L. Teresa Valdivieso and Carmelo Virgillo. 7th ed. New York: McGraw Hill, 2012.). In the biographical introduction to Sor Juana, it is said that out of curiosity she disguised herself as a man to enter into the university in Mexico City (190). This is a possible conflation of her own account in the *Respuesta* of begging her mother to allow her to disguise herself and go (she didn’t), with her learning process (cutting off her hair and marking its growth as timelines for achieving certain new knowledge), and her examination by forty scholars in the viceregal courts. Students seeing this author for the first time are then already misinformed when reading her texts.

whose layers are difficult to disentangle and whose consequences are compounded through time and translations.

Feminist criticism is often focused on the *Sueño* and the *Respuesta*, both of which they approach as defenses of women's right to education. Dorothy Schons' 1926 article "Some Obscure Points in the Life of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz" could be considered the first English-language feminist Sor Juana scholarship, a thread retaken during the 1980's and 1990's boom in Sor Juana criticism. Schons' article is oft cited; in it she notes that the *Respuesta* shows the nun as "a house divided against herself," (52) and is one part of a confluence of things that "broke the strong spirit and made her accept the martyr's role" (57). More important to feminist criticism is her declaration of the *Respuesta* as a "defense of the rights of women, a memorable document in the history of feminism" (52). Stephanie Merrim states in the introduction to her collection *Feminist Perspectives on Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (1991) that Schons, writing during the last years of First-Wave Feminism, produced a "landmark piece, the mother of feminist studies on Sor Juana" (7–8). However, applying the label "feminist" to Sor Juana is anachronistic, and a feminist study of Sor Juana must always imply projecting contemporary ideas and values on a time in which they were non-existent. Therefore, the figure of Sor Juana must instead remain a "triste precursor" (Volek, "Las tretas" 338–39); a "proto-feminist" or a "feminist *avant la lettre*" (Merrim 18); *El sueño* apparently shows "prefigurements of the theoretical modes of 20th-century feminist scholars" and "foreshadows modern feminist psychoanalytic theory" (Arenal, "Where Woman" 125 & 130); eventually the *Respuesta* is declared a "fundamental work in Western feminism" and in a call-back to Dorothy Schons is noted to be a "declaration of the intellectual emancipation of women of the

Americas” (Arenal, *Answer* vii). These attitudes actually rob Sor Juana of some of her value: she is contextualized by her contemporary (to us) critical usefulness and stripped of some of her contemporary (to her) cultural value as one of the monsters of the Baroque³ (which put her on par with figures like Góngora or even a later out-of-time *hombre del barroco*, José Lezama Lima). That is to say, utilizing one critical lens creates a delimiting view of a complex person whom we still know relatively little about, at least in terms of biographical information. Caught in the hermeneutic spiral, these limited readings create a new text under study, which influences subsequent criticism and scholarship. This is especially true in translations of her works, which also create a new text other than mirroring or “completing” (Benjamin) those created by the author, where the reader is presumably very far removed from the source material and Spanish-language scholarship about the author, and must take the text with which they are presented as authentically Sorjuanian. Almost as telling as the translations themselves for finding these misreadings are the accompanying translators’ notes and introductions, which often intentionally or unintentionally reveal the shortcomings and limitations of the translated work.

This chapter does not promise to be an exhaustive study, nor an absolute valorization of the translations to English, but instead utilizes them to explore the critical process of translating poetry, and translated poetry’s role in the critical process, to analyze some general patterns in the extant English translations. I will investigate specific instances of variation among the translations and from the original in key moments, while recognizing the difficulty of translating a text between linguistic and cultural codes, an

³ Monstrosity was an admired quality in the Baroque. Abnormalities were a fascination.

arduous task considering that “entre el contexto enunciativo originario—histórico y social—y el nuestro median trescientos años de democratización, de progresiva secularización del mundo y de trivialización de lo sagrado” (Volek, “La señora” 336).

Entering the Labyrinth

With poetic translation the dimensions of the communicative text are multiplied, as are the roles of the emissary and receptor that exist within their own cultural and linguistic codes. With a text like *Primero sueño* it would be quite difficult to follow a prescriptive formula like the one offered by Umberto Eco, for example. Translation is like a refractory prism at the semiologic level; with each refraction the possibility of referents multiply, as does all extra-textual material, or Eco’s “Extra-Linguistic Substance” (ES₁ and ES_{1a}) and “Content” (C₁ and C_{1a}). That is, through space and time, the original signifieds of the signs, other extra-textual elements related to the text’s code, as well as critical interpretations of the author and her works, influence the process of deciphering and reconstruction, or, the translation process.

The very act of putting pen to paper is first and foremost an act of translation. Ortega y Gasset notes that one must translate out of their world and into a sort of pseudo-language whose signs have been agreed upon (*Miseria* 435). The very act of speaking is a utopian exercise, then, as speaking presupposes that one will be able to express what it is one is thinking, that is, represent the concept representing the referent (*Miseria* 442). Translation, in itself, relies heavily upon that presupposition in multi-dimensional form: from author to reader/translator; reader/translator to new reader in another language, plus all of the reader/translator and new reader’s interaction with other extra- and inter-textual

critical dialogues surrounding the text in the original and target language. The hermeneutic spiral takes on more web-like qualities, creating more points of tension between meaning, intentions and the text.

Ortega's thoughts on translation as expressed in *Miseria y esplendor de la traducción* coincide nicely with a critical approach to translating dense Baroque texts like Sor Juana's. Ortega's entire rational vitalist philosophy (which of course informs his views on translation) is reminiscent of the perspectivist and circumstantial Baroque worldview as presented by José Antonio Maravall in "Un esquema conceptual de la cultura barroca." This is a culture based on change, expansion, movement, impermanence, temporality, fortune, occasion, strategic "games," appearances and essences, masks, theatricality, and dreams, all connecting to or revealing reality. In all, it is a "cultura historicista" (443) with a dynamic, paradoxical and often dualistic view of the nature of the reality, es "una primera cultura de masas, con un fuerte carácter de cultura dirigida" (461). In Ortega, language and translation also function in a paradoxical and dualistic way: "Es decir que el lenguaje está sujeto a un *doble proceso de desvelamiento y ocultación de la realidad*—términos que ganaron fortuna y fama con la extensión del pensamiento heideggeriano. El lenguaje *es presencia de lo ausente, una forma de acercarnos una lejana realidad a la inmediatez circunstancial de nuestro vivir*" (Martín 244, my emphasis).

Primero sueño is, in effect, a poem of the revelation and occultation of reality (knowledge), a poem of strategy, circumstance, appearances and essences, of impermanence, expansion and movement in pyramidal, vertical and spiraling varieties. Ortega echoes the pursuit of knowledge outlined by Sor Juana when he utilizes a dialectic

argument to expound his theories on language and translation, passing first through the *miseria* of the work but then professing that, “no es una objeción contra el posible esplendor de la faena traductora declarar su imposibilidad. Al contrario, este carácter le presta la más sublime filiación y nos hace entrever que tiene sentido” (439). There is a clear resonance between his thought and *El sueño*'s misinterpreted finale, when declaring the infinite nature of the path to enlightenment is not declaring defeat, but instead makes the lifelong task and its rewards more sublime. A translated work, for Ortega, even becomes its own literary genre in his relativist view: according to the dynamic, or circumstantial, nature of reality, it is always in a state of “becoming,” is a “camino hacia la obra original” (Ortega 449). He advocates then, for the necessity of a “conciencia histórica,” which means constantly trying to approximate the original text, as in bringing the new reader as close to the original as possible, seeing the author's original language (450–52).

As the act of writing is the author's rebellion against language (innovation of common usage), this aspect of the text becomes extremely important when considering the violence of rendering the text in another linguistic, cultural and historic code: “El estilismo personal consiste, por ejemplo, en que el autor desvía ligeramente del sentido habitual de la palabra, la obliga a que el círculo de objetos que designa no coincida exactamente con el círculo de objetos que esa misma palabra suele significar en su uso habitual” (436). The important task becomes the recognition of the referents as implied by the author, a task that could be objectively impossible to evaluate in some instances, but with proper strategy, critical analyses and context clues, can often be correctly inferred. Rendering them in a translation is another level of the challenge altogether.

Roman Jakobson denotes intralinguistic translation as one of the three forms of translation, but Eco argues against that, based upon the idea that a reformulation of words within the same semiologic system is simply that, a way of re-writing the signs, but is not a transmutation of their substance (Eco *Mouse* 123–30).⁴ In a *conceptista* poem with Baroque (marked) syntax like *El sueño*, I argue that intralinguistic translation (into an unmarked syntax) is a form of translation. Syntax is an extra-linguistic substance (for Eco) because it produces a certain aesthetic effect and also helps to obfuscate or create various levels of meaning and referents. One must untangle the signs, restructure them, and still transmit the Content (C_{1a}) or *mood* of the poem. This is what Georgina Sabàt de Rivers does with her prosaic version of *El sueño*, which I utilized as a starting point for then examining the interlinguistic translations of the poem (to English). Along with the syntax, there is a larger allegorical aspect to the utterances and signs there within, which further complicates the possible referents—complications that seem to confuse translators, if they even perceive them. José Pascual Buxó comments on the allegorical aspect of the poem in his essay “‘El Sueño’ de Sor Juana: Alegoría y modelo del mundo”:

A diferencia de los enunciados exclusivamente lingüísticos en los cuales, por medio de un solo sistema semiótico (el de la lengua), puede instaurarse una determinada relación de homología entre dos dominios diferentes (la mitología clásica y la historia moderna, digamos), los emblemas no sólo articulan separadamente unidades pertenecientes a dos sistemas semióticos de diferente naturaleza (el icónico y el verbal), sino que constituyen dos textos cuya correspondencia aparece postulada, en principio, por el mero hecho de su concurrencia. (245–46)

⁴ Eco conceives of both a Linguistic Substance (LS) and an Extra-Linguistic Substance (ES) in poetry. The LS is the verbal sign in its linguistic system, in the strict sense of sign and referent, or signifier and signified. Eco categorizes the ES's as extra-linguistic sounds or musicality produced by the structure of the poem, that is, meter, rhyme, and rhetorical devices such as alliteration, onomatopoeia, anaphora, and etcetera. These would be a continuation or simplification of the *content-form*, *content-substance*, *expression-form*, and *expression-substance* found in Louis Hjelmslev. (*Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*. Trans. Francis J. Whitfield. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1961. 47–60).

Given this information, the reader/translator not only has to struggle with the double referents in the sense of recognizing referents in the verbal system, but also with the emblematic stratum underlying the discourse and creating other correspondences within the text. In Sor Juana's time, these would have been part of the cultural code, as didactic books of emblems were popular (her beloved Kircher published a book on Egyptian hieroglyphics in the tradition of the emblem). Some referents/objects in a phrase like "aves sin plumas aladas" (l. 46) are not literal: *birds, featherless, winged*. Through their semantic relationship, these three signifiers would seem to point to one referent, a bat (which, in English, becomes a new signifier with multiple signifieds). But there are multiple emblematic or symbolic referents because of cultural codes of the time, and the object "bat" in the poem also connotes: flight at night; the darkest part of the darkness; the fateful nature of nighttime birds/winged creatures; Bacchus' daughters being converted into bats in mythology; spiraling off from the ultimate one, the added metaphoric value as the emblem of a woman who disobeyed the commands of her father—that is, being a rebellious woman and the consequences that carries. Examples like this abound throughout the poem.

The Dream in English

Before examining instances in the translations of *El sueño* to English in greater detail, it is important to see them as a whole and contextualize their time of publication. The first one is by Scottish Gilbert F. Cunningham, a translator of Góngora's *Soledades* who wrote his doctoral dissertation about the English translations of the *Divina Comedia*. He was only able to translate the first 150 lines of Sor Juana's poem before his death in

1967, a fragment which was then published by Johns Hopkins Press in 1968. He recognized that it represented “the description of nightfall and sleep, which sets the background mood for a scholastic, yet dreamlike and Faustian, exploration, first intuitive and then discursive, of the macrocosmos” (253). Recognition of the intuitive aspect of this ontological treatise on knowledge is important, and is a topic that will reappear later in this chapter. Although it is incomplete, the first part of this translation is of interest in comparison with the others, but with one complication: we cannot know if this was the “final” version in the eyes of Cunningham, nor if, or to what extent, it was touched by the editor’s hands, and even then, whether they were gloved or not.

The second translation of interest was published in 1983, one year after Paz’s *Las trampas de la fe*, a key book for modernizing (or postmodernizing) criticism in the 1980’s and 1990’s. This translation was done by John Campion, currently at UC Berkeley and the self-proclaimed initiator of the “Echo-Tropic Movement” in poetry. The introduction, written by Paul Foreman, praises the translation as “a gift to the whole English speaking world” because it is considered to be the first full translation of the poem to English. It is a gift perhaps in the sense of opening the door to subsequent translations, but not so much in terms of its quality. Seen as a whole, it is definitively the weakest of the full translations of the poem studied here, although some parts stand out when compared to the others. This is consistent with Ortega y Gasset’s claim that “cabén de un mismo texto diversas traducciones. Es imposible, por lo menos lo es casi siempre, acercarnos a la vez a todas las dimensiones del texto original” (*Miseria* 450), which also serves as an ever-ready justification for a new translation of any text.

As a whole, stronger than Champion's translation is that of Margaret Sayers Peden, the well-known translator of writers like Octavio Paz (including *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz o las trampas de la fe*), Juan Rulfo, Carlos Fuentes and César Vallejo, among others. She had more time to revise and hone her translation of the *Sueño*: Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe published a fragment in 1985; later a full translation with footnotes was published in *Poems, Protest, and a Dream* in 1997.⁵ In certain sections, the influence of modernizing criticism and its impact on some of the translator's choices are quite apparent; the same influence is notable in the book's introduction written by Ilan Stavans, who declares that Sor Juana "had become an impersonator of masculinity, an actress pretending to be someone other than herself" (xvi). Sayers Peden corroborates his idea in her introductory note: "In this poem, Sor Juana is challenging the wrath of the male establishment" (vii). These perspectives represent a fundamental error in the understanding of the poem's content; within the context of its historical-cultural code, it was a metaphysical reflection on the poet's lifetime of learning, the ways of knowing, and the nature of procuring knowledge, a poem urged by the poet's own intuition and the necessity to understand both secular and theological erudition in poetic terms, verse being the most sacred of forms. This is also an example of a fundamental error for Ortega y Gasset: above all a translation should retain its exoticism, guiding the reader to "salir de nuestra lengua a las ajenas y no al revés," and to see "los modos de hablar propios del autor traducido" (*Miseria* 452). The modern translator seems unconcerned with this type of fidelity, opting instead to try to bring a text from a pre- or early-modern culture into a culture that has passed through an industrial revolution (Ferré 91). As Ferré asserts, "it is

⁵ I cite from the 1997 full translation in this study, although I consider it to have been birthed chronologically and ideologically amidst the crop of 1980's Sor Juana scholarship and translations.

ultimately impossible to translate one cultural vision into another” (91); the projection of the target culture onto that of the original text could be seen as the translators’ overcompensating due to their undertaking’s nihilistic fate. Sayers Peden actually contradicts her own approach in her article on working with Sor Juana’s “Poem 145,” in which she discusses the process of translating a sonnet utilizing an extended metaphor of the translator as a “builder in the reconstruction business” (“Building” 13). In the end, she asserts, “[a]ll the debris—the components of the original edifice—must be transported to a new language, to be restored to its *original baroque splendor with the least possible signs of damage*” (“Building” 14, my emphasis), which was not the guiding principal in her translation of *Primero sueño*.

Sayers Peden is not the only one who opts to “modernize” the text’s language; common practice is to pick structure and content or meaning over meter, rhyme, and register, especially when dealing with tangled syntax, rhyme, and perceiving that meter that relies upon syllabic count (Spanish) versus stresses (in English). The poem’s structure lends itself to the oneiric landscape and anabasis genre. In “El arte de la memoria en el *Primero Sueño*. Introducción al estudio de un poema enigmático,” Buxó comments that the semantic complexity (aside from reflecting the common aesthetic of the era) functions as a reflection of the oneiric world (312). The 975-line poem is a *silva* without any division into stanzas or sections, at least not any indicated explicitly by the poet. Scholars have divided the poem thematically from between about three to twelve sections. According to Buxó, the looser *silva* form (the same one used in Góngora’s *Soledades*) embodies the nun’s constant contemplation, and

es la causa de que tanto Pfandl, como antes Chávez y Vossler, hayan pensado que la poetisa escogió para la composición del *Primero Sueño* el *verso fluido y libre de la silva, apropiado—a juicio de esos críticos—para transcribir sin coacciones los movimientos sueltos e impredecibles de las imágenes oníricas*, esto es, el aspecto de un sueño real, “nebuloso, difuso, sin orgánica agrupación ni distribución del asunto”, en suma, sin lógica y sin ratio (318, my emphasis).

None of the translators follow the meter or rhyme that appears in the poem—nor do they necessarily look for an English equivalent—, a central problem for poetic translation in general. At the same time, free verse in English can lend itself to the flowing images of an oneiric world. However, while on the surface the movements in the poem may appear to be “*sueños e impredecibles*,” or “sin lógica y sin ratio,” Sor Juana actually writes a methodical passing through her circumstantial realities: connecting the natural stages of the night, the stages of sleep and dreaming, with those of the soul’s searching flight—in other words, not in terms of happenstance nor an incoherent stream of consciousness.

Translators usually address this problematic in their notes, explaining what was sacrificed and what was “saved” to achieve a certain balance between the two versions. Cunningham does not address this in his introduction, and Sayers Peden avoids it in her translator’s notes. Campion begins to touch on the difficulty of encountering equivalents in English, but avoids a discussion of his metric choices in a pseudo-explanation that also robs the translator of his authority over the new text:

It began as a lark—trying to find stress-meter equivalents for syllabic verse. Finding a suitable word and image order in English for her latinate style also provided an unsuspecting translator with some hours of bemusement... That night I dreamt... Never have I had such intimacy with the dead. When the spectre vanished, the translation of “El Sueño” was written on the paper before me. (n/p)

He is working from the supposition that he must search for “stress-meter equivalents for syllabic verse,” as if to say that Spanish verse does not utilize stress along with syllable counts, a common misconception. However, revisiting Navarro Tomás, we are reminded that Spanish uses the same rhythmic or stress patterns as passed down from the Greeks (trochaic, iambic, dactylic, anapestic, cretic, etc.)—they are just utilized to mark strong and weak vowels and work in concert with syllabic count. Drawing on Andrés Bello’s previous work, he says of the two types of lines used in the *silva*: “Respecto al heptasílabo advirtió que parece fluctuar entre el yámbico y el anapéstico. . . . En cuanto al endecasílabo, le atribuyó ritmo yámbico como tipo básico, pero señaló que es raro encontrarlo en esta forma” (Navarro Tomás 26). Obviously, lines are not always uniform and so these designations can be more complex; Navarro discusses them more intricately in terms of rhythmically diverse clauses within one line. The implication, then, is that rhythm could be determined and replicated in an English translation, a task dealing in *minutiae* that might be unappealing to some.

Luis Harss makes a similar claim as Campion for his inspiration in his translation from 1986, noting that he has “dreamed along with Sor Juana’s Poem,” (n/p), but he takes full authority and authorship over his translation, seeing his new version as a “poem in its own right” mirrored by the original. That is, he follows Benjamin’s task of completion; Borges’ mandate to write what the author wanted to say. In terms of meter, he most closely addresses an attempt at an analogous form: “I have adopted a basic iambic trimeter, with random rhymes where chance offered them, stressing sense over sound where I had to choose between them, but listening for internal harmonies” (25). However, he also wrote to cater to the modern reader, but in an attempt to be more balanced,

claiming to avoid foreignness and archaic words and to have “followed Quintillian’s advice: to stay within the common usage that makes the old seem new but well aged” (26). This generally shows up in his translation as an untangling of, or a lack of allegiance to, the baroque syntax that is inextricable from the *conceptista* nature of the poem, its movements and metaphors. The extra-textual aspect, such as the side-by-side experience of reading his translation, ends up being less of a mirror and more of a seek-and-find exercise. This creates a new aesthetic extra-linguistic effect within the new linguistic, cultural and historic code.

Alan Trueblood’s 1988 translation, as well as introduction and translator’s notes, are of interest for their heavy influence from Octavio Paz (who wrote the foreword), for rounding out the decade of numerous Sor Juana translations, and for the translation’s explicit catering to the “modern reader.” Trueblood’s own words reveal him to be someone with very astute observations and intuitions about Sor Juana’s poetics, mixed with popular contemporary interpretations of her works (particularly the *Respuesta* and *El sueño*). In his foreword, Paz echoes the sentiments expressed six years prior in *Las trampas de la fe* and woven throughout the other translations from the 1980’s as he identifies Sor Juana’s condition with that of the modern poet: “Her lot as a woman writer punished by haughty opinionated clerics reminds us of the fate that has befallen independent intellectuals of our own century in societies ruled by intolerant bureaucracies” (viii). In terms of *Primero sueño* he claims it is “rational delirium,” “scientific poetry—and also poetry of nocturnal terror,” and that as readers we must “draw victory from defeat and song from silence. Once again poetry is fed by history and biography. Once more it transcends them” (ix–x). Except when it does not transcend

them, as most critics seem to conflate the three when it comes to Sor Juana, including Trueblood, working within the framework of Paz's ideology. He explicitly claims his indebtedness to Paz in the introductory footnote (1), and also notes in the preface that the selections in his anthology follow "as closely as possible the order in which they are presented and discussed in Octavio Paz's book on Sor Juana" (xiv). For him, the *Reply* demonstrates an "almost programmatic feminism;" and *First Dream* is an "unrealizable aspiration" (21), "an *intellectual apologia*, no doubt more difficult than the *autobiographical Reply to Sor Philotea* yet just as compelling and no less revealing" (20, my emphasis). *First Dream* then becomes, in his view, defeatist, confessional and defensive, instead of an autodidact's exploration of, and treatises on, the process of learning and the various forms of knowing. The poetry has in no way transcended history and biography (and fiction) as it should.

Returning to the discussion on meter and rhyme, when Trueblood addresses these topics he reveals a certain obsession with the "modern" reader (a relative term, and not to be confused with Eco's Model Reader), and an over-eagerness to cater to his or her ignorance. This is an assumption that presupposes that the "modern reader" is a static and abstract entity whose understanding of Sor Juana's time will only ever be that of a person with limited knowledge, in the moment in which the translation was published. While one generally must work from a set of assumptions with an ideal reader in mind, which in turn can only be an abstraction, and translation is work that can allow a reader-response-heavy critical approach, there is also a danger in concentrating too much effort on a "modern" or "contemporary" reader. Works cannot be understood completely out of context, even in their native/original language, as we have seen with the coming and

going of 20th-century New Criticism. Trueblood acknowledges that rhyme in English “stands out more forcefully” than in Spanish, and that with *First Dream* he “found that it could be dispensed with altogether without serious loss” (xiv), a sound decision. However, upon discussing fragments of other works that appear in the anthology and the decision to cut pieces out of whole texts, he notes, “there are instances in which expansiveness, for a contemporary ear, turns into repetitiveness” (xiv). In terms of the baroque syntax and *conceptista* wordplay, he declares that “the modern reader is more likely to be struck by breakthroughs of stylistic originality and moments of plain earnestness, simplicity, colloquiality” (11), and claims that the “discursive use of imagery” and poetry instead of prose as her “expository vehicle” makes this a hurdle for the “modern reader” (23). He explicitly actualizes the text’s language, as do Sayers Peden and Harss, by way of syntax and register, obscuring the original relationship between form, structure and content that Sor Juana created in her neoplatonic, humanistic and metaphysical celebration of essential interconnectedness—of the abstraction, the thought and the expression, the verb—in other words, our forms of knowing.

Rhetoric, Poetics and the “*persona sui generis*”

In the *Respuesta*, written in 1691 but published posthumously in 1700, Sor Juana mentions “un papelillo que llaman *El sueño*”; it appears in the second edition of the *Obras completas* from 1692 as “*Primero sueño*, que así intituló y compuso la madre Juana, imitando a Góngora [*Soledades*]” (*First Dream*, as entitled and composed by Mother Juana, imitating Góngora”). The question planted by many is whether or not Sor Juana was going to write a “second” dream, as her “first” one is a supposed mimesis of

Góngora, and the introductions of various of the translations follow the same line of thought regarding the deceptively simple title. Paz ultimately declares that between the two, “las diferencias son mayores y más profundas que las semejanzas,” and that Sor Juana’s language is more intellectual while Góngora’s is more aesthetic, owing to the differing content (*Las trampas* 470); however, he does stick with the title of *Primero sueño* throughout his study. Paz also addresses the multiple signs represented by the signifier *sueño* that overlap and complicate the referents within the cultural code of Sor Juana’s era: “el acto de dormir, las imágenes fantásticas e irracionales que vemos mientras dormimos, la facultad psíquica o fisiológica que produce esas imágenes, los deseos, las ambiciones, las ensoñaciones y, en fin, la rara experiencia que refiere sor Juana” (471–72), “rara experiencia” that belongs to the genre of anabasis literature.

The polysemy of *sueño* diverges in English and it can become one of two different signs, sleep or dream, whereas in Spanish the various referents are encompassed in the same sign, making the translator’s task more difficult. Each translator must also choose which title to work from *Primero sueño* or *El sueño*, which implies an attempt to follow the wishes of the author, or as Borges mandates, to say what it is the author *wanted* or *meant* to say. All of the translations here agree that *sueño*, in this context, is a dream. Cunningham and Harss both choose *The Dream* in English (again, Cunningham’s choices may or may not have been his final version). This follows the author’s own reference to her work, although she distanced herself from it, as it is a little paper that *they* call (*llaman*) *El sueño*; for Harss, Sor Juana’s use of that title could be due to “shorthand, modesty, or caution” (25). It could also be that by that time, the poem had taken on a cultural life of its own, or at least had been read by some and designated a *vox-*

populi title. Harss addresses his choice in his introduction: while he sees “internal evidence” of the “Dark Queen’s implied return,” or that there would be a second dream, he recognizes that there is no concrete evidence or manuscript and notes, and therefore “I have stuck with the title that best seems to reflect the feeling one has of a poem complete in itself” (25), a logical justification, especially with the use of the definite article. Champion avoids choosing a title in English and simply leaves the Spanish *El sueño*, creating a mixture of linguistic codes that on a certain level helps bring the new reader toward the world of the author, as mandated by Ortega y Gasset. Trueblood and Sayers Peden work from the title *Primero sueño*. Sayers Peden addresses the problems that the title presents in English in her translator’s note, recognizing that “We also know that in the first edition of her complete works the poem was entitled ‘Primero sueño.’ We must assume that Sor Juana suggested that title to her editors in Spain” (vi), a sentiment echoed by Harss in his introduction, even though he opts for the other title. From there, she deviates from the accepted interpretation of the phrase as an adjective + noun utterance that would echo Góngora, recognizing the phrase’s possible ambiguity in Spanish, “[g]iven Sor Juana’s love of wordplay, of conceits and puns and sly allusions” (vii). Sayers Peden employs two different verbal signs in a semantic game: adverb + verb conjugated for the first-person singular: *First I Dream*. Her observation of this other possible combination is astute, but the justifications of her choices show the influence of modernizing criticism:

Sor Juana’s attempts to maintain an anonymous, genderless voice—the neuter state that allowed her to soar toward, though fail to achieve, the ecstasy of union with the omniscient cosmos—the first-person *yo* does occasionally escape to identify the yearning, questing mind that seduces us

today. It is present in the Spanish title 'Primero sueño'. We need to hear it in the English as well. (vii)

This is part of the aforementioned introduction where she is seen disguising her femininity and challenging the patriarchy.⁶ While the *disfraz* or mask/costume was a common Baroque subject—cliché, even, due to its ubiquity—, as was the obsession with appearances and theater, the conceits were utilized to move beyond them to the essence of an ever-changing reality: “el hombre del barroco piensa que disfrazándose se llega a ser sí mismo; el personaje es la verdadera persona; el disfraz es una verdad”, as theorized by Rousset (Maravall 455). It would seem the modern critic is confused by the same. That is, by working through the levels of appearances, one reaches a revelation of the ultimate substance of things. That would seem to corroborate Sayers Peden and Ilan Stavans’ assertions, but this is in fact where they misunderstand. There are various levels of mirroring between Sor Juana the person, the poetic voice, and the soul that takes flight. The latter, along with the mind, consciousness, and understanding (*entendimiento*) of the poetic voice are actually the subjects/agents of the poem (i.e. the poetic voice did not experience what is narrated, it is instead relating what happened to the mind and soul, that in waking hours, the poetic voice was able to integrate into a sort of narrative). When Stavans asserts that she “had become an impersonator of masculinity, an actress pretending to be someone other than herself” (xvi), he first misunderstands that in Baroque times the “acting” *is* the self. The appearances are the first way of entering into knowing reality, in the Baroque relativist worldview.

⁶ In this citation we also see the phrase “fail to achieve,” which would imply an interpretation of the poem ending in defeat, a popular interpretation but a sentiment not actually expressed by the poetic voice.

Furthermore, Sor Juana is not pretending to be masculine, nor is she covering or disguising her femininity, nor is she challenging the patriarchy—at least not explicitly or intentionally, or as it is conventionally explained. Her manner of feminism is much more transcendental and metaphysical than the term implies in its present-day connotations; her concern for woman is encompassed in her concern for the human condition, the greater world around her and spiritual erudition and revelation. In fact, she is subscribing to the idea that the soul is genderless and that gender did not impede erudition because this entered a person through an aspect of the soul. If the poetic voice were the equivalent of Sor Juana the person, then it too would not be disguised as masculine, but instead would be assuming the genderless view that Sor Juana expressed of her own body.

Upon analyzing “Romance 48,” Volek points out that Sor Juana ascribes to the idea that being *mujer* is a socially constructed role (with a separate recognition of biological womanhood); to that end, the term cannot apply to her as a woman of the veil. That is, “desde el punto de vista de la economía social de los sexos, ella ha optado por mantener su cuerpo en un estado *potencial, no actualizado*, o sea, *sui generis* ‘neutro’: un depósito abstracto del alma” (Volek, “Las tretas” 337). Sabàt-Rivers recognizes the same neuter label that Sor Juana assigns to virginal status, adding that it made her “free from the domination of any man, and thus established her fundamental liberty” (“Feminist” 143). Being in a state of potentiality is an underlying dynamic of the Baroque society described by Maravall, where reality is circumstance, and helps create the possibility for the dream, and for the dream as an important way of knowing, since it was considered part of reality. Sayers Peden correctly acknowledges the neuter state that allowed the poetic voice’s soul to soar; that, and the fact that as it is night, the soul is free to fly

toward other ways of knowing. The *yo* appears, as she indicates, but as part of the poetic apparatus or framework. Therefore, one could consider the title to mean *first I dream*, not because the *yo* escapes to from time to time to reveal her “true” identity, but because it would indicate the first of many steps taken toward illumination, entering into the dream state, especially considering the title as the first real line of the poem.

Of course, in the (in)famous last line the gendered *yo* appears accompanied by the feminine modifier *despierta*. But following the line of argument above, this is more of a sexed than a gendered modifier, as its signified, in the strictest sense, is an awakened female body, and not the social role of “woman.” Also, considering the poetic voice to be separate from Sor Juana the person, and from the thirsting mind and soul who are the subjects/agents of the poem’s narration, this middle level *yo* becomes strictly a rhetorical device. Harss loses sight of this in his translation, over-identifying the poetic voice with that of Sor Juana. In his introduction he proclaims: “But the personal ‘I’ does burst through now and then; and the Dark Empress and other female figures that are floating self-images do speak for Sor Juana in her guilty vanity, her narcissistic solitude, and the barely repressed fear that ultimately makes her step back from the edge of forbidden knowledge and proclaim it all a ‘dream’” (22). Certainly in this interpretation, the poem has not transcended history, biography, or fiction. This citation reveals several of the main defects in Harss’ translation and misunderstanding of the figure of Sor Juana. According to Maravall, the Baroque personality is operating under the “condición de mónada cerrada,” and “son seres en constitutiva soledad, clausurados sobre sí mismos, sólo tácticamente relacionados con los demás” (460). While he is speaking of characteristics of literary characters from the epoch, the description applies to Sor Juana,

by now a figure, a myth, a caricature, a simulacrum. She is not operating outside the norms or cultural codes of her time in many of the ways that people try to ascribe to her, especially in her use of language and poetic rhetoric and conceits.

The *yo* that appears in *El sueño*, at least before the last line, which as Trueblood notes could function “as the author’s signature” (21), is a rhetorical one because it is not used as the actual subject or agent in the original poem. It only appears as “digo” or “ya digo,” which can be translated as the impersonal *meaning* or *that is*, while the real subjects are the mind or “mi entendimiento,” with an indirect *yo* implied through the possessive adjective “my.” But the poetic voice distances itself from the actual events of the mind and soul, only interjecting with “digo” for line count, or as a reminder of the difficulty of trying to comprehend the incomprehensible, introducing a new simile or metaphorical description. Trueblood addresses it in his introduction: “The protagonist is now expressly linked to a subjective self, which speaks of ‘my mind’ and ‘my thought,’ and is perhaps also alluded to ambiguously in the Spanish text when the subject of verbs—I? it?—is left unexpressed (as it cannot be in English)” (21). In this way, following Ortega’s line of thought, the “I” is not revealing as Sayers Peden would have it, but is concealment, is silence, as it is used rhetorically it further distances the narrated experience from the author. As Trueblood states, he utilized the *Obras selectas* prepared by Georgina Sabàt de Rivers and Elías Rivers, also evidenced by “A Prose Summary” which precedes the poem in translation; I assume he also followed Sabàt de Rivers’ prose version in Spanish. The prose version is no doubt there to help the “modern reader” that he is concerned about, and is also a well-rendered summary in English. In it, he manages to avoid the “I” (although the possessive adjective appears as “my ambition” in a key

section of the poem in terms of proving challenging to translators), but in his verse translation, inexplicably, more “I’s” appear than in the original, causing the poetic voice to be inserted more frequently and less rhetorically than it was written in the author’s original voice.

In the majority of the cases, as with the *yo*, the evidence or lack of “una exégesis atenta al carácter alegórico de su escritura, por obra del cual en un mismo proceso discursivo se manifiestan diversos sentidos compatibles” (Buxó, “Alegoría” 238) keeps appearing with varying rates of frequency among the translations, often resulting in displacement or misplacement of referents. The enigmatic *yo*, for example, has implications in Sayers Peden’s feminist rendering, not just her chosen title. As I stated above, she perceives the nun’s poem as a challenge to the patriarchy, and Ilan Stavans corroborates the idea in his introduction by characterizing the text as subversive:

“The Dream” is a companion to Sor Juana’s *Response to Sor Filotea*: a manifesto promoting freedom of expression and elevating literature to a status higher than all other human affairs, a modernist document transforming poetry into a new type of religion. This subversiveness explains why Sor Juana is a favorite today: she challenged the ecclesiastical status quo, but with a subtlety that confused her contemporaries; she fought for women’s rights not with weapons but with poetry. (xli)

I argue that in its moment, the text was not born of an impulse to be subversive, but out of an intimate, personal need to explore the nature of knowledge, to write her treatise on that, and by doing so, come to a metaphysical understanding through her favorite literary form. From there comes the poem’s impersonal tone; it is not a rebellion against ecclesiastical authorities, but is a subject of the times: the liberation of the sexless soul

that occurs during our provisional death, or sleep and dreams, in a flight that brings ontological and theological revelations to the waking mind.

Lines 704–80, or the section that Volek names “Crisis de ‘la empresa de investigar a la Naturaleza’ (los conceptos abstractos vs. el conocimiento concreto de los objetos en su ‘mundo’/hábitat)” and which Sabàt de Rivers refers to as “Cobardía” within the “Dialéctica última,” offer particularly interesting takes that are representative for how translators treat the enigmatic *yo*, and in Sayers Peden the influence of modernizing criticism is evident. She moves away from the impersonal tone of the poetic voice, during its study of the natural world, and she personalizes it with an *I*, as she does with the title.

For example, the original reads:

Estos, pues, grados discurrir quería
unas veces. Pero otras, disentía,
excesivo juzgando atrevimiento
el discurrirlo todo,
quien aun la más pequeña,
aun la más fácil parte no entendía
de los manuales
efectos naturales; (704-11, my emphasis)

Sayers Peden translates it as follows:

These, then, were the steps *I* wished to follow,
even repeat, *but others of my*
sisters disagreed, decreed it was
too bold for one who
understood so little
of the least, of the most tractable,
of natural effects
to ponder great things. (my emphasis)

In untangling and updating the language and syntax, and also due to an over-identification of the poet’s life with her poem, Sayers Peden has converted this into autobiography, but without verisimilitude. On a linguistic level, the subject for *quería*

appears in lines 617–18: “De esta serie seguir *mi entendimiento* / el método quería” (my emphasis) and then goes through the levels of inanimate objects all the way up to Man. The poetic voice spends the next 87 lines of the poem outlining the steps of that method, and then declares that, “Estos, pues, grados discurrir quería [mi entendimiento] / unas veces. Pero otras [veces], [mi entendimiento] disentía.” The translator has either opted to ignore this important distinction, or got lost in the winding syntax. Aside from the addition of an “I” that was not the subject in the original text, Sayers Peden has added a referent that did not exist anywhere in the original. “*Otras*” does not refer to people, but to “*veces*,” meaning “other times.” It is part of the poem’s internal dialectic and the vacillation between the impulse to continue on the path to knowing or to leave it, as well as which methods to utilize along that path. Changing this to a pronoun referring to other nuns takes the mind/soul out of its solitary nocturnal journey and into the nun’s daily life, a change that should not occur until the final line of the poem when the poetic voice awakens to daylight. It also confuses the poetic voice with Sor Juana herself, as this translated section could be used as a justification to show feminist views in a way in which they are not actually expressed in the author’s voice (for example, quarrelling with her sisters).

Other translations fail to avoid the pitfall of adding an “I” to the seemingly floating, subjectless “quería” in this section, bringing in a non-rhetorical *yo* as an active agent and therefore changing the poem’s dialectic, in this particular section, the attempts, motivation and then discouragement of neo-Aristotelian reasoning. The insertion of an “I” interrupts the process being described by the mind, and instead of integrating and

making coherent the experience of the soul is no longer removed as another level/step in the process. Harss' lines read as follows:

This being then, at times,
how I proceeded, by degrees;
but forced, at others, to desist
from task so excessive to whom,
all aspiring, yet the least,
the simplest part remained obscure
of Nature's works closest at hand; (691-97)

In Trueblood's version we see his tendency to oversaturate the poem with "I's":

These then were the stages over which
I sometimes wished to range; yet other times
I changed my mind, considering much too daring
for one to try to take in everything,
who failed to understand the very smallest,
the easiest part
of those effects of nature
that lie so close at hand; (189)

As stated before, Trueblood over-identifies the rhetorical "I" with the poetic voice, and with Sor Juana in his translation, although he distinguishes between the levels of narrated experience and metaphorical description of those experiences in his introduction. While dismantling an overall structural trope of the poem, therefore affecting meaning for the new reader, this also greatly diminishes the impactful ending when the *yo* finally inserts itself into the poem, showing the full integration of the nocturnal quest taken by the mind/soul (logic and intuition) with the poetic voice, now sexed (not necessarily gendered).

Building the Pyramid

The poem's opening establishes the Baroque trope of (cyclical) movement which ends with that awakened "I," as well as the verbal and emblematic realm in which the poetic voice will be relating the dream. From the first lines, the symbolic figures and images that carry various referents begin here and continue throughout the poem, in a showcase of Sor Juana's affinity for mythology, philosophy, astronomy and theology. They reflect the cultural code in which she lived: much of this is the knowledge of the times, or her syncretization of existing theories and scientific knowns. In this section, as in other areas previously discussed, questions of gender have been (mis)applied too, as well as a general lack of awareness of the various levels of referents being established in this first section, important to the architecture of the poem.

The first 150 lines of the poem are named by Paz as "El dormir"; for Volek are part of "La noche: todo duerme"; Georgina Sabàt de Rivers prefers "Prólogo: Noche y sueño del cosmos." It is like a prologue because it sets the scene that is going to leave the soul free to soar, the sleep of the material and corporeal world, including human beings. According to Paz, the worldview of the epoch was that a prerequisite for the soul to free itself from the body is that it must be in a state of rest, or sleeping. In this text, the dream also represents a provisional death that allows for the liberation of the provisional soul (Paz 485). I recognize that the connection between death and sleep is nothing new within this poem, but it is relevant in terms of the ways in which the possible referents and selection of new signs in English are multiplied. Buxó warns that although the reader is pulled into an oneiric landscape, "las imágenes poéticas del *Sueño* no son precisamente ininterpretables por causa de la vaguedad o indeterminación de sus referentes objetivos,

como ocurre normalmente a quien recuerda sus sueños, sino por el contrario, perfectamente definidas en su configuración y, por ende, en sus referencias culturales” (“El arte” 327).

Baroque language is an architectural language within a stratified, symbolic—sometimes described as *hieroglyphic* (see Checa, Buxó)—society. Literary structures of the epoch often followed a rigorous architecture as well, adding to the game between content and form, as seen for example in the employment of anagrams in poetry. The game in Baroque culture, as Maravall points out, is a part of fortune and occasion, occurrences in life that give new perspective and can grant access to reality or truth (if the right game is played when fortune shows itself through occasion). The nocturnal setting is the large framework within which Sor Juana will build her series of stratifications: the stages of night, of sleep and dreams, and ways of knowing and classifying reality. The nocturnal reference is not sinister, then, not a “limitation put on the pursuit of knowledge and science by the powers that be,” as Electa Arenal suggests (“Where Woman” 129–30); nor is it representative of Harss’ “Dark Empress and other female figures that are floating self-images do speak for Sor Juana in her guilty vanity” (Dark Empress is his translation for night in the last section of the poem when the allegorical forces of dawn temporarily defeat those of night); nor are the abundance of feminine nouns, such as night (personified at the end) or the pyramid, utilized as a means to establish a gender war or “a universe where woman rules as a cosmic force” (Sabat-Rivers “Feminist Rereading” 146). These are instead part of the poem’s architecture; the night is half of one of many dialectic binaries that play into the poetic voice’s baroque perspectivist and relativist view on knowing the essence of reality.

Within night is another dialectic binary: the pyramidal shadow that comes up from Earth (darkness), but cannot reach the light of night: the stars, and the mythological personified moon. Darkness and light are both feminine nouns in Spanish, and are opposing—and at the same time complementing—forces in the architectural framework of the poem. Sor Juana breaks the night into its various components as she does with the material world; later in this same section she relates night to a male god, Harpocrates, the god of silence, and whose laws all must obey. It becomes part of this section’s allegory of the sublunary world asleep; even the winds obey the laws of silence, their own form of sleep. Even in the *Respuesta*, Sor Juana uses the image of the pyramid when talking about observing phenomena in the natural world as a method for learning (when her books were prohibited from her). The pyramid becomes symbolic of visual perspectives and of the *engaño/desengaño* of human physical and metaphorical vision: straight lines in a square room can appear as pyramidal at a distance, “Y discurría si sería esta la razón que obligó a los antiguos a dudar si el mundo era esférico o no. Porque, aunque lo parece, podía ser engaño de la vista, demostrando concavidades donde pudiera no haberlas” (*Obras completas* 838).

In the first lines, in which night does not actually fall upon the Earth, but instead the nocturnal shadow rises up from the sublunary world toward the stars, a movement that the soul of the poetic voice will imitate, Buxó comments on the importance of the multiple verbal and cultural referents:

...aparte de otras, las dos dimensiones semánticas destacadas por Boccaccio en su interpretación del mito: los aspectos naturales del fenómeno astral (aquella pirámide de sombra que emerge del hemisferio terrestre abandonado por el sol y que pretende “escalar” hasta la luna y las distantes estrellas pero que, al final del poema, es perseguida y ahuyentada

por el sol naciente) y las implicaciones morales de aquellos habitantes de la noche—lechuzas, murciélagos, búhos metamorfoseados en aves funestas en castigo por diversas transgresiones a una ley u orden moral establecido. (Buxó, “Arte” 340)

The notion of a nocturnal shadow that originates in the sublunary world was part of the philosophical, theological and astronomical knowledge at that time, as Joseph de Acosta points out: “la noche ninguna otra cosa es sino la oscuridad causada por la sombra de la Tierra” (63). On the other hand, the hieroglyph of the pyramid has a double function in the poem, as a representation of the rise of night and the anabasis dream that will occur, but also as a conceit of the epoch, of the symbolic Baroque society. Fernando Checa in his article “Arquitectura efímera e imagen del poder,” points out that in terms of the pyramids, there is a “carácter funerario y sacro de esta forma geométrica” (266) and that “En este repertorio de tópicos barrocos en torno a la muerte...El motivo que se elige para que recordamos esta idea tiene igualmente que ver con la arquitectura: la contemplación de sepulcros y panteones” (273). Pyramidal funeral pyres were constructed to honor the high-society dead, so the pyramid in *El sueño* not only relates the symbolic hieroglyph of knowledge (Egyptian or indigenous), but also of a tomb or final resting place in ancient and contemporary (to her) intellectual/elite societies, or in the case of the poem, the provisional death that allows the soul’s flight.

These aspects of the Content (C₁) that are part of the referent in the original—and its cultural code—are all necessary to be able to transmit the allegorical sense of the poem, to set the scene for what will come later within and after the first section, and to highlight the various semantic and emblematic referents characteristic of Sor Juana and her masterpiece. Therein lies the necessity to create an analogous or aesthetically

congruent translation. Following are the first four lines of the original poem, accompanied in Spanish by my untangling of the syntax, and each translator's rendering of those important opening lines:

<p><i>Piramidal, funesta, de la tierra nacida sombra, al Cielo encaminaba de vanos obeliscos punta altiva, escalar pretendiendo las Estrellas;</i></p> <p>([una/la] funesta sombra, nacida de la tierra, encaminaba vanos obeliscos de punta altiva al Cielo, pretendiendo escalar las Estrellas)</p>	<p>An earth-born shadow, like a dismal cone, Directing to the sky the loftiest Point of its empty obelisks, appeared Presumptuous to scale the starry heights; -Cunningham (1967-68)</p>
<p>Pyramidal death born shadow of earth aimed at Heaven, its proud point of vain obelisks pretending to scale the Stars; -Campion (1983)</p>	<p>Pyramidal, doleful, mournful shadow born of the earth, the haughty culmination of vain obelisks thrust toward the Heavens, attempting to ascend and touch the Stars -Sayers Peden (1985/1997)</p>
<p>A shadow born of Earth, bleak pyramid, vain obelisk, pretending to scale Heaven pointed to the stars; -Hars (1986)</p>	<p>Pyramidal, lugubrious, a shadow born of earth pushed heavenward its towering tips like vacuous obelisks bent on scaling stars, -Trueblood (1988)</p>

The image being created is also structuring the frame in which the poetic voice's soul will soar: 1) There is a shadow shaped like a pyramid, 1a) which is like a tomb, 1b) which is also symbolic of ancient forms of knowing, 1c) which is also like the pattern of movement of the soul's permanent flight after death, 1d) which is parallel to its temporary flight (toward truth/illumination/God) during provisional death (sleep); 1e) which ultimately reflects the organization of the material and spiritual planes all

ascending toward one point/Author;⁷ 2) the fatal (fated) shadow is born of the earth (night begins to spread up from the sublunary world); 3) the shadow then guides/aims vain, lofty obelisks toward the heavens (vain because they are shadows and because they must obey the natural laws, i.e., they will not be able to reach/extinguish the light of the stars or the moon, but must stay in the sublunary world in silence, as evidenced by the lines that follow in this section); 4) these vain obelisks sent up by the pyramidal shadow are hoping and trying to scale the stars (as will the poetic voice's mind and soul). A translation must convey all of these ideas to properly set up the extended metaphor and its various sub-metaphors found not only in this section, but also throughout the entire poem.

The impactful first word, *piramidal*, is the first brick laid in the poem's architecture, and therefore would ideally be retained in the English version, as Trueblood, Sayers Peden, and Campion did. Cunningham's translation does not manage to overcome the challenge of Sor Juana's language. From the first word, he strays by untangling the syntax and choosing: "An earth-born shadow, like a dismal cone". With the word *cone* in English, the poem loses all levels of referents in Spanish, not only the object, but the cultural and emblematic connotations as well (although Alatorre believes the shape to actually be conical, but decides Sor Juana liked the sound of *piramidal* better, as he states in a footnote to his edition of the *Sueño*). The three who began with "Pyramidal" quickly lost the other associations or tone/content as established in the original. Trueblood immediately follows with "lugubrious," an unpoetic and somewhat labored choice that loses the death association with *funesta*. Sayers Peden uses "doleful" and "mournful," but

⁷ In the *Respuesta* Sor Juana writes: "Todas las cosas salen de Dios, que es el centro a un tiempo y la circunferencia de donde salen y donde paran todas las líneas creadas" (OC 833).

the pyramid becomes a product of, or a “*haughty* culmination of vain obelisks,” thrust upward by some unseen force, a subtle difference from the use of the transitive verb “encaminar” in Spanish, in which the shadow (i.e. terrestrial night) is the subject, directing other shadows (vain obelisks) toward the stars in a metonymic relationship with night. She captures one of the possible meanings of *funesta*, breaking it into two words (doleful and mournful) but a better option would be a word in English like *fatal* that implies death and also fate or twists of fortune, so important to the Baroque worldview.

Campion changes the semantics and inexplicably the shadow becomes “death born.” He retains the referents of the object “pyramid” and some of the implications of *funesta*, but now *altiva* becomes “proud” as it was “haughty” with Sayers Peden, losing the other implication in Spanish of being high/tall points. Cunningham employs “lofty,” the only word in English that conveys all of the possible referents of *altiva*, both proud/arrogant and elevated/tall, along with idealistic. However, by trying to “modernize” the syntax for the new reader, Cunningham is forced to use “loftiest point” (losing the other referents) and later “appeared presumptuous” for *pretender*. *Pretender* is another key word in this section, as it can mean pretend (appear/seem), attempt, want/desire, or court/woo. “Attempt,” utilized by Sayers Peden, is probably the word in these English translations that best conveys simultaneously wanting and trying to scale the stars.

These examples also show the variations in metrics employed by the translators, as well as their distinct ways of intending to save or untangle the hyperbaton that envelopes the ideas presented in the poem. Just from analyzing a few of the lexical and syntactic choices in these lines, the complexities of Sor Juana’s word games are apparent,

and they will multiply, bifurcate, and spiral back on themselves throughout the 975-line poem. Therefore, every choice becomes extremely important, from the first word on in creating an analogous architecture or framework for the poetic voice and for the experiences of the mind/soul it will relate. These also create distances from the figure of the poet herself, creating the textual level for the rhetorical *yo* (not to be confused with Sor Juana herself) as discussed earlier in relation to the poem and translations.

Sor Juana's Answer

The *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* by Sor Juana, written in 1691 and published posthumously in 1700, was discussed earlier in this chapter in context of criticism wanting to turn it into her autobiography. While it is a direct reply to the prologue/letter written by “Sor Filotea de la Cruz” (Bishop Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz) that accompanied the publication of her *Carta atenagórica*, it could also be seen as a pre-emptive answer, a sort of calling into account her own life and therefore a testimony of how she views and operates within the world. She is especially interested in describing her process of learning and her natural (read: *God-given*) talent for letters and erudition. There is even a summarization of the entire process described in *El sueño*, presented as Sor Juana's own experience with learning:

Y más, señora mía: que ni aun el sueño se libró de este continuo movimiento de mi imaginativa; antes suele obrar en él más libre y desembarazada, confiriendo con mayor claridad y sosiego las especies que ha conservado del día, arguyendo, haciendo versos, de que os pudiera hacer un catálogo muy grande, y de algunas razones y delgadezas que he alcanzado dormida mejor que despierta...[eso es] todo mi natural y del principio, medios y estado de mis estudios. (*OC* 839)

Here is an example where other texts by the same author can become useful in the exegesis of one particular text, and become part of the hermeneutic spiral of interpretation. Exegesis, as stated before, is an extremely important part of translation and in determining how that translation will fit into critical dialogue. Translations can call attention to the minutiae of the original text, to details, tensions, and its ‘indeterminacies’ (to use Ingarden’s term), and in this sense works toward ‘completion,’ or as Rosario Ferré sees it, the translator becomes a telescopic lens for the writer. In the case of the *Respuesta*, this telescopic lens becomes part of the extra-textual material in the translation, that is, the introductions, translator’s notes, and footnotes or endnotes that accompany each one.

While the prose follows a dense Baroque syntax, and some sentences contain an excess of subordinate clauses, the translations as a whole seem to better convey the substance or *purport* (Hjelmslev’s term) of the original. This could in fact be a testament to the strength of the original (as well as *El sueño*), in which the original can survive even some major deficiencies in its translations. Ortega states that, “la lengua no sólo pone dificultades a la expresión de ciertos pensamientos, sino que estorba la recepción de otros, paraliza nuestra inteligencia en ciertas direcciones” (*Miseria* 443). These difficulties can equate to the schematized indeterminacies of Ingarden, or for Iser, the reader is transcendental and can understand the norms and values of these other eras by experiencing the text and its extra-textual elements, or cultural context. The text is guiding the reader in its own construction and interpretation. Ideally, the same indeterminacies would exist within both versions of the text (original and translation), but many times in the translations of the *Respuesta*, particularly in explanatory extra-textual

material, the translators attempt to make those indeterminacies explicit instead of leaving the reader to be guided by the “intentional object” of the text. Steiner calls “magnification” a “subtler form of treason” (422). We have seen examples of this above, as discussed in relation to modernizing criticism and the over-emphasis on the autobiographical nature of the polemic letter.

Feminist studies, in particular, have focused on the role of gender in this letter, as it is widely considered to be more or less a defense of the rights of women to education. Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell published their critical translation in 1994 through The Feminist Press at CUNY, and state in the preface that the “translation that follows is the first English version of the *Respuesta* to focus, as *Sor Juana* does in the original, on gender” (viii, my emphasis), and that because Sor Juana “wrote as a woman aware of her gender status and because she intended her arguments to be applied on behalf of other women *as women*, she is certainly a precursor to worldviews and activities we call feminist” (ix) as a means of justifying the application of the anachronistic term “feminism.” Later they declare that “[t]o preserve Sor Juana’s meaningful ambiguities intact, her translator must know the contexts on which they play and must keep that play between text and contexts in the translated version,” (ix), a creed to which they won’t adhere when determining the “meaningful ambiguities” or concretizing the indeterminacies on behalf of the new reader. Stating that the original focuses on gender is the first example of this.

As discussed before, Sor Juana had different views on biological sex versus social roles (or gender), and viewed her own gender as neuter, while recognizing her biological sex as female. The focus is not exactly on gender, but on biological sex. In broader terms,

it is a Baroque argument on the ever-changing relationship between appearances (being female, in this case) and essences (genderless soul). As knowledge enters through the genderless/sexless soul and becomes integrated into the mind/body (a process we have seen described poetically in *El sueño*), then biological sex does not matter in terms of erudition. Sor Juana's argument implicitly states that gender roles should be reconsidered (i.e., women should be able to teach other women, instead of not at all); her explicit argument is not as democratic as modern feminist interpretations would have it, but is in fact nuanced with a certain elitism:

...que el estudiar, escribir y enseñar privadamente, no sólo les es lícito [a las mujeres], pero muy provechoso y útil; claro está que esto no se debe entender con todas, sino con aquellas a quienes hubiere Dios dotado de especial virtud y prudencia y que fueren muy provecas y eruditas y tuvieren el talento y requisitos necesarios para tan sagrado empleo. Y esto es tan justo que *no sólo a las mujeres*, que por tan ineptas están tenidas, *sino a los hombres*, que con sólo serlo piensan que son sabios, *se había de prohibir la interpretación de las Sagradas Letras, en no siendo muy doctos y virtuosos y de ingenios dóciles y bien inclinados...*" (OC 840, my emphasis)

Not only is she not arguing for a *universal* right of women to education, but also she does not even believe that all *people* have the right to study. In fact, it is not a right at all; it is a talent, and a dangerous one at that when in the wrong hands. A more accurate assessment of her argument would be that women with talents have the right to be part of the intellectual elite, can be considered as erudite, and a woman writing should not be considered offensive.

Later in this argument, emphasizing the amount of literary garbage floating around due to unchecked, untalented (men) writing, Sor Juana declares "¡Oh si todos—y yo la primera, que soy una ignorante—nos tomásemos la medida al talento antes de

estudiar, y lo peor es, de escribir con ambiciosa codicia de igualar y aun de exceder a otros, qué poco ánimo nos quedara y de cuántos errores no excusáramos y cuántas torcidas inteligencias que andan por ahí no anduvieran!” (OC 841). The translations of this sentence are as follows:

Oh, that each of us—I, being ignorant, the first—should take the measure of our talents before we study or, more important, write with the covetous ambition to equal and even surpass others, how little spirit we should have for it, and how many errors we should avoid, and how many tortured intellects of which we have experience, we should have had no experience!

—Margaret Sayers Peden p.131-33 (1982), p.51 (1997)

Oh, if all of us—and myself first of all, *weak woman that I am*—would size up our talents before undertaking study and, even more, before writing out of a driving ambition to equal and even excel others, how little heart we would have left for it, how many errors we would spare ourselves, and how many wrong interpretations now making the rounds would not be circulating!

—Alan Trueblood (1988) p.231

Oh, that all *men*—and I, who am but *an ignorant woman*, first of all*—might take the measure of our abilities before setting out to study and, what is worse, to write, in our jealous aspiration to equal and even surpass others. How little boldness would we summon, how many errors we might avoid, and how many distorted interpretations now noised abroad should be noised no further!

—Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell (1994) p.83

*[endnote]: SJ points up to the false inclusiveness of the generic masculine and makes fun of its exclusions in this phrase (131)

Contextually, one can see in the emphasized variations how criticism has affected subsequent translations, as the translators move from an unmarked language (neuter gender) in Margaret Sayers Peden’s translation, to a marked language (emphasis on males versus females) in Arenal and Powell. That is, they have concretized a specific

indeterminacy on behalf of the reader, adding an explicatory note. They consider *todos* to be a “generic masculine” meaning “men,” while Sor Juana has already established that she is including both sexes, but her focus is on a neuter idea of talent/ability.

Furthermore, *todos* is actually unmarked (neuter) and therefore inclusive, while *todas* would be the marked and therefore exclusive form of the pronoun. This shows a misunderstanding of a basic function of the Spanish language. Trueblood’s translation is intermediary in its concretization; he leaves *todos* neuter in English, but overemphasizes *una ignorante* by using “weak woman that I am.” *Una* is necessitated in Spanish as articles and adjectives must agree in gender with the noun they modify (she is referring to herself, feminine), and Sor Juana’s use of it here is not to differentiate herself as a weak woman, but instead as a talent who must recognize her own limitations (*una persona ignorante*) when setting educational goals for herself (an idea she is continuing from the previous paragraph). In this instance, Trueblood’s and Arenal/Powell’s translations have created an emphasis on gender not present in the original and that detracts from, interrupts even, the original argument, as at this moment Sor Juana has already set up a neuter space for erudition and woman’s ability to access it.

Sor Juana emphasizes the importance of cultural context in the *Respuesta*, for example, when continuing this argument and interpreting the Church’s allowance of women to study and teach (to other women) scripture. The success of her argument is based on her use and understanding of rhetoric from the time, and any good exegesis of this text demand sensitivity to that rhetoric. The most common pitfall is to misunderstand her tone as flippant, sardonic, aggressive, or excessively debasing, for example, in the first section of the letter. As I discussed earlier, misunderstandings of Baroque rhetorical

devices can also lead to interpretations of the text as purely autobiographical, or as a sincere confession, when in fact it was carefully calculated. As Ortega insisted, the reader/translator, must access, and bring the new reader toward the author's own language. Baroque rhetoric is already transgressive, and Sor Juana is being doubly transgressive by writing to a male ecclesiastical superior as if she were another nun (in the simulacrum mentioned earlier in Volek's "La señora y la ilustre fregona..."). She is playing a Baroque game, and using various extremes of rhetoric (humility to sharp self-defense, see Volek p.347) to create a framework within which she can voice her philosophy of learning, which in itself becomes her self-defense for dedicating herself to letters. Rosa Perelmuter breaks the letter into five parts, the first two of which many interpret to be a strange or excessive humility: salutation, *captatio benevolentiae*, narration, petition, and conclusion (152). She combines forensic discourse with the rhetoric of a familiar letter, appealing to ethos as mandated by Aristotle, to demonstrate her virtue (152–56). The narration leads up to her proof, demonstrating that: 1) the *Carta atenagórica* was not a crime; 2) writing poetry is not a crime; 3) writing both and being a woman is not a crime, either (Perelmuter 157). I would add in tandem with the small section analyzed earlier, that writing without talent, or intelligence, *would be* a crime.

In the end, as Volek declares, "su fin y su tema final es la *libertad humana*" ("La señora" 348). Once again her concern for woman is enveloped in a larger theme of free will, of independence, and on a much more metaphysical level, various paths that can all lead to the same Source. The difficulty for some modern critics in recognizing the careful rhetorical structures being followed by Sor Juana can easily lead to misinterpretations of her, or to misapplications of her form of dialectic. There is also the danger of

overidentification: between reader and author, author and text, translator and text, or translator and reader in all of their varying degrees. Sor Juana's texts reflect Maravall's assertions that "el Barroco como primera fase, crítica, insuficiente, confusa, en el proceso de formación de la mentalidad moderna" and that "su condición de modernidad es un factor de la mentalidad barroca" (436, 441). A dynamic and historicist view of reality is then a precursor to living with a "modern condition," while a Baroque inheritance tinges Latin American culture even to the present (see for example Lezama Lima, *La expresión americana*). Sor Juana becomes a figure, from our modern condition, an allegory of that time, of standing between the sacred and the profane—in her eyes, unifying them, in ours, rebelliously separating them. The translator must allow the new reader to dive into her rhetoric, into her emblematic world, confusing as it may be. Signs of modernity should show through as they are in the text, dialectic explorations and empirically derived conclusions (based on her own experiences of learning), and not modernized or actualized by the translator for the reader.

CHAPTER THREE:

Political Literature and Literary Politics: A Meditation on Translating

José Martí's *Nuestra América*

Oculto en mi pecho bravo
La pena que me lo hiera:
El hijo de un pueblo esclavo
Vive por él, calla y muere.
(José Martí, Poema I, *Versos sencillos*)

The poet and the seer are blind so that they may, by the antennae of speech, see further.
(George Steiner, *After Babel*)

José Martí, Latin America's 'Apostle', is a widely studied figure whose impact extends far beyond the limits of Cuban or Latin American literature and poetry, into the worlds of transnational journalism, translation, education, political science, history, philosophy, cultural anthropology and even visual arts. He is known primarily in literary criticism for debuting *modernista* aesthetics with the publication of *Ismaelillo* in 1882⁸ and culminating in *Versos sencillos* from 1891, as well as for his consistent journalistic (including his chronicles), and essayistic production throughout that time. Martí scholarship often divorces the literary from the political, or briefly mentions one in context of the other, compartmentalizing at the expense of one or both. He is either the sensitive but militant *Modernista* poet,⁹ or the father of Yankee anti-imperialism (seen in post-modern criticism as simultaneously attempting to decolonize Cuba and Latin

⁸ See Enrico Mario Santí and Iván Schulman for arguments establishing *Ismaelillo* as the first *modernista* book of verse.

⁹ Fina García Marruz and Cintio Vitier have explored the idea of the *militancia del amor* in Martí.

America). The grandiloquence of his prose reminds the reader of the closeness of his Baroque inheritance; Luis Rafael and Ángel Esteban point out that Martí is a “[d]eudor del barroco, yuxtapone ideas y símbolos, crea imágenes cromáticas y un discurso en general aforístico, sugerente y de *múltiples connotaciones semánticas*, preocupado de la musicalidad y el ritmo” (x, my emphasis). Juxtaposition, contradiction, binaries, duality and polysemy are key features of Martí’s revolutionary aesthetics, and of his revolutionary ideological positions in general, which often are expressed in dialectical arguments that carry multiple and parallel meanings, offering difficulties for readers who share his native tongue, and even more so for a reader also tasked with translating his texts into another language, era and culture.

These contradictions are also manifest in the reception of Martí, particularly throughout the twentieth century, as he has become mythologized as hero, martyr, redeemer, prophet and apostle, and on the other hand, in context of his populist legacy or as a *caudillo cultural* (Krauze, *Redentores*). Cintio Vitier asserts that Martí is “el padre del antiimperialismo latinoamericano” and that “Fidel Castro . . . pudo decir con verdad que Martí era el ‘autor intelectual’ de aquel movimiento,” that is, the Cuban Revolution (*Temas* 91). However, Enrico Mario Santí points out that political regimes have appropriated the figure of Martí on an as-needed basis to justify their actions with ideology (110). Belnap and Fernández are astute in their observation that as a “national icon in Cuba’s ideological apparatus,” since 1959 supporters and detractors of the Cuban Revolution have either portrayed him as a proto-socialist or a democratic liberal, respectively, while both citing him as their “intellectual ancestor” (3). Martí might smile

at the irony and the sample of proof that words and ideas have the mightiest reach across time and societies.

One must question if the power of Martí's texts lies in the meaning and intention of the author, or the varied, imbued meanings ascribed by readers—or in the moments of tension between them. Scholars concerned with cultural studies and Latin Americanism impose various iterations of twentieth- and twenty-first-century identity politics onto his writings; particularly the celebrated essay *Nuestra América*. This seminal essay, first published in *La Revista Ilustrada* in New York on January 1, 1891, and again on the 30th of that month in *El Partido Liberal* in Mexico, stands as a prophet and martyr's wake-up call to the new generation in Latin America, on the cusp of the next millennium and facing the threat of imperialistic ambitions. Those ambitions emanate from threatening powers little known to the vast majority of the *campesino* population, who are generally “ignorant of the comets' cosmic scuffle, hurtling through the sleepy air, devouring worlds.”¹⁰ This image, along with that of the giant in seven-league boots, set the stage: an impassioned, sometimes visceral and volatile prose, densely populated with metaphors, and masked behind a voice of reason which paints a common threat and an idealized population capable of combatting that threat—the very same “natural man” who is ignorant of the comets. This in turn creates an antithetical ontological exploration, which results in advocating for both an essentialist, homogenous Latin American political identity and for preserving individual cultural identities (more specifically, *cubanidad*), filtered through the lens of Cuba, Martí's homeland. A frustration with the incongruity between beliefs, values, and circumstances manifests in the contradictions and visceral

¹⁰ All renderings in English are mine, unless otherwise noted. See Appendix I for my full translation of *Our America*.

arguments in his writing: behind the mask of optimism is fear for Our America's future, fear of the threat of effeminate and weak traitors, of repetition of the past, of imported ideas, governments and even social structures. Underlying this is another layer: the rhetorical structure of the essay; the language, symbols and metaphors employed that allow the text to endure and adapt. It is written by an ideologue in the language of transcendence. Alas, no one is a prophet in his own land, and the words destined for Martí's idealized *madre patria* must be written from his 15-year exile in New York, in the "entrails" of the sleeping (or awake and roving?) giant.

As is well known and documented by Martí and others, he spent a good deal of his life exiled from his beloved Cuba, returning for battle and his death in 1895, essentially sealing his fate as prophet and martyr. Cintio Vitier notes that Martí's "concepción americana" began during his time in Mexico and Guatemala (1875–1878), where he bore witness to despotism in Guatemala, and later *caudillismo* in Venezuela (*Temas* 75–79). The United States, then, gave him the time, distance, and opportunity to calibrate the situation in which Latin American countries found themselves in their own post-independence processes of auto-liberation from colonial structures (Vitier, *Temas* 81–82). As these various forms of tyranny and echoes of colonialism are symptomatic, for Martí, of imported governments and philosophies, "se trata, pues, de rescatar la originalidad como prenda, *precisamente de la universalidad*; y de entrar en la vía del *desarrollo moderno*, única que puede resolver los problemas masivos, *sin perder el rostro*" (Vitier, *Temas* 80, my emphasis). Vitier notes, then, an emphasis on the particular within the universal, maintaining an autochthonous identity while becoming modern—that is, entering the global, industrial economy. This is a philosophy that will guide

identity politics in Latin America for some time, and which some cultural studies scholars will cite as a precursor to postcolonial theories later born out of the Indian subcontinent.

Charles Hatfield discusses Martí and Latin Americanism in *The Limits of Identity: Politics and Poetics in Latin America*, reading *Nuestra América* as an anti-universalist text, and also recounting the spiraling and incongruous history of critical reactions to the text. Hatfield's focuses on race in what he sees as Martí's "post-identitarian" politics (19), in which ideologies transcend beyond material (read, corporeal) identity. That is, when Martí presents the tautological claim that "There is no hatred among races because there are no races," he is "positing the universality of [disembodied] *cubanidad* based on ideology" (Hatfield 21). Ironically, he uses only material identity markers to metaphorically reference the current inner workings of Our America, such as European vestment and the apron of Our America's "Indian" mother. Hatfield's argument eventually tangles itself up, mirroring a surface-level observation of the contradictions in Martí's essay, and basically relies on circular logic to prove his points. While Martí *does* claim that there are no races, his entire essay is based on categorizing a country's "natural elements": the "natural man" (read: indigenous), the "Indian," "Creole," and "Negro"—all of whom are identified in racialized terminology. This idea of "natural elements" will form the basis of essentialist identity politics in Latin America, based on some sort of *a priori* identity shared by a given population. This shared identity then constitutes the given population's culture, as opposed to identity being constituted by the surrounding culture. The important element here is that *culture can be created* and should reflect the shared identity. This essentialist attitude will later inform Latin American cultural studies

coated in *macondismo*, and on a rhetorical level is also made visible in some of the surreal imagery employed by Martí, as I will explore below.

The rhetoric he employs in regards to race and a country's "natural elements" has manifold purposes in the context of his times. As George Steiner points out, "Time moves through every feature of language as a shaping force. No true understanding can arise from synchronic abstraction" (114). With a diachronic view in mind, this essay could be seen as a culmination of reactions to a century of changing thought and political statuses across Latin America, as Martí dialogues with his contemporaries and with Latin American history: with 19th-century Argentine intellectual and eventual president, Domingo Faustino Sarmiento ("There is no battle between civilization and barbarism, but between false erudition and Nature"); or referencing Simón Bolívar and General José de San Martín ("...nations began to arise, the Venezuelans in the North and the Argentines in the South. When the two heroes clashed, and the Continent was going to tremble, one, who was not the lesser man, gave up the reins."). During his generalized, quasi-metaphoric recounting of the processes of independence across Latin America, Martí criticizes the influx of foreign thought and influence and advocates for a turning inward, which is not new rhetoric. Hatfield points out that, "Beginning in the 1860s, the idea that the region's problems would be solved by confronting and fully understanding national and regional particularities was consolidated around the rise of positivism" (16), questioning the validity of the presupposed universality of imported political structures. This, in turn, influences ideas about racial superiority/inferiority, and is anti-universalist in its relativist focus on the particular—or regional differences—, which establishes a

false correlation between racial constitution and its manifestation through historical events.

Therefore, Martí is reacting to this prevailing thought in his politics. Fear after slave revolts in Haiti and of the large African-origin population in Cuba “had been one of the main obstacles to the island’s independence” (Hatfield 17). The goal is to convince that this perceived impediment to independence is actually a fiction shaped by rhetoric, a fiction that Martí wants to refute through his own rhetoric and semantic games. In his essay, “‘Nuestra América’ y la crisis del latinoamericanismo,” Enrico Mario Santí nuances this argument and criticizes Vitier and others for reducing the essay to a mere anti-imperialist pamphlet (111). Putting the text into the context of Martí’s isolation from exile and (peripheral and unsatisfactory) participation in the Pan-American Conferences of 1889–1890, Santí perceives a strong ambivalence toward Latin Americanism in the essay’s rhetoric. He references the Panamanian Conference of 1826 convened by Bolívar (the “lesser man”), in which it was decided that independence could not reach Cuba (Santí 107). The idea of Latin Americanism becomes a fiction for the abandoned colonial island, making it that much more vulnerable to possible United States annexation. To explain the motivation, or authorial intention of the work, Santí draws parallels between the exile of the man and the metaphorical exile of his country, left to defend itself against the giant in seven-league boots:

El aislamiento de Martí, y por ende, el aislamiento de su patria, Cuba, dentro del llamado ‘rpto de nobleza’ del Panamericanismo, o como lo llamaré aquí, del *Latinoamericanismo*: la ficción piadosa de unidad continental Precisamente porque Martí se ve a sí mismo como un paradójico ‘americano sin patria,’ suspendido en el limbo intermedio de la piedad de sus colegas y la profecía histórica, busca refugio en lo que él mismo llamó ‘Nuestra América’. (103; 108)

The essay's seemingly incongruous rhetoric allows for all of these readings on a superficial level, but the nuance Santí adds is important in giving cohesion to Martí's argument. That is, it is both an anti-imperialist argument and a call for reformation of Latin Americanism, a sort of pleading of his case to all parties who were obstructing the liberation of his beloved island. But, for all his fervor, he offers no concrete plan for Latin America, Our America. His goal is personal and political; his means are literary; and what ostensibly is a rational argument actually is built in what Octavio Paz would call the world of the analogy. Here is a true meeting of politics and poetics.

The Politics of Clothing, or Martí's "Hemp Sandals"

The translations of *Nuestra América*, specifically to English, add to the hermeneutic spiral of criticism. Firstly, if "Desde el mismo título el ensayo está dirigido al lector latinoamericano" (Santí 110), how does that affect the ways in which a translator approaches the text? That has interesting implications for the title, since for an English-speaking reader "Our America" would read as an inclusive statement, when in fact it is intended for Latin America. However, all translations, including my own, choose to stick with the literally-translated title, as context quickly dispels that misreading and an alternative would stray too far from the intended emphasis by the author of the original (that is, advocating for his brand of *cubanidad* and an inclusive Latin Americanism). For the purposes of this chapter, and when doing my own translation, I examined the four others that I could find in English: by Juan de Onís (1953); by Elinor Randall (1977), reappearing again in Deborah Shnookal and Mirta Muñiz (2007), with occasional

changes; and by Esther Allen (2002). My own (unpublished) translation can be found in Appendix I.

As with the translations of Sor Juana studied in the previous chapter, the extra-textual material included with the translation, such as the introductions and footnotes or endnotes, can provide further insight into the translations themselves. These translations all emphasize the political over the literary aspects of the original, and interestingly, only one of them—Allen’s—is catalogued as “Cuban Literature,” using the Library of Congress classification system. The other three are housed in “History of the Americas”—Juan de Onís’ version is under “America,” while the Randall/Shnookal and Muñiz versions are within the “Latin America. Spanish America” section of “History of the Americas.” The prevailing perception of this text, then, is as an historical, political document. The following excerpts from the introductions emphasize the same:

In this important work, Martí *outlined what constituted a full program of government* for the Spanish-American peoples. (Philip S. Foner, Randall’s translation, p. 25, my emphasis)

Written during the period of the formation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, this article presents the *ethical and political principles of the future Cuban Republic*. (Randall’s translation in Shnookal and Muñiz 120, my emphasis)

This essay is Martí’s most frequently cited and anthologized work. It represents the culmination of a lifetime’s reflection on Latin America, its *essential unity*, and its relationship to the United States, and it *deliberately echoes and carries forward Latin American liberator Simon Bolivar’s* crucial 1815 “Letter to a Jamaican Gentleman,” which also insisted on the importance of developing systems of government appropriate to a country, rather than importing them from the outside. (Allen 288, my emphasis)

Each of these passages contain threads of the most common interpretations of *Nuestra América* in terms of its purpose and central themes, specifically the idea that Martí actually outlined a plan for government; Latin America's "essential unity" based presumably on its "essential" identity (i.e. *macondismo*); and the "political principles for the future Cuban Republic," that is, the work of a prophet, although, as we can see from Santí and others, Martí was writing from a place of fear from Latin America turning its back and the United States standing by to annex the island. Martí even disputes the idea of a homogenous identity at the same time that he advocates for Cuba's inclusion when he recognizes: "From *such disparate factors*, never, in less historic time, have such advanced and solid nations been forged," highlighting the *essential differences* of the regions that have managed to work toward the common goal of independence, not fully realized due to a shared colonial heritage and the *caudillismo* infecting the lands.

However, the seer, the poet, is at work in this essay: more than reading a well-reasoned political treatise, one is swept through a whirlwind of evolving metonymic symbols and metaphors, such as the recurring *patria*, personified and feminine, and articles of clothing and objects (imported or indigenous) associated with various historical and sociological aspects of that patria. They act as signs with changing referents, such as the priest and banner of the Virgin (the Catholic Church) that helped liberate Mexico, which later becomes the foreign prebendary and the cassock against which reason must fight, the inheritance of the new nations, and, for Martí, not a manifestation of their natural identity. He also utilizes clothing as a stand-in for identity, and more notably for the (forced) hybridity of Latin American identity. Jeffrey Belnap's essay, "Headbands, Hemp Sandals, and Headdresses: The Dialectics of Dress and Self-

Conception in Martí's 'Our America'" is introduced in the anthology by highlighting Belnap's interest in "Martí's metaphors of dress, images Martí uses to articulate the tension between the pathological self-understanding produced by Eurocentric education and what he sees as a socially responsible alignment with America's objective cultural circumstances" (Belnap and Fernández 16). "Objective cultural circumstances" is a phrase that gives pause, as culture is generally described in subjective terms, such as the metonyms of "mismatched and incongruous costumes" that are a manifestation of a "misapprehended self-conception and incongruous appearance" (Belnap 193; 198). However, the title of his article is evidence of misunderstanding in translation causing inaccuracies in criticism, as was also explored with Sor Juana and modernizing criticism. Belnap states that he is working from Randall's translation into English. The passage to which he refers is shown below, with its corresponding translations into English:

Éramos una máscara, con los calzones de Inglaterra, el chaleco parisiense, el chaquetón de Norteamérica y la montera de España. . . . Éramos charreteras y togas, en países que venían al mundo con la alpargata en los pies y la vincha en la cabeza. (Martí 149)

We were a masquerade in English trousers, Parisian vest, North American jacket, and Spanish hat. . . . We were all epaulets and tunics in countries that came into the world with hemp sandals on their feet and headbands for hats. (Onís 146)

We were a masquerader in English breeches, Parisian vest, North American jacket, and Spanish cap. . . . As for us, we were nothing but epaulets and professors' gowns in countries that came into the world wearing hemp sandals and headbands. (Randall 91; Shnookal and Muñiz 126)

We were a whole fancy dress ball, in English trousers, a Parisian waistcoat, a North American overcoat and a Spanish bullfighter's hat. . . .

We wore epaulets and judge's robes, in countries that came into the world wearing rope sandals and Indian headbands. (Allen 293)

We were a mask, with English breeches, a Parisian vest, an American short coat and the cap of a Spanish bullfighter. . . . We were epaulets and togas, in countries that came to the world with rope sandals on their feet and headdresses on their heads. (Brown, Appendix I 7–8)

While on the surface all of the translations appear to get the main point across; that is, the masquerade of incongruous and inauthentic dress in Latin America, equated as Belnap states, to the hybrid identity created by the colonial reality. However, the slightest inconsistencies in the translations belie the importance of the metonymy of dress as employed by Martí in connection with his cultural context and in relation to metaphors employed elsewhere in the essay. For example, the *montera de España* is associated with bullfighters, which itself brings up connotations of Spanish culture and tradition, as well as a subtler connotation of a propensity for bloodlust. It covers the American head in a metaphor for the Spanish crown, manifest in lasting colonial structures and clouded thought in Our America. Utilizing “Spanish cap” in English loses these multiple connotations for many English-speaking readers, while adding the qualifier of “bullfighter” lets the translator convey the multiple referents and avoid a possible footnote.

The Parisian vest will be echoed later in the essay when Martí explicitly calls for poetry to “cut its Zorilla-esque mane and hang its red vest on the glorious tree”—that is, a call for change in literary aesthetics and a cessation of mimetic literary production. I will explore this below in more detail in the context of the literary politics of *Nuestra América*. The epaulets and togas are also important in terms of their intratextual

references and metonymic value for imported power structures and sociopolitical histories, respectively. I am the only translator to retain “toga” in the English rendering; the others use “tunics,” “professors’ gowns,” and “judge’s gowns.” However, like the Parisian vest, the toga dialogues with Latin America’s literary and cultural inheritance; that is, the earlier mention of “Our Greece” that “takes priority over the Greece that is not ours” in relation to reforming the education system to be more American-centric instead of Eurocentric. As Belnap notes, these forms of dress (epaulets and togas) are considered to be “artificial,” in contrast to “natural” American dress (193), the rope sandals and headband, symbolic of the “natural” or autochthonous man.

Most notable in these passages is that Onís translates *alpargata* as “hemp sandals,” which possibly influenced Randall’s later translation using the same terminology. In fact, much of Randall’s translation closely resembles that of Onís. According to the *Pequeño Larousse ilustrado*, *alpargata* is defined as “*calzado de tela, con la suela de esparto trenzado*” (cloth/canvas footwear, with woven esparto/straw soles). To speak of hemp fibers, Martí would have indicated it by its name, *cáñamo*. Onís and Randall have committed a philological error by taking liberties with the indicated material of the natural American footwear. This violates Martí’s material representation of the constitution of Latin American identity. A simple encyclopedic search reveals that hemp originated in East Asia, and came to the Americas by way of Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many of the United States’ founding fathers, including George Washington, famously grew and utilized industrial-grade and medicinal hemp; it was mandated by law that the North American colonists should grow India hemp; it was used to manufacture the paper on which is written the Declaration of

Independence; it was even used as an acceptable form of currency for more than two centuries in the colonies and later United States. Aside from its important history in colonial and post-colonial North American society, its connotations today are mostly linked with marijuana, or drug use. A North American, English-speaking reader may make this association, but more importantly, they would make the erroneous connection between Martí's celebrated "natural" elements and the hemp sandal, and perhaps project that error onto the flashy title of a critical study. The error has become part of the hermeneutic spiral.

A Virile Patria is an Authentic Patria

The theme of artificiality versus authenticity presented through incongruous dress is also linked to the recurring figure of the personified patria, as stated above. She is the mother figure that is ultimately being abandoned by those opting for a Europeanized mode of being. In my translation, as in Allen's, we both employ "patria," a word accepted in English, therefore avoiding the diasporic, Peninsular association with "motherland" and the masculine association with a term like "fatherland."¹¹ Although English nouns by and large aren't gendered, using "she/her/herself" instead of "it/its/itself" as pronouns for *patria* emphasizes a feminine association in the English rendering. I reinforce this symbolic relationship by employing "Our America" as a proper noun throughout the essay. Randall's translation once again closely follows that of Onís, opting for the non-gendered "country" and "lands" instead of *patria*, paired with "Our

¹¹ Within this essay's ethos, the patria, Our America, is passive and to be defended from the imposition of more "virile" nations. Paradoxically, to be a patriot within this ethos would embody the virile qualities of the enemy, otherwise risk being an effeminate traitor. Also paradoxically, Our America must be authentic, which is also equated with virility.

America” and “our America,” respectively, and “itself/it” (Randall), or “herself/she” (Onís). Their own incongruity in choosing to personify, or not, fails to maintain the original’s symbolic value and corporeal metonymy: first her bones are being gnawed by destructive insects, or traitors; later she is represented by the Indian apron she wears; then as an ill mother, of whom her son (a traitor), is ashamed and refuses to help (and whose masculinity must therefore be called into question: “So then, who is the real man?”).

As the son who abandons his mother fails in his masculinity, Belnap also points out that the weak, braceleted arms are another example of “failed masculinity” in this essay (195–96). In other words, Martí relies on material “violation(s) of gender norms,” but not in a post-modern sense. In fact, this is where his message of inclusivity ends, as throughout this piece, “the *exterior threat* is coupled with an *interior analogue*” (Belnap 192), the interior analogue being clothed in either gender or culturally “inappropriate” clothing (i.e. the incongruous dress discussed above). These are the threats of which Martí is most passionate and also most adamant in vanquishing from Our America, and therefore he is most viscerally impassioned toward those who don’t support the cause for political and cultural independence, who are generally referred to throughout the essay with disparaging, homophobic epithets. Translators to English have had particular difficulty with the translation of the word *sietemesinos* (literally, those born prematurely, at seven months). Volek addresses the problem and analyzes various attempts to translate the term into English, asserting that Martí equated it’s use in Spain to the use of *gratin* in France for the upper crust, decadent Parisian youth of the epoch, although it is not a perfect analogy to begin with (“*Nuestra América*” 131). These *sietemesinos* are not only weaklings, and in Martí’s macho ethos, therefore effeminate, and *therefore born* traitors

(Volek, “*Nuestra América*” 130–31); there is also an emphasis on farce and pretension versus authenticity, as with the other metonymic symbols throughout the essay, such as the book, the cassock/Church, the artificial lettered man/false erudition, and the Greece that is or is not ours. Authenticity is virility. Or vice versa. Mimicry is passive, feminine, and weak. These weak arms appear as (false) arms of Paris or Madrid that contribute nothing to the tree of Our America. In fact, they can’t even reach its branches. Later, they get sent to the Prado park and to Tortoni’s caffè, but they are posers—ridiculously, pretentiously, effeminately, posing.

As Volek notes, this is a semantic struggle for many translators. One must choose words that imply the same struggle between authenticity versus falsity in a causal chain, although the lexical distances between Martí’s imagery-laden and visceral late 19th-century (mostly Cuban) Spanish prose and a “modern” reader in (American) English will almost surely create an unwanted level of artifice. And, as with other passages, the metaphors must retain a certain internal cohesion within this section, as well as correspond to the essay’s leitmotifs. This paragraph is particularly important as it is still opening the essay (third paragraph) and introduces the false European costumes in the Americas, the sick mother who is the *patria* and whose bones are being gnawed to destruction by traitors—the same traitors who are violating gender norms and “authentic” American dress in braceleted arms with painted nails. Following are the translators’ takes on some key phrases in this passage:

A los sietemesinos sólo les faltará el valor. Los que no tienen fe en su tierra son hombres de siete meses. . . . Si son parisienses o madrileños, vayan al Prado, de faroles, o vayan a Tortoni, de sorbetes. (Martí 145)

Only the seven-month birthling will lack the courage. Those who do not have faith in their country are seven-month men. . . . If they are Parisians or Madrilenians, then let them stroll along the Prado under the lamplights, or take sherbet at Tortoni's. (Onís 139)

Only those born prematurely are lacking in courage. Those without faith in their country are seven-month weaklings. . . . If they are Parisians or from Madrid, let them go to the Prado under lamplight, or to Tortoni's for a sherbet. (Randall 85)

Only those born prematurely are lacking in courage. Those without faith in their country are seven-month weaklings. . . . If they are Parisians or from Madrid, let them go to the Prado, to swan around, or to Tortoni's, in high hats. (Shnookal and Muñiz 121)

Only runts whose growth has stunted will lack the necessary valor, for those who have no faith in their land are like men born prematurely. . . . if they are Parisians or Madrileños then let them stroll to the Prado by lamplight or go to Tortoni's for an ice. (Allen 289)

Only those born prematurely are lacking courage. Those who don't have faith in their land are premature-born weaklings. . . . If you are Parisians or from Madrid, then go stroll through the Prado passing as coxcombs, or go to Tortoni's caffè in high hats, posing as sipping straws. (Brown, Appendix I 144)

One thing worth noting is that all previous translations have interpreted the plural *son* with a subject pronoun of "they" in English, as if the first phrase read: "[que] vayan"; i.e. "let them go/stroll." However, as in the previous paragraph, when Martí used the imperative in a form of direct locution with his reader (or listener), he once again interjects a direct command into his own argument. This adds force to his vitriol, and his finger pointing leaps off the page and into the face of any reader who wants to put on European airs in Our America. These men are now an effeminate "Other" in their own

land, proving once again that Martí's "principle of inclusion"—as Belnap (203) calls it—only extends as far as the virile man/nation who shares in that vision. Deviation is inherent from birth in the metaphorical *sietemesino* and he cannot be reformed or included in the new national project, but must instead be banished, as must the destructive insects.

In this paragraph, I originally wanted to use "dandy" for *sietemesino* due to its similar implication of posing, but that proved inadequate, and didn't allow for the way Martí employs this imagery in a chain of causality from weakling to traitor to effeminate poser (and later, in my translation, a "dandy" who does not want to do the work of men). So, they are introduced first as premature-born weaklings in my translation, as in Allen's and Randall's, which maintains the insinuation of a weak constitution and adds the allegorical connotation of a person unready or unfit for their times—in this case, to fight for Cuban independence and Latin American autonomy. Martí is telling them to go, but they will be humiliated because they are going to a false homeland in which the material manifestation of their "inappropriate" identities will reveal them as posers. As Volek says, "instead of sarcasm and derision, are we supposed to let them go and enjoy themselves in Madrid's grand park or in the famous Parisian café?" ("*Nuestra América*" 131). In the other translations there is a (possibly intentional) deviation from the Spanish Martí was using and perhaps most familiar with in their translations of *de faroles* and *de sorbetes*. This is a phrase that implies "*ir de faroles y de sorbetes*" or "*disfrazados/vestidos de,*" etcetera. Not "under the lamplight" or "for a sherbet." Cintio Vitier's edition of *Nuestra América* has an interesting note about the meaning of *ir de farol* or *farolear*: "hacer ostentación vanidosa o jactaniosa"; in Mexico "se llama 'farol' a

un ‘sujeto de poca miga que presume de personaje y se da mucha importancia’”; and in Cuba “se registran ‘farol’ como ‘embuste’ o mentira exagerada, con todas las características de un engaño” (Vitier 153). The idea being that they would arrive in Europe to find that they are ridiculous impostors there, too, as they are not being authentic but are instead masquerading incongruous identities.

Therefore, when they go to the Prado Park in my translation, they go passing as coxcombs, an epoch-appropriate synonym for dandy and also a type of flower, which creates a double entendre accessible to the English-speaking reader. In Paris, Tortoni’s *café* (popular in the epoch) becomes a destination for those who are posing in high hats, which makes them appear as sipping straws, an object, in itself, of almost inconsequential value. Volek discusses Martí’s proximity to Mexican and Puerto Rican Spanish, in which a *sorbete* can mean a type of high hat or a sipping straw, respectively. Vitier relies on the Mexican meaning of “sombbrero de seda, de copa alta” (153). I made the two images more explicit in my translation, and although it doesn’t retain the same wordplay as the original, it manages to transmit a new wordplay and an analogous laughable image, utilized by Martí for the very people he found most worthy of derision.

The Syntax of History and Present-Tense Prophecy

Martí’s passion comes through in a frenzied manner and sometimes leads him to contradict himself: at one point he speaks of the stagnant aboriginal race; at the end of the essay he declares that there is no hate among races and that races don’t exist because they are a construct of elitist intellectuals (“bookshelf races”), of false erudition. The contradictions are coupled with, or perhaps borne of, his reliance on “romantically

charged dichotomies” in which “Enlightenment values are simply supplanted here by romantic ones, as if romanticism were less imported to America from Europe, and as if the Enlightenment were less important to America” (Volek “*Nuestra América*” 136). Some of these dichotomies have been explored through their metonymic manifestations and their parallel dimensions in the text, such as European versus “Indian” dress, authenticity versus mimicry, virility versus passivity. Dichotomies lend themselves to the aphoristic rhetoric and axiomatic predictions of Martí, because although the poet is at work in the crafting and stylistics of the essay, the mask being shown is perhaps his favorite: the prophet-politico mask, but it is stunted or unsure, looking to project a voice of certainty with the use of aphorisms and axiomatic commandments, implying no room for error or doubts.

This is important as Martí recounts the mistakes of Latin American history since Independence and at once predicts the possible future failure (if they don’t wake up and stand up to the giant in seven-league boots), while at the same time setting the stage for alternatives, presented through his special form of logic. George Steiner speaks of the construction of history as a “diachronic translation inside one’s own native tongue,” and as primarily a “speech-act, a selective use of the past tense” (29–30). However, since time is a function of language, “whatever tense is used, *all utterance is a present act. Remembrance is always now*” (Steiner 140, my emphasis). This creates an “ontological paradox” in which historians, to speak of history, must work within “axiomatic fictions” because of “the duality of relation through which language happens in but also, very largely, creates the time in which it happens” (Steiner 140–44). These axiomatic fictions not only create a vision of the past and of the future that seem like a natural cause-and-

effect chain of events perceived by Martí, but they also lend his words a sense of authority and urgency, because the remembrance is at once born of and creating the present reality. The malleable rhetoric also creates a populist message that swings toward demagoguery, allowing for Martí to become, as Enrique Krauze sees it, the “caudillo moral de la independencia de Cuba” (25). This, in turn, informs the later multiple interpretations of his text by varying political movements within and outside of Cuba, as discussed above.¹²

Perhaps the language of smoke and mirrors, the secret of the seer, is what has given the text its enduring quality. As Steiner points out, “The force, the axiomatic certainty of the prophet’s prediction lies precisely in the possibility that the prediction will go unfulfilled. . . . behind every prediction of disaster there stands a concealed alternative” (154). While the ‘axiomatic history’ recounted by Martí points to the eventual imperialist takeover by the giant in seven-league boots, he also provides a proverbial roadmap for the alternative: a Latin America that is *essentially* and *in practice* truly “Latin American”—whatever that may concretely be. “It is understood that the forms of governance of a country should conform to its natural elements; that absolute ideas, in order not to fail due to an error in form, should become relative forms. . . .” Martí declares. To paint the abstract picture, he tends toward axiomatic metaphors and aphorisms, resulting in phrases that truly vacillate between wisdom and vacuity:

¹² Imagery that implies but doesn’t name explicitly—like *sietemesinos*, *gusanos* (worms) and “destructive insects” for traitors—offers later generations a populist rhetoric that can be recycled and repurposed: under the Cuban Revolution the specific enemies of Castro and the Revolution may be ever-evolving, but can always be classified as *gusanos*. And one can’t help but connect the *venas abiertas* described by Eduardo Galeano, a catchphrase that would affect generations of subsequent political thought and action in Latin America, to Martí’s mention of *las venas que nos dejaron picadas nuestros dueños* (“the veins that our masters left open”), interpreted as the doomed cultural, political and economic inheritance of Latin America.

“Resolving a problem after knowing its elements is easier than resolving it without knowing them...To know is to resolve.” Perhaps the real seeds finally sown by this Grand Cemí are in fact those phrases of the prophet that can be imbued with myriad meanings, according to the dictates (dictators) of the epoch, or which arm of the octopus is throwing the people toward the skies with hope. These sentences were structured by Martí as a series of ‘historic’ causes (each independent clause) culminating in one subsequent effect; for example, all of the factors leading up to the past-to-present-tense assertion that “America began to suffer, and still suffers.”

The syntactical difficulties are perhaps the most challenging aspect to the translator. Occasionally it seems impossible to decipher his code, which doesn’t speak to a deficiency on the part of the reader, but does create important questions for the translator, such as: At what point as a reader is one imbuing the original with new meanings, and then importing those to the translation? Is that, in fact, the job of the translator? For example, Walter Benjamin highlights the translator’s task of echoing and continuing the original author’s work, and working within and outside of the bounds of language’s tendency to evolve over time. The translator would be following an outline, so to speak, provided by the original text. At one point, Benjamin cites Goethe, who asserted that translation should impose itself violently upon the new language that is housing it, and maybe even leave a sense of “foreign-ness,” an idea also debated in Gregory Rabassa and Umberto Eco, among others. Steiner notes that Benjamin has a Kabbalistic approach to translation, ascribing to the belief that “the translator enriches his tongue by allowing the source language to penetrate it and modify it” (Steiner 67). The “penetration” would result in a somewhat hybrid text birthed from the translation, bringing both languages

closer to a supposed source or root universal. This could be seen as Truth, but then begs the question of which Truth the translator is working toward: one existing outside or within the original text? The more verifiable of the two is allegiance to the latter.

As a commentary on the importance of syntax, this was a thought I kept in mind as I worked with this essay. The barrage of symbols and metaphors are encased in a confusing and tangled syntax—often relying on devices like hyperbaton, asyndeton, and polysyndeton, apart from other poetic rhetoric—, suffering its own identity crisis between a baroque inheritance, romantic sensibilities and *modernista* aesthetics. In “Martí, creador de la gran prosa modernista”, González notes, “de la misma manera que la personalidad intelectual y moral de Martí es una de las más complejas y múltiples que pudieran descubrirse en ninguna literatura, su estilo es igualmente complicado y vario, proteico y dúctil, musical y plástico, conciso y opulento” (204). It is often difficult to clearly understand the correlations Martí wishes to establish, sometimes the process seemed futile, just beyond grasp, a tangle of prepositions and subordinate clauses with no clear antecedent, or metaphors that tend toward the quasi-surrealist and whose referent remains fuzzy. Working with, or against, this in my translation, I wanted to convey Martí’s same ‘axiomatic historical’ construction—his version of truth. I eventually settled on cutting out the “As” or “due to” initiating each clause/cause, and leave them as a series of separate sentences that would paint the process undertaken in post-Independence American republics, such as the centralization of power and people in the cities/capitals, and the importation of faulty knowledge through “bibliogenic redeemers” (a neologism in Spanish, and so in its English rendering as well). Each enumeration of crimes against Our America now culminates in the final sentence of that paragraph, maintaining the cause-

effect relationship established by Martí, while making the prose “sparkling and sifted” for English-speaking readers.

My other guides were the often concise and always impactful axioms (whether wise or vacuous in their content), which tended to get lost amongst longer, more rambling explorations of thought. Sometimes, a series of axioms were inserted as a part of a larger theorem, truth in the Martí cosmos: “The government must be born of the country. The spirit of the government must be that of the country. The form of government must comply with the natural constitution of the country. Government is nothing more than equilibrium of the natural elements of the country.” In the original, this sentiment, which has a certain cadence building up toward a climax, was the closing of a paragraph, in which it was actually a new idea. I moved the last sentence to become the opener of the following paragraph, a transition that highlights the correlation of the natural process of achieving equilibrium with the natural man vanquishing the imported book, the idea that immediately follows in Martí’s essay. Aside from this type of structural cleanup, the order in which Martí espouses his vision for Our America is unchanged in my translation.

The imposed (or retained) foreign-ness is manifest in the use of words like *patria* as highlighted previously, and in the use of an epoch-appropriate lexicon. While I made clearer divisions amongst separate thoughts originally housed in one long paragraph, I also occasionally chose to use an active subject-verb structure instead of the passive voice. While the passive voice is generally more accepted in Spanish, in English it can sound contrived instead of “antiquated” or “of its time,” so to speak. The active construction in English also transmits the imperative urgency of Martí’s original text. There is almost a quiet desperation, a beseeching of his people masked behind

(seemingly) cold logic. The other translators structurally and syntactically chose to follow Martí's original much more closely, often employing awkward phrasing mimicking the passive voice of the Spanish.¹³

The last paragraph, in which Martí contradicts his previously used racialized terminology, is kept intact by all other translators, while mine is divided. However, more interesting is the choice by Onís and Randall (in both 1977 and in Shnookal & Muñiz 2007) for the paragraph's opening sentence, perhaps one of the most important for Martí's intention of convincing Cuba and Latin America that the racial make-up of Cuba will *not* be an impediment to its successful independence. As Vitier notes, this is another way in which he is contesting ideas ("las razas de librería") previously laid out by Sarmiento in *Conflictos y armonías de las razas de América* (1883) (Vitier "Nuestra América" 161). Below the original and the various translations:

No hay odio de razas, porque no hay razas. Los pensadores canijos, los pensadores de lámpara, enhebran y recalientan las razas de librería, que el viajero justo y el observador cordial buscan en vano en la justicia de la Naturaleza, donde resalta, en el amor victorioso y el apetito turbulento, la identidad universal del hombre. ... Peca contra la Humanidad el que fomente y propague la oposición y el odio de las razas. (Martí 151, my emphasis)

There *can be* no racial hate, because there are no races. The rachitic thinkers and theorists juggle and warm over the library-shelf races, which the open-minded traveler and well-disposed observer seek in vain in Nature's justice, where the universal identity of man leaps forth from triumphant love and the turbulent lust for life. ... Whoever foments and

¹³ It is unclear from these translations which Spanish version was used, as none of them comment on this. For example, they all divided a paragraph that is the seventh one in the Vitier version that I used. It is hard to tell if this was due to using a differently structured original, or from one translator influencing subsequent work. Even Allen, who followed all of Martí's original divisions, split up paragraph seven. I also recognize the possibility of the editor and not the translator deciding to create or merge paragraph divisions, but for the sake of observation, I will speak in terms of translators' choices (which still exist as choices for all, no matter what the final outcome of the published translation).

propagates antagonism and hate between races, sins against Humanity.
(Onís 150)

There *can be* no racial animosity, because there are no races. The theorists and feeble thinkers string together and warm over the bookshelf races which the well-disposed observer and the fair-minded traveler vainly seek in the justice of Nature where man's universal identity springs forth from triumphant love and the turbulent hunger for life. ... Whoever foments and spreads antagonism and hate between the races, sins against humanity.
(Randall 94; Shnookal and Muñiz 129)

There is no racial hatred because there are no races. Sickly, lamp-lit minds string together and rewarm the library-shelf races that the honest traveler and the cordial observer seek in vain in the justice of nature, where the universal identity of man leaps forth in victorious love and turbulent appetite. ... Anyone who promotes and disseminates opposition or hatred among races is committing a sin against humanity. (Allen 295–96)

There is no hatred among races because there are no races. Feeble thinkers, candlelight thinkers, mix up and reheat bookshelf races, which the just traveler and the cordial observer look for in vain in the justice of Nature, where instead the universal identity of man stands out, in victorious love and turbulent appetite. ... Whoever foments and propagates opposition and hatred among races sins against Humanity.
(Brown, Appendix I 150)

The opening sentence is perhaps the most important in this example, although there are a few interesting comments to make about choices, one being the need by some to syntactically mimic Martí, and not necessarily following the conventions of comma usage in English. The passage not only contradicts his previous use of racialized terminology in the essay, but also the vehement fervor against the *gusanos* and anyone who disagrees with him—or more widely, with Cuba's right and ability to independence and full participation in Our America. Martí's brand of humanism has its well-defined limits, but they are not apparently based on racial differences. He uses the present-tense indicative in

the original, simply stating that “no hay.” This is important, as it is part of the authoritative language used to create his ‘axiomatic history’, and his prophecies for the future, in turn based on the ‘present’ remembrance of the past. However, Onís and Randall have both chosen to render it as “There *can be* no...”. This may appear as minutiae, but it actually creates a subtle change in the original diction with a big implication, depending on how it is interpreted by the reader: it can be read as in imperative for change and for the future, which then allows room for the possibility that there *could exist* hate amongst races, in turn, *verifying the existence of races*, which Martí is explicitly refuting at the end of his essay. As Steiner notes, “language is the main instrument of man’s refusal to accept the world as it is” (228). He does not allow room for the possibility, or imply that present behavior needs to change; in the Martí cosmos it is factually part of present reality, and therefore future reality. It is part of the certainty projected by the prophet, the oracle of the seer, whether or not it reflected the political, psychological or sociological environment at the time. These are the ways in which new meanings become imbued in a translated work, thus, the translator as traitor analogy. Small, subtle changes whose impact grows exponentially, working in tandem with sociological evolutions, perceptions and precepts, and becoming part of the hermeneutic spirals of influence.

Literary Politics

For all its political deficiencies, the text holds great literary value as a testament to the beauty of Martí’s hand, and to his faith in the power of ideas and reason (words) as the mightiest weapons in the birthing of a new nation. His use of metaphor-laden rhetoric

is not only important for its implications in twentieth-century Cuban and Latin American politics, but also for its poetic renovation and marking of *modernista* aesthetics in his own style, namely “...que no fuera un escritor empeñado en fraguar una literatura preciosista o esteticista sino un comunicador que *aprovechaba el idioma y sus múltiples recursos para iluminar y conmover*. . . . Su prosa reflexiva o ensayística, impresionista, intuitiva y poética, explicita una poética propia y también generacional” (Esteban and Rafael VII–VIII, my emphasis). Generationally, those poetries are predominantly *modernista* in nature, but even *modernismo* is part of a larger generational movement in Western literature, which Steiner notes as the “principal division in the history of Western literature” occurring around the turn of the century (1870’s onward). This moment “divides a literature housed in language from *one for which language has become a prison*. . . . Established language is the enemy” (Steiner 184–86, my emphasis), ideas that will be carried to their extreme in the various vanguard movements of the twentieth century. These generalities can apply specifically to *modernismo* and to Martí, even in their diversity of manifestations within each one’s literary production. In the case of the latter, particularly his prose, “el modernismo martiano no se circunscribe al aspecto formal o meramente lingüístico, ya que supone un cambio de sensibilidad, de interacción del arte con el mundo” (Esteban and Rafael VII). The autonomous art of Romanticism becomes the autonomous art that is also interacting with and creating its world; it slowly becomes *arte comprometido*, or committed art.

While Steiner notes that language is our principal form of negating reality; to negate is also to create an alternative reality, a goal also visible in Martí’s literary preoccupations. In another set of parallels within *Our America*, the literary reflects the

body politic in its need to be “authentic” and autonomous, virile and actively new, not passively mimicking its European forefathers. He creates this parallel on multiple levels (in true Martí fashion): one is through establishing a dialogue with literary antecedents, not just Latin America’s political history and public intellectuals like Sarmiento. The symbol of the book then is not only metonymically equated to educational and political institutions, but also to the field of letters. In fact, the essay opens with a reference to the heroes of Juan de Castellanos, in which reason is the mightiest weapon, establishing the lineage of Latin American letters. This warrants a footnote in the original Spanish in Vitier, and an endnote in Allen’s translation, in which they both identify him as an epic Golden Age poet. I also believe it warrants a footnote, and in mine, add, “Here Martí establishes a connection with Latin American history since the Conquest, as well as with literary antecedents.” We see the building blocks of the ‘axiomatic history’ as well as the concomitant literary inheritance in the parallel imagery of the Conquest and Spanish literary tradition, and subtly pointing this out in the footnotes prepares the modern reader (who may not have the cultural literacy to make the contextual connections) that this will be one ‘thread’ followed throughout the essay.

He equates creation with authenticity, first in terms of governance, then with identity and cultural production in one of the essay’s better-known passages:

Gobernante, en un pueblo nuevo, quiere decir creador. . . . Las levitas son todavía de Francia, pero el pensamiento empieza a ser de América. Los jóvenes de América. . . . Entienden que se imita demasiado, y que la salvación está en crear. Crear es la palabra de pase de esta generación. El vino, de plátano; y si sale agrio, ¡es nuestro vino! (Martí 146; 149)

To be a governor of a new country means to be a creator. . . . The frock coat is still French, but thought begins to be American. The youth of

America . . . understand that there is too much imitation, and that creation holds the key to salvation. “Create” is the password of this generation. The wine is from plantain, and if it proves sour, it is our wine! (Onís 142; 147)

In a new nation a governor [“government” in Shnookal and Muñiz] means a creator. . . . The frock coats are still French, but thought begins to be American. The youth of America . . . realize that there is too much imitation, and that creation holds the key to salvation. “Create” is the password of this generation. The wine is made from plantain, but even if it turns sour, it is our own wine! (Randall 87; 91–92; Shnookal and Muñiz 123; 127)

Governor, in a new country, means *Creator*. . . . The frock-coats are still French, but the thinking begins to be American. The young men of America . . . understand that there is too much imitation, and that salvation lies in creating. *Create* is this generation’s password. Make wine from plantains; it may be sour, but it is our wine! (Allen 290; 294)

Leader, in a new nation, means to say creator. . . . The frockcoats are still French, but the thinking begins to be from America. The youth of America . . . understand that imitation happens too often, and that salvation is in creation. To create is the prerogative of this generation. The wine, from plantains; and if it comes out sour, at least it is our wine! (Brown Appendix I 146; 149)

There is little deviation between the translations, but the most obvious is with the opening word in which I chose “leader” instead of “governor” to replace *gubernante*. This is due to the correlation with a specific elected office in the United States (state’s governor), as opposed to Martí’s use of *gubernante* to refer to any politician or leader/ruler. This is tied into his anti-*caudillo* stance, as the *caudillo* came into being through the post-independence lingering (social and political) colonial structures, which are imported and not “authentically” American. Therefore, for Our America’s leaders to break the cycle of *caudillismo*, they must learn to create anew, thereby becoming a truly “American” leader.

Martí also seems to relent a little on those in European clothing because a change is happening from within, and the thinking begins to be American. As he passes the torch to the next generation, imploring them to make plantain wine, my other deviation comes in the form of “prerogative” instead of “password” for *palabra de pase*. While password has a connotation of secret societies and, now, brings to mind the technological world and our participation in it, “prerogative” maintains the connotation of birthright, privilege, and advantage—the youth have the right and the responsibility to create, to be authentic.

As the plantain wine implies a cultural imperative, a “truly American” identity marker, or a sense of *cubanidad* expressed metaphorically and concretely through various forms of cultural production, Martí also demonstrates the parallel between literature and politics by extending the creative power of Our America to literature; for example, to *modernista* aesthetics. Ángel Esteban and Luis Rafael comment that, “En su caso, *la nueva ideología también se acompaña de una estética moderna, una literatura más dinámica y llamativa que la agotada por demasiada copia romántica o calco de modelos culturales europeos*” (x, my emphasis). He is a modern writer who is self-aware as a product of his times and inheritance, and as an artist with the power of the verb and of creation at his fingertips: “No sólo hizo la revolución a través de la palabra, sino que revolucionó a la palabra misma, haciéndola girar en el sentido de América y abrirse a la fecundación de los nuevos tiempos”(Vitier “En la mina martiana” 15). For Krauze, Martí notably “vierte el vino viejo de la mejor tradición literaria del castellano (los poetas y dramaturgos del Siglo de Oro y el barroco que conocía al dedillo por su estancia en España) en el odre nuevo del periodismo norteamericano. *En este sentido, es el primer escritor moderno de América Latina*” (27). Iván Schulman agrees that Martí belongs to

the *modernista* modality of expression “de oriundez hispánica—sobre todo de los maestros del Siglo de Oro—, plástica, musical y cromática” (“Reflexiones” 53).

Although he disdains the imported book, his own style is in fact a synthesis of European and American influences. As stated before, the rhetorical devices are mostly housed in baroque syntax laced with lingering Romanticism (as seen in the repeating dichotomies and the emphasis on the idealized “natural man”), but with a heavy dependence on metaphor and symbolism characteristic of *modernista* aesthetics, of Martí’s prose writing, and of the poetics that drive even his ‘non-literary’ production. However, González and others have noted that sometimes his imagery borders on the surreal, bringing him closer to Vallejo or the Vanguardia, adding to his prophetic powers the foreshadowing of things to come—or the natural conclusion to a rebellion in which “established language is the enemy,” as discussed above: “Pero Martí a veces trasciende el modernismo y nos sorprende con imágenes y expresiones metafóricas que más que modernistas parecen presagiar ya la poesía imaginista de los ultraístas, sobre-rrealistas [*sic*] o vanguardistas” (González 182).

A few quasi-surrealist images sprout up, such as the octopus from whose arms the young generation is springing forth in (false) hope, or the opening assertion that Latin Americans can no longer be “a people made of leaves, living in the air, our crown loaded with flowers.” He also sets the stage for the *macondismo* (see Brunner, Volek), an essentialist attitude that points toward the inherent “uniqueness” of Latin America as a stumbling block to its modernization or integration into the modern world, which will pervade Latin American political thought and literary and cultural production, particularly in the latter half of the twentieth century. As Martí proclaims: “Let the world

graft itself onto our republics; but the trunk must be our own.” It seems almost a conciliatory gesture toward the rest of the world on his behalf, but at its core, is an anti-assimilationist argument; syncretic culture stays within the borders of Latin America. Again, we see reflected here the identity politics previously discussed in terms of race, now, as a people with an *essential* or *a priori* shared identity to show to the world. The identity exists, it just must be (re-)discovered and implemented in the creation of a culture that is ‘truly’ representative of that ‘true’ American identity. Martí’s use of (surreal) imagery and his status, at least according to Krauze, as Latin America’s first modern writer sets him up as precursor to *Vanguardia* and Boom literary politics connected to the establishment of *macondismo*. In another manifestation of his prophetic tendencies, his heavy reliance on polysemy and evolving metonymies seem to directly reflect, on a literary level, the “continua danza de los signos” (Brunner 302), or “rotación de signos” (Paz) that constitutes a Latin American modernity, which, in fact, is a simulacrum—the plantain wine came out sour and was abandoned, and the warning went unheeded that the imported apparatus does not make for modernity.

Applied to literature—certainly Martí would agree, integral to the cultural identity of Latin America—the phrasing about the trunk that “must be our own” could be emblematic of the *modernista* aesthetics to which he helped give early formation. The following excerpt comes from the same paragraph as the plantain wine, and we see that these youth whose prerogative it is to create, have now become *los hombres nuevos americanos*, rhetoric also familiar to those who were later under the Cuban Revolution and the ideology of Che Guevara’s *hombre nuevo*:

En pie, con los ojos alegres de los trabajadores, se saludan, de un pueblo a otro, *los hombres nuevos americanos*. Surgen los estadistas naturales del estudio directo de la Naturaleza. Leen para aplicar, pero no para copiar. Los economistas estudian la dificultad en sus orígenes. Los oradores empiezan a ser sobrios. Los dramaturgos traen los caracteres nativos a la escena. Las academias discuten temas viables. *La poesía se corta le melena zorrillesca y cuelga del árbol glorioso el chaleco colorado. La prosa, centelleante y cernida, va cargada de idea*. Los gobernadores, en las repúblicas de indios, aprenden indio. (Martí 150, my emphasis)

This passage represents several of the ideas and leitmotifs running throughout the essay, such as the Romantic notion of the ideal, ‘natural’ statesman who arises ‘naturally’ from studying ‘nature’ learning to apply ‘relative forms’ but (somehow) not to imitate or copy; the economists who study the origins of problems (“To know is to resolve”); and the Indian who is to be incorporated into the national project, but whose actual participation remains peripheral (i.e., the governors learn ‘indio’ to communicate with that element of the population, but the ‘indio’ is not a leader or part of the governance—it does not read *los gobernadores, en las repúblicas de indios, son indios*). This section also concretizes the parallel between politics and cultural production, including literature. The plantain-wine metaphor has extended to plays that reflect ‘caracteres nativos’ to the viewer—they should be able to self identify with this new ‘culture’, their creation—and academia focuses on topics relative to Our America and her ‘uniqueness’.

The next step, *naturally*, is that the literary production, while recognizing its lineage, will no longer mimic, but apply the elements of its own trunk to a new branch of literary production. The translators approach this section of the passage as follows:

Poetry shears off its romantic locks and hangs its red vest on the glorious tree. Prose, lively and discriminating, is charged with ideas. (Onís 148)

Poetry shears off its romantic locks and hangs its red vest on the glorious tree. Selective and sparkling prose is filled with ideas. (Randall 92)

Poetry shears off its Zorrilla-like locks and hangs its red vest on the glorious tree. Selective and sparkling prose is filled with ideas. (Randall in Shnookal & Muñiz 127)

Poetry is snipping off its wild, Zorrilla-esque mane and hanging up its gaudy waistcoat on the glorious tree. Prose, polished and gleaming, is replete with ideas. (Allen 294)

Poetry cuts its romantic Zorrilla-esque mane and hangs its red vest on the glorious tree. Prose, sparkling and sifted, is loaded with ideas. (Brown, Appendix I 9)

Once again, Vitier (in the original Spanish), Allen and I felt that this section warranted a footnote. Randall followed Onís' lead and made the connotation more explicit in her first translation ("romantic locks") while changing to "Zorrilla-like" in her later version. Unfortunately, Randall also loses some of the musicality of the original, and sacrifices the parallel sentence structure Martí employs to declare his imperatives for the new Poetry and Prose, the first word and active subject in each phrase, respectively. Allen and I went with "Zorrilla-esque," while Allen notes who José Zorrilla was, and that Martí was not a fan of his writing. My footnote draws upon Vitier's, and follows his idea that the "chaleco colorado" (another French vest returning in the essay to serve as metonym for an entire literary movement) is a reference to the *gilet flamboyant* described by Victor Hugo, symbolizing the triumph of Romanticism in France. The glorious tree, according to Vitier, is the laurel, the tree of artistic fame. Here, I harken back to Martí's opening reference to Siglo de Oro epic poet Juan de Castellanos and the symbolic 'beginning' of

Latin American letters with the Conquest. Martí is reiterating that history is to be revered, but it is time for a change in aesthetics and ideology. Vitier also does not indicate animosity on Martí's part toward Zorilla, to whom he had dedicated "líneas de afectuosa simpatía." Instead, he sees Zorilla as a metaphor for "el romanticismo retórico" that "es ya historia, pero historia perdurable, pues la poesía lo 'cuelga del árbol glorioso'" ("Nuestra América" 160).

Footnotes in this section are particularly helpful to the English-speaking reader (and perhaps to the native Spanish-speaker as well), as the reference to José Zorilla is not likely to be widely understood, and they can remind the reader of the literary parallels Martí creates within his metaphoric recounting of Latin American political history. Literary criticism could benefit from these footnotes as well. Returning to Belnap's article, "Headbands, Hemp Sandals, and Headdresses," in which he utilized Randall's first translation, the lack of an explanatory footnote here has perhaps caused a critical misunderstanding. He writes,

And at the same time that the playwright introduces Native American characters onto the urban stage and the *poet forswears excessive subjectivism in order to become allied with the natural environment ("the glorious tree")*, the governor of the Indian republic is able to test the relevancy of the foreign book because he is 'learning Indian.' . . . Martí's reclamation of Our America's intelligentsia from the artificiality of its Eurocentric masquerade through a successful reintegration into American Nature certainly strikes a note of familiarity for students of U.S. culture. (Belnap 201)

Without the extra context clues, Belnap seems to have taken this "glorious tree" as the trees from the beginning of the essay, getting in line, like the silver coursing through the veins of the Andes. He also seems to interpret "hangs its red vest on the glorious tree"

more closely to the English idiom to “hang your hat” on something, which implies belief or dependence on something. Hanging the red vest on the tree means the poet is allying himself with that tree, when in fact, Martí is advocating for just the opposite. This is not the same “trunk [that] must be our own,” nor is it the same “chaleco parisiense” discussed earlier. The symbols’ referents have changed within Martí’s established dichotomies, and can confuse critics when they reappear, re-contextualized. However, they are related to the others as an evolved symbol with parallel meaning, changing their referent as Martí shifts the focus of his argument. Even the metonyms within this essay seem to be internally metonymically related. Martí’s prose is polysemous at the level of the word-object relationship, but also entire phrases, paragraphs and arguments exert a certain level of multi-layered polysemy. Belnap has chosen to focus on one layer of this multi-layered text (artificiality versus authenticity, or, the political literature) instead of also recognizing its literary politics, and then specifically draws his reader’s attention to that reading (“familiarity for students of U.S. culture”). While his claims about artificiality and authenticity are not entirely untrue, they sacrifice much of the richness of Martí’s text to focus on the political instead of the literary, and their intimate relationship in Martí’s mind and his pen.

Conclusions

This study on Martí has relied upon an exegesis of his text *Nuestra América* that takes into account several factors in the linguistic and cultural code in which it was produced, particularly through a lens filtered by a very specific revolutionary political agenda and poetic sensibility. The resulting rhetoric creates an ambiguous text that

accepts both a superficial (and visceral) reading; constant historical interpretation of its referents; and at the same time, is a masterful blending of poetics and politics, axiomatic metaphors and symbolic histories, passion and reason—resisting a simple arrival at deeper meaning. The dichotomies with changing, moving, symbols and referents and the prophetic language that relies upon ‘axiomatic histories’ springing from Martí’s present and projected toward the future become contradictory.

English-language translations intentionally or unintentionally highlight and confuse these apparent contradictions, especially as their focus tends to be on the political nature of Martí’s literature instead of on the combinations of his political ideologies and literary politics. The process of translating his complex, poetic prose demands as much critical analysis as it does poetic sensibility and intuition. Those translations—or analyses—where one is sacrificed in favor of the other, fail to capture the rich complexity of his imagery, metaphor and metonymy. This in turn affects English-language scholarship that relies on translations and guides the English-language reader to a one-dimensional, political reading of his texts, with a sort of ‘flattening’ of the dancing signs and referents. When Martí is seen as a politico, and subsequently as a prophet, his mythologized figure becomes one-dimensional and malleable to any political agenda, leading Krauze to announce him as the *caudillo cultural* of Cuban and Latin American identity politics.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Translation and the Modern Poet: T.S. Eliot, Octavio Paz , and the Mexican *Vanguardia*

Nuestro siglo es el siglo de las traducciones.
(Octavio Paz, “Centro móvil”, *Renga*)

Chronological literary maps, the transposition of literary criticism, and the human tendency (necessity) to categorize literary movements or schools, seem to carry with them a subsequent and inevitable hierarchy, implicit or explicit, by determining a predecessor and a descendant, one who is *influenced by*. Translation follows a parallel and spiraling trajectory, in that a translation is always compared against the original, “parent text,” but also against previous and subsequent translations and criticism. Steiner points out that “contemporary and subsequent translators” exist in “an act of reciprocal, cumulative criticism and correction” (437). Chronologically, yes, by birth and publication dates one can place antecedents and descendants, but in a hermeneutic spiral—in the *era imaginaria* of Lezama Lima, the oblique life of the metaphor, or in Octavio Paz’s system of correspondences that governs the universe of the word—before and after lose their meaning. The hermeneutic spiral of influence that Steiner describes in *After Babel* exists within what he calls the cultural matrix, as culture is perceived “topologically,” meaning “culture is a sequence of translations and transformations of constants (‘translation’ always tends toward ‘transformation’)” (449). This conception of culture aligns with Paz’s dialectical ideas about continuity and rupture as governing forces in the

development of literary movements or schools of thought, and more broadly as it is exemplified in the act of translation, which he equates to poetic creation.

What happens when literary movements are conceived of as simply a function of language, and therefore part of a dynamic, reciprocal relationship, a web of influences and transposition of *eras imaginarias*, and not a horizontal or vertical hierarchy? Does the ontological anguish before other literary traditions vanish, if everything is seen as a whole, a family and tradition from the same genealogical tree, with diverse branches sustained by the same roots—verb and metaphor, language? This would also relate to conceptions about translation, as many approaches seek a ‘revelation of truth’ through translation, glimpses of a universal or root language, a step toward redemption of the problematic caused at Babel. This would be a continuation of the Benajmin school of thought, a Kabbalistic approach is a universalistic approach that assumes “analogous”, “common principles of being”: “The idealistic premise is one of universal homology and rationality” (Steiner 77; 372). If texts are inherently translatable, then so are their characteristics, motifs, rhetoric, and up to bodies and groupings of texts—that is literary movements.

Translation is a way to see the direct contact among the branches of the tree that don’t normally touch; the act of translation in itself, according to Borges, is collaboration with the original author, not a betrayal. This bifurcation by means of translation is a point of inflection in which enter the *eras imaginarias* that participated in the creation of the original, and through which subsequent ones will appear in response. With this hermeneutic act, another filament has been added to the web, the layers augment without there being a vertical nor a horizontal influence because, upon translation in the form of

reader interpretation or translation proper, the text will pass through varying degrees of the hermeneutic process, and eventually will be translated into the ‘cultural matrix.’ Steiner refers to this process of mutual influence as “interanimation”—intertextualities and literary inheritance (Steiner 477–78). In someone like Martí, this process would be looked upon with derision, as it invokes the “Greece that is or is not ours,” the disdain for imitation and a supremacy of national pride over inclusions, or even allowances, of ‘otherness’. Paz, writing much after what he calls Latin America’s “verdadero romanticismo”—that is, *modernismo*—calls the movement not an imitation but a translation, an appropriation: “su versión no fue repetición, sino una metáfora: otro romanticismo” (*Hijos* 162). *Mimesis* becomes a virtue in the context of translation because nothing is an imitation if everything is a translation, or an analogy or metaphor: “El juego de la analogía es infinito: el lector repite el gesto del poeta: la lectura es una traducción que convierte al poema del poeta en el poema del lector” (Paz, *Hijos* 156). Here we could substitute translator for reader, as the translator simultaneously occupies multiple ‘positions’ relative to the text(s). Abstracted, this analogous game is the art of poetic creation/translation, and even further, is the art of communication through language. The ontological fear on which Martí analogizes a lack of national literature with a lack of national identity, and therefore a lack of ‘being’—i.e. Cuba’s lack of independence—is inverted in Paz, in which uniqueness comes at the level of the work, in the particular, which has shared universals as its substrata: “considerar la literatura de occidente como un todo unitario en el que los personajes centrales no son las tradiciones nacionales, ni siquiera el llamado ‘nacionalismo artístico’.... Los estilos son colectivos y

pasan de una lengua a otra, las obras...son únicas” (Paz, “Traducción” 8). Modern poetry is defined by, and exists, because of translation.

Latin American Vanguards and the Problems of Definition

The Latin American poetic *vanguardias* suffer the paradox of their existence within the critical tradition: against their diverse nature, they have been put into a definitive category, defined by characteristics that do not apply to all of them. The central debate is if recognition of European influence brings into question regional literary authenticity and autonomy, a continuation of Martí’s worries for Our America. The movement ‘authentically’ Latin American, *modernismo*, which seemed to turn the traditional Europe-America flow of influence on its head, realizes its full potential in its successors. The *vanguardias* are simultaneous instances that are difficult to plot on the chronological map and they share, it seems, sometimes little more than a coetaneous epoch. For Paz, they are another example of continuation and rupture: “La vanguardia rompe con la tradición inmediata—simbolismo y naturalismo en literatura, impresionismo en pintura—y esa ruptura es una continuación de la tradición iniciada por el romanticismo” (170). Under the diverse surface, in almost all instances, Romantic ontological questioning reappears. The Latin American avant-garde manifestos are proclamations on literary aesthetics and identity politics, but the first ones appeared in Europe, like Marienetti’s futurist manifesto in 1909. After that come more, for example in Latin America: from Argentina, from Peru, and from Mexico. Borges had lived in Spain for a while. As fruit of this stay, he integrated himself to ultraism, which he brought back to Argentina later. In Peru, the figure of Mariátegui and indigenous

Marxism appeared. In Mexico, *estridentismo* was proclaimed from Xalapa. From then, the manifestos had their own objectives, and their own processes for achieving those objectives by means of literary production.

And what makes this ‘literary movement’ retain cohesion, if traces of it appear in so many places with an infinite list of qualifying ‘-isms’? There are multiple answers and the debate is continuous. For Nelson Osorio, the central axis of the *vanguardia* is the questioning, with diverse answers, enveloped in a continental cohesion. That is, the regional varieties are socio-political reactions understood as an international and ‘supranational’ phenomenon. Although he recognizes the international aspect, Osorio is not a fan of comparisons with the European Vanguards. He emphasizes the hegemonic nature of the Hispano-American Vanguard and its artistic manifestations as overcoming and/or renovating the limitations of *modernismo*, which include symbolist and Parnassian influences (a point that will be of interest in regards to T.S. Eliot and imagism). Osorio’s argument lacks concrete examples and suffers profound divergences off-topic. He highlights the ontological anxiety of influence, to reference Harold Bloom’s (in)famous term, which affects not only poets but also plays out as the family drama in the field of criticism. Influence manifests itself in a regionally inward drama: protest against comparisons with Europe, and the homogenization of the Latin American Vanguards under “continental cohesion.”

Gloria Videla, for her part, perceives the plurality of the *vanguardias* in the form of a refractory prism, and recognizes that Europe will always serve as a point of reference. The avant-garde exists as various ‘-isms’ under an international cultural phenomenon, and therefore, studying Hispano-American vanguards is naturally a

comparative endeavor, but this does not imply a Hispano-American hierarchic inferiority. What is implicit in her work is that questions of identity underlie not only the manifestos and Latin American avant-garde poetry, but also the polemics over the nature of the movement that is born of the same era. This questioning and its subsequent propositions cannot escape being of a comparative nature either. That is, a constant comparison with *otherness*, constructing an identity through negation, because admitting the foreign influence equates (supposedly) to admitting *mimesis*, the common enemy of creativity, and perhaps the shared characteristic most declared (but not always practiced) of avant-garde aesthetics. Videla adds another filament to the web with the inclusion of Anglo-Saxon imagism, which for her enters by way of the United States. Now Europe is not the only comparative focus in the refractory prism, not the only *otherness* against which Latin America proclaims its ‘unique’ identity.

Literary movements—as is known—are usually pluralistic and heterogeneous; Paz speaks in the same way about the nature of romanticism, *modernismo*, and the vanguards in *Los hijos del limo*. The era of the so-called literary vanguard is not the first time the United States had figured in Latin American poetry, nor is it the first ontological questioning against foreign influences, an idea that crystalized as an anguished preoccupation, combined with the exaltation of the individual, the interiority of the poetic “I”, during romanticism and nineteenth-century wars for independence. Walt Whitman influenced the *modernistas*; from New York Martí celebrated the genius of Whitman and warned against Yankee imperialism; Darío dedicates poems to Whitman and President Roosevelt. The values of the ontological search reappear, intensified, and now with exteriority through symbols and images in the *vanguardia*: as Paz says, “un mismo

principio inspira a los románticos alemanes e ingleses, a los simbolistas franceses y a la vanguardia cosmopolita de la primera mitad del siglo XX” (*Hijos* 133). One must speak, then, of predominant characteristics without homogenizing, separate them from the devouring Cronos and think in terms of the analogy (Paz), the *era imaginaria* (Lezama Lima), or the hermeneutic motion (Steiner), with the verb in the center, with surface ruptures and continuity underneath—the continuous return to origin. It is worth repeating that literary tradition is not a chronological map, it is an eye with wings that moves in the shape of a spiral. The same impulses return along different points of the spiral, but their manifestations diversify; from the finite number of signs, infinite new chains of metaphor, in the Borgesian model of the universe of the verb. For Lezama Lima:

No basta que la imagen actúe sobre lo temporal histórico, para que se engendre una era imaginaria, es decir, para que el reino poético se instaure. . . . En los milenios, exigidos por una cultura, donde la imagen actúa sobre determinadas circunstancias excepcionales, al convertirse el hecho en una viviente causalidad metafórica, es donde se sitúan esas eras imaginarias. La historia de la poesía no puede ser otra cosa que el estudio y la expresión de esas eras imaginarias. (*Eras* 44)

What the Mexican *vanguardia*, among others, incorporated from Anglo-Saxon poetry in the form of imagism (known primarily through the poetry of T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound) had already appeared under various masks in the poetic tradition of Spanish letters. In the branch of Spanish-language literature: the *modernistas* were inspired by French symbolists and Parnassians; at the same time it was about a revolution in poetic language and a rejection of intimate, confessional Romantic poetry. As I mentioned before, Walt Whitman and the modernization of the world also inspired them. There appeared indications of a more anarchistic language and the leitmotif of cosmopolitanism,

which is sometimes seen as Eurocentric, while according to their proclamations, many echoing ideas initiated in Martí and Rodó, it was about an autochthonous and autonomous Latin American movement.

Anglo-Saxon Imagism and *The Waste Land*

The vanguards, as Osorio and Paz point out, are a continuation of renovations, carried out to a further extreme, or as Videla says: “puede verse en perspectiva como una intensificación de tendencias, aunque sus protagonistas lo vivieron como una ruptura rebelde y provocativa con respecto a la herencia rubendariana” (197). In the Anglo-Saxon¹⁴ branch of the tree, the coincidences and surprises: in part the Spanish-language avant-garde, especially in Mexico, is alimented by imagism, particularly through *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot. It is a modernizing poem, rebellious within its own branch of tradition, but with obvious knowledge of its predecessors, for example, Whitman and his lilacs, as Harold Bloom points out in the introduction to a collection of critical essays about the poem. Steiner also notes that Eliot was a neo-classic, “observant of canonic precedent” (Steiner 490). Eliot’s own essay production shows his ‘conservatism’ in regards to his reverence for tradition and the classics as well. Anglo-Saxon imagism, like *modernismo*, also takes inspiration in the French symbolists, a late influence in Anglo-Saxon literature, as Graham Hough explains in his essay “Imagism and its Consequences.” Chronologically, those ideas and aesthetics had already influenced Latin

¹⁴ Anglo-Saxon is a term that includes English-speakers from both sides of the Atlantic and blurs their distinct histories and literary traditions. That is, the term makes them from the same branch in our tree of literary traditions, which can later bifurcate when it becomes convenient for the purposes of critical classifications. It is a term applicable to T.S. Eliot, born in the United States, but convert to the Anglican Church and British citizenship.

American *modernismo*, the movement that the rebellious *vanguardias* purported to reject. But ironically, some aesthetic practices derived from the same base are accepted through imagism because...well, why? Here the matter gets more complicated.

First, then, how is imagism characterized? And, did it really enter Spanish-language literature through the United States, as Videla declared? Yes...and no. This study is interested in imagism as it appeared in *The Waste Land* by T.S. Eliot, the form in which it has the most traceable impact, especially on the Latin American vanguards and particularly the Mexican one. As noted, imagism draws upon multicultural and multilingual sources, but the primary comes through Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, Chinese poetry which he translated without knowledge of Chinese. Later, "[a]s Eliot and Ford Madox Ford saw, Pound's search for imagist intensity, his theory of emotional concentration through collages and the intersection of different planes of allusion, coincided perfectly with what he took to be the principles of Chinese poetry and ideograms." Pound is "mimicry and self-metamorphosis" (Steiner 377–78). Through the context of translation, *mimesis* has become an invaluable form of appropriation, or in terminology more common in translation theory, of *domestication*. This type of translation can in fact be easier, as the languages exist in such different topological spaces; only the most universal elements become translatable. Exoticism has a certain effect on the process as well, as the invention of a far-off cultural landscape (i.e. 'the Orient') is corroborated in subsequent translations in the form of "stylized, codified markers" (Steiner 378–79). That is, Pound was operating in a sort of poetic misprision, symptomatic of poets and translators alike. His brand of *mimesis*, however, a form of importation and a creative uniqueness, continued on as Anglo-Saxon imagism.

There is consensus that imagism is characterized by exactly what the name implies, a focus on the image and not so much on the structure or coherence of the discourse. Graham Hough notes that the symbolist influence arrives late to Anglo-Saxon poetry; there does not really appear a radically *new* poetry in English until around 1910 (39). This coincides with full Latin American *modernismo*, already developed aesthetically and arriving toward its decadence, which also coincides with the first European vanguard proclamations and manifestos. Hough notes the similarities between Romanticism and symbolism, which both depend upon the epiphany, but in symbolism it is more transcendental, enveloped in the revelatory magic of symbols, which give clues (38). From there, imagism is born, which Hough describes as “Symbolism without the magic. The symbol, naked and unexplained, trailing no clouds of glory, becomes the image...” (39). The chain of presented images stop being clues that carry the reader to an epiphany or transcendental discovery, and convert into a *collage*, simply a series of images that are symbols of themselves in an exteriorized poetry. The interiorized “I” of romantic poetry is all but lost. The image becomes a sign whose referent is not an object, but in fact more chains of signifiers, the infinite analogy and associative emotions. Evodio Escalante comments, “el revelo de las tribulaciones del personaje por un elemento del paisaje [la imagen] no sólo cumple con...la estética *exteriorista* predicada por el primer Pound y los imaginistas; también consume lo que podría llamarse un paso trascendental” (65). This so-called exteriorist aesthetic also leads to the perceived coldness of Eliot’s poetry. His deviation from Whitman is also a form of recognition of and completion with his literary heritage, within the image of lilacs.

In Eliot, the imagist doctrine manifests in his own deviation from Pound and his practice of employing the objective correlative as image in his poetry, which leads the reader to a certain dissociation of sensibility. This is also a general characteristic of avant-garde art, discussed for example as the technique of ‘defamiliarization’ in Viktor Shklovsky, and the exteriorization of that which is lived internally in “*La deshumanización del arte*” by Ortega y Gasset. The perceived coldness in imagism results from the idea of *replacing*—instead of *revealing*—the emotion with the image, the exteriorized object in respect to the poetic voice. On the other hand, the function of the poem can also be to evoke a certain emotion through the objects or events presented (instead of delving into an emotion), an idea that Escalante notes is found in the phenomenology of Husserl. The focus is on the “importancia no de la emoción personal sino de crear una ‘nueva emoción artística’ ... En lugar de las emociones y la personalidad del autor, lo que Eliot se propone encontrar es el *correlato objetivo*” (Escalante 72). So, there is a sense of equivalency between the chosen image and that which it supposedly represents, like the analogy proposed by Paz that characterizes poetry and translation (the relationship between language and the universe), the correspondence among everything, metaphor, and cyclical time. According to Hough: “the image so produced exists to be one side of an equation the other side of which is an emotion” (42).¹⁵ The poem, in its most extreme form, becomes a series of incoherent images—in fact, imagism depends upon the constant contrast of images (Hough 51), a technique that produces the

¹⁵ Imagism seems to fail in many aspects as a poetic practice—for example, Hough criticizes “the collocation of images is not a method at all but the negation of method” (50), and Escalante notes “la imposibilidad de encontrar un tal correlato [imagen-emoción]” (73)—however, the focus here is not on its advantages and disadvantages, but instead understanding it and exploring its transpositions and posterior manifestations in the *vanguardia mexicana*.

dissociation of sensibility in the reader, as seen in the crucial chain of images in *Altazor*, for example, so emblematic of the Hispano-American vanguards.

The dissociation produced leaves the majority of critics either misinterpreting the text, or supporting their arguments with other textual elements, such as the auditory aspect, or specifically with *The Waste Land*, the footnotes planted by Eliot as a sort of clue to the reader. In her incisive essay “How to Read ‘The Waste Land’ So It Alters Your Soul Rather Than Just Addling Your Head,” Mary Karr affirms that “symphonic force...is arguably its chief virtue” (xxii). For her, the polyphony of voices (that seem like the diversity of voices in a city landscape); the clashing of high and low cultures; the collage aspect—all of these represent “disparate pieces assembled to create in readers the kind of despair that infected much of Western Europe after the Great War” (Karr xii), but the collage effect prevails in contemporary cultural production as well, often in the pastiches of *macondismo*. Hough is not so quick to praise the diversity of languages and registers:

But it is a question how hard such contrasts of [rhetorical] texture can be worked in a relatively short poem without disastrous damage to the unity of the surface. It is not so much in the obvious collisions of the high and the low styles that this is felt. ... It is the use of language in different and unrelated fashions in different parts of the poem that is disruptive. (47–48)

While the first twenty lines of *The Waste Land*, more or less, could be considered as written in the form of an elliptical narrative (Hough 45), the poem rapidly fragments and slides toward a polyphony of voices, a *heteroglossia* as Bakhtin would say¹⁶—

¹⁶ I recognize that *heteroglossia* originated as a term applied to narrative writing. Its use in this chapter is two-fold: It highlights the ruptures with lyrical traditions in modern Anglo-Saxon poetry, which sometimes tends toward a less confessional and more conversational tone—a tone that carries with it a mixture of high

literally, with a mix of languages like Italian and Hindi, as well as a mix of registers: kitchen conversations, ‘vulgar’ love and the ‘cultured’ poetic voice with tired metaphors like “At the violet hour...” (l. 220). In this aspect, it loses all ‘narrative’ or stylistic coherence; there is no explicit unity of message(s) in the poem—therefore, it is a poem markedly *modern*, or better yet, *modernizing*. Escalante points out that Eliot seems to be a modern poet, but only if he is understood by the classics (92–93).

Knowledge of the classics and literary traditions is explicitly exhibited in the footnotes and more implicitly within the lines of *The Waste Land*. The first two lines are a direct allusion (one that reappears throughout the poem) to Whitman and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”: “April is the cruelest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead...”; afterwards figures like Filomela, Tiresias, and the city of Thebes appear. The footnotes—a bizarre and at the same time innovative element in verse, as manifestation of a self-conscious poetic voice—seem to show Eliot’s erudition more explicitly, and at the same time give a superficial coherence to the poem, but therein lies the rub. In the notes are fragments of Dante in Italian; Herman Hesse in German; Saint Augustine’s *Confessions*; Hindu prayers; but, they are subsumed by the polyphony and become another element of the poem’s *heteroglossia*; they become an objective correlative, one more image in the chain. The self-conscious poetic voice paradoxically becomes just another layer. In one note Eliot pretends to give cohesion to the work through the figure of Tiresias (and one sees that he speaks of the poem in narrative terms): “Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character,’ is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest” (53). He does the same with the tarot, and the

and low or popular register; secondly, it more accurately describes the variety of voices within the text, separate from the polyphony employed by the narrative, or in this case, poetic, voice.

insertion of the sailor and the merchant in section I (“The Burial of the Dead”) that later appear in section IV (“Death by Water”). The notes are really a magician’s trick; they distract and confound the reader, sending him on a confusing search for meaning. Furthermore, they seem to be arbitrary, placed at random by a poet who laughs at his own ingenuity. Karr warns that the reader should let himself be carried by intuition when reading the poem for the first time (Lezama Lima would agree with this approach). Later, if one wishes, he may enter into the erudite search because what is really important is the relation among things, the feeling of correspondence. Karr comments on the notes:

It’s a little-recognized fact that the controversial notes were an afterthought Eliot later considered cutting because they so distracted readers from the poem. In fact, he’d only tacked them on because the nineteen-page poem alone didn’t seem long enough to constitute a book.
(xv)

An afterthought for the author has become an integral part of the poem’s *heteroglossia*, part of the myth constructed by critics, readers, translators and poets influenced by the grand Eliot.

The Waste Land Made Páramo: Manguía’s Prose Poem

In regards to the vacillation in terms of how it arrived in Latin America: it was not through Spain, Videla is correct about that. But, Eliot, although born in the United States, moved to Oxford to study and afterwards went to London. Later, after becoming intimate friends and collaborators with Ezra Pound, Eliot became naturalized as a British citizen. Imagism is considered to be practically a literary doctrine that ‘originated’, if one may say so, with Pound. So the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ returns, generalizing and encompassing,

and it is concluded that imagism entered by mode of Anglo-Saxon literature. The port of entry for *The Waste Land*, however, is of most interest right now as its translation defies Harriet Davidson's declaration that:

The technique of the *The Waste Land* discloses this ontological absence and this [hermeneutic] process of interpretation. The *poem resists* any attempt to encompass it by a coherent psychological, structural or logical idea; the poem's existence, like the voice of the woman in the pub in 'A Game of Chess,' is real, meaningful and *defiantly untranslatable*. (4, my emphasis)

The fact that the poem demands a hermeneutic interpretation actually lends it to translatability, a feat that more than one Spanish-speaking poet has taken on. *The Waste Land* came into Spanish almost simultaneously through a Puerto Rican translation and one of particular interest here: through the *Contemporáneos* group in Mexico. In his article "European and North American Writers in *Contemporáneos*," Edward J. Mullen focuses on the relationship between foreign and Mexican literatures in the literary magazine. The absence of Enrique Manguía on the list of 'members' of the group with which he begins the article is noteworthy, given the subsequent treatment of his important contributions (translations and essays) by bringing D.H. Lawrence and T.S. Eliot to Mexican letters. In his essay "Rescate de Enrique Manguía," Octavio Paz declares, "La obra de Manguía merece ser recogida, incluso para contemplar nuestra visión de las tendencias y direcciones de la literatura mexicana antes de la segunda guerra" (Paz 43). This translator, at least for Paz, stands as compass for the movements of a *national* literature or literary aesthetic at the height of the international avant-garde movements. Paz's use of a demonym ("Mexican") connected with literature—literature adjectivized or modified as "of a nation"—seems to be at his convenience, as he conversely declares

poetic language to be universal. He also states that in regards to T.S. Eliot, “algunas de las *mejores versiones* de la poesía de Eliot han sido hechas por mexicanos” (Paz, “Rescate” 42, my emphasis). This citation shows not only a certain national pride, but also, Paz’s belief in the creative power of translation—they are not the best *translations* of Eliot, but the *best versions* of his poetry. Surpassing, perhaps, even the original, that constant standard for comparison.

Mullen notes the high level of skill and precision of the translations published in the journal and observes that the inclusion of Eliot (*El páramo* and *Los hombres huecos*) “is another manifestation of the journal’s constantly expressed concern for modern man’s spiritual dilemma” (341). Indeed, one could obliquely interpret it as a spiritual manifestation of modern man, in the sense of the poem’s fragmentation as a reflection of the broken-up post-war world, and man bewildered in the face of rapid technological advances. More than that, the inclusion of Eliot in the magazine reflects something of interest to this essay: the open and encompassing gaze of Mexico toward coetaneous literatures in other languages—which presumes the absence of an inferiority complex, latent for example in Osorio who does not want to speak of the Latin American vanguards in relation to their foreign brothers and sisters—and also presumes the astute knowledge the *Contemporáneos* group had of world literary trends. Paz acknowledges that the *Contemporáneos* had a distinct purpose that in fact revolved around and relied upon the act of translation for its completion: “abrir puertas y ventanas para que entrase en México el aire fresco de la cultura del mundo” (Paz, “Vuelta” 40).

Also of interest is the displacement of Eliot’s influence, even though he was translated by little-recognized Munguía, toward some of the most well known 20th-

century Mexican poets and writers: José Gorostiza, Juan Rulfo, and Octavio Paz. How can this process be seen? It is a serpentine process of prismatic refraction. Paz sees, for example, influences of Symbolist poet Jules Lafourge in Eliot and the Mexican writer Ramón López Velarde, while the two may be completely ignorant of it, an idea expressed in Borges and Bloom as well—the ‘absent’ influence: “Dos poetas escriben, casi en los mismos años, en lenguas distintas y sin que ninguno de los dos sospeche siquiera la existencia del otro, dos versiones diferentes e igualmente *originales* de unos poemas que unos años antes había escrito un tercer poeta en otra lengua.” López Velarde died young, in 1921 at 33 years old, and Paz believes that “su obra termina donde comienza la de Eliot” (Paz, “Traducción” 9–10).

Translation is really just another form of implementing metaphor. In his series of conferences joined together under the title *This Craft of Verse*, Borges recognizes that there exists an infinite and a finite series of metaphors. Poetry is always looking for new correspondence, analogy, as noted in imagism or any other poetic and literary movement or innovation. The paradox is the infiniteness of possibilities and the finiteness of patterns, the limit of human themes that can always be reduced to the most universal. Paz declared that the game of analogies is infinite. One could say that translation is an act that turns the original poem into a creation of the translator, and therefore becomes appropriated and integrated into the cultural matrix. As Borges notes, “We are burdened, overburdened, by our historical sense” (74), recognizing the tensions between that which has already been said, versus the desired innovation in saying it a new way.

Munguía introduces his translation of *The Waste Land* with an essay that highlights some of the poetic qualities he confesses to admiring in Eliot: his “vigor,

intensidad y claridad”; the poem’s “unidad sensual” (perhaps the only form of unity contained in the poem); “La metáfora... tan anónima, objetiva y precisa como algún metal”; “la tradición que lleva implícita” (8–14). He then recognizes what Mullen refers to as the spiritual crisis of modern man:

[N]os sorprende Eliot con un tema nuevo, de nuevo característico, muy suyo—¿o muy nuestro? —: el del agotamiento afectivo, el de la desolación allá en los círculos más espesos y oscuros de la conciencia del hombre cultivado de nuestra época... es ciertamente hoy cuando de modo agudo... se demuestra la imposibilidad de dar cabida *dentro de un solo marco*, en forma orgánica, a la imaginación, a la intuición, a la emoción y a la razón. (11, my emphasis)

But, effectively, Eliot *does* create space within one framework for all of them, and the fragmentary nature of *The Waste Land* paradoxically is the most organically cohesive component of its form. The elements that impress Manguía will appear later in José Gorostiza’s *Muerte sin fin*, and in a certain way in Rulfo, and definitively in Paz also, but we can see that Manguía is already identifying with and incorporating Eliot into Mexican letters by asking himself, “¿o muy nuestro?” imploring the reader to think critically about the implicit universality in the themes.

The third and fourth parts of Steiner’s hermeneutic motion are ‘incorporative movement’ and ‘reciprocity or restitution.’ Manguía’s ‘incorporative movement’ with Eliot’s poem is not only the translation into Spanish,¹⁷ but the way in which he translates it: 1) he writes it in prose; and 2) he omits, combines, or modifies the majority of the notes that appear in the original. He explains his choices in the following way:

¹⁷ In Manguía’s footnotes, he recognizes that there already exists a translation into Spanish titled *La tierra baldía*. It was published in the same year (1930), and was done by a Puerto Rican, Ángel Flores. Interestingly, of all the translations of the poem into Spanish, Manguía is the only one to title it *El páramo*, a title that Paz sees as deficient.

“[A]lgunas de estas notas, precisamente porque no pueden aumentar el goce directo o el interés literario del poema, han sido suprimidas de la traducción al español, y que ésta fue hecha en prosa *por no existir equivalencia prosódica en nuestro idioma del ‘blank verse’*” (14–15, my emphasis). In fact, the translation only includes 11 footnotes versus more than 50 in the original; among those which Manguía includes are the ‘unifying’ notes pointed out above: the one on the tarot and Tiresias as an important ‘character.’ However, Manguía does not focus on Tiresias’ divinatory role and therefore unifying force in the poem, but instead on his nature as a “símbolo antiguo de dos sexos” and therefore unifying the “characters”—that is, the voices—of the poem. Tiresias gives unity to the *heteroglossia*, at least in Manguía’s version. And the negation of versification in the translation could be a symbol of the influence of tradition on Manguía, that is to say, he does not feel comfortable to write in ‘blank verse’ (clearly an Anglo-Saxon phenomenon as it is even described with English words), or possibly it is a sign of his astute poetic sensibility by recognizing that such a thing does not exist, verse is always measured by rhythm, although it may appear to lack a fixed pattern.

The prosification of the poem could bring into question the degree to which Manguía ‘completed’ his duties to restitution or reciprocity. Steiner argues, “A translator is accountable to the diachronic and synchronic mobility and conservation of the energies of meaning” (319), and later, that “prose translation...embodies the whole mechanism of dialectical differentiation and self-definition” (388). This is akin to Borges’ idea that the translator should translate what the author *quería decir*. However, the prose rendering *does* retain the fragmentary nature and the aspect of collage, and Manguía follows the same division into sections, but the prose permits him to play a little with the

heteroglossia. Munguía does not always mark direct and indirect speech in the poem as Eliot does, and sometimes there is no indication of voices in conversation—in this sense, it is more modernizing than the emblematic modernizing poem. That is, he augments the levels of *heteroglossia*, of confusion and the sense of stream-of-consciousness writing in the style of Virginia Woolf and the Anglo-Saxon Modernists. The prose permits another reading of the metaphors; they appear in units or blocks of correlative images—the objective correlative is presented with a higher level of intuitive cohesion, a tenuous unity that will also appear in *Muerte sin fin*.

Echoes of *The Waste Land* in Comala

The impact that this translation-prosification has within the spirals of literary tradition could be difficult to objectively measure, but in terms of displacement the effects are more evident. The texture of the web is enriched; translation is through time and space, with effects and echoes up through today. Hough notes about imagism: “Imagism remains a small affair. But as a centre and an influence it is not small. It is the hard irreducible core of a whole cluster of poetic ideas that extend far beyond Imagism as a movement” (37). In this case, they extend into the vanguard and beyond, which, as Paz declares, is very much a part of the present: “una época que es todavía, en buena parte, la nuestra” (Paz, “Rescate” 43).

The effect of imagism on Mexican letters has been studied in poetic terms, but not so much in relation to prose. Upon reading *El páramo*, not *The Waste Land*, one perceives an undeniable impact on the writing of Juan Rulfo. Who can plot the coordinate path(s) by which it arrived? Through Anglo-Saxon modernism and imagism in Faulkner

and later in Rulfo, or through a direct route of reading *Contemporáneos*? Perhaps through the French adulation of Faulkner, which eventually brought him late popularity in the United States. Most likely through all of these and even more, untraceable routes. Rulfo's style—cold, distant, questioning modern man's spirit, utilizing imagery, especially the landscape and *heteroglossia*, the evocation and not revelation of emotions—is it not a reflection of Eliot's imagism? The title itself, *El páramo*, and all it implies—which in a certain way is more accommodating to following the original poem's thematic, more so than the literal translation *La tierra baldía*¹⁸—makes room for the subsequent *Páramo* in Rulfo's novel, which seems to share a similar topos, at least in essence or in spirit.

In fact, Manguía's choice to opt for a more thematic than literal title, and a prose rendering that could also be considered more thematic than literal, makes of the translation itself an objective correlative, and it is something to which he alludes in the final sentence of his introduction to *El páramo*: “Esmeróse el traductor por conservar tanto la letra como el espíritu del poema, empero, sacrificando sin escrúpulos en un buen número de ocasiones, aquélla a éste.” It is the central debate and dilemma for each translator of poetry and any treatise about the craft: What should be sacrificed and what should be maintained of the original? Manguía chose the organic path instead of a prescriptive one. At times he sacrificed the style, the versification, punctuation and footnotes, but he maintained the conceptual atmosphere and affective voice of Eliot. This is what Rulfo incorporates later into his own prose, under, of course, his own deviation. The well-known translator Robert Bly, in *The Eight Stages of Translation*, declared,

¹⁸ In *This Craft of Verse* Borges recognizes that literal translations, which receive so much critical disdain, “can make for [unexpected] strangeness and beauty,” and therefore are not completely lacking in value (68).

“Each poem has a mood. Harry Martinson remarked that to him a poem *is* a mood... a poem marked a moment when he was able to catch a mood.” The mood of *The Waste Land* captured in *El páramo* transfers into Rulfo’s prose. The evidence specifically lies in a paragraph under section V (“What the Thunder Said”), which in *Contemporáneos* is found on pages 28–29:

No hay aquí agua, sólo rocas, rocas sin agua y el camino arenoso. El camino serpenteando allá arriba sobre las montañas que son montañas de peña sin agua. Si encontrásemos agua nos detendríamos a beber. Entre las peñas no nos podemos detener a pensar; se seca el sudor y nuestros pies descansan entre la arena; monte muerto con boca de ulcerados dientes que no puede escupir. Aquí no podemos detenernos a descansar. No hay siquiera silencio en las montañas, tan sólo el estéril trueno, seco, sin lluvia. No hay siquiera soledad en las montañas. Tan sólo, en cada puerta de las casas hechas con lodo terroso, caras agrias, burlonas, crueles. Si hubiese agua sin que hubiese peñas, si hubiesen peñas con agua, un arroyo, una fuente entre las peñas, si hubiesen rumores de agua en vez de la cigarra y la yerba seca canturreando, si cantase el tordo ermitaño entre los pinos trip trip trip trop trip trop . . . , pero no hay agua.

In this language one sees traces of a deviation that will manifest in a later wasteland, or *páramo*; the lands of Comala, of “Luvina”; a dry, rocky and inhospitable landscape in “No oyes ladrar los perros”; a slow, steady rhythm, a repetitive theme, polyphony and colloquial speech that will characterize the grand novel *Pedro Páramo* and the short story collection *El llano en llamas*, by one of the most revered twentieth-century novelists not only in Mexico, but in the tradition of Spanish-language letters.

***Muerte sin fin* and the Exteriorized Image**

The mood of *The Waste Land* is captured in Rulfo, in his own peculiar way, in an echo of imagism, or a metamorphosis of it. Meanwhile the poet José Gorostiza, member

of the *Contemporáneos*, a contemporary of Eliot and Manguía, strongly exhibits the influence of imagism in his poem *Muerte sin fin*, with its own deviations and completions, and arrival at Truth in a glass of water, truth being the inescapable fact of mortality. But here it is not even mortality, the chain is longer than that: it is the exteriorized language of the moment of realization of *being cognizant* of the inescapable fact of mortality. According to Escalante, Gorostiza's works are characterized by metalepsis, a characteristic derived from imagism, and of course, according to Lausberg "conduce a una 'esfera diversívoca y es un fenómeno caótico de la técnica de la traducción'" (in Escalante 63).¹⁹ Metalepsis functions as a type of deviation and longed-for metaphor renovation on which Borges commented; it basically functions as a metonymy of a metonymy (Bloom). Escalante qualifies metalepsis in Gorostiza as "entendida como un cambio brusco en el contexto de la significación, como un salto en el abismo que conduce a nuevas (o inesperadas) laderas enunciativas" (63). This chaos of enunciative order manifests, for example in *The Waste Land*, through the *heteroglossia* and fragmentation of the text, combined with the strong use of the generative, polysemous image.

In *Muerte sin fin*, coherence rules over chaos, and it is divided into more sections than *The Waste Land*, but the exteriorization of emotion, object and image that replace the poetic voice's interior "I", are characteristics of imagism and create a certain chaos in the form of rupture with 'tradition', while at the same time following a return to a sort of modern 'epic' poetry that Paz attributes to Pound and Eliot. He claims that the novelty of

¹⁹ Escalante introduces another type of deviation-chaos by translating between genres (intersemiotic or intralinguistic) but not interlinguistically: he includes a prose version of *Muerte sin fin* at the end of his book on Gorostiza, which is similar to the translation choices Manguía made with Eliot. Escalante's is not accompanied by a footnote, explanation or introduction.

The Waste Land and Pound's *Cantos* was in "la intersección entre el destino social y el individual...[que] permitió a los dos poetas recapturar la tradición central de la gran poesía de Occidente y, al mismo tiempo, darnos una imagen de la realidad contemporánea" ("Vuelta" 41). Imagists and vanguardists alike also focus on the unexpected metaphor. In Gorostiza it is not so much unexpected as disassociated and exteriorized. The early anagnorisis, in the eighth line, sets in motion the entire 775-line poem: "lleno de mí—ahíto—me descubro / en la imagen atónita del agua, / que tan sólo es un tumbo inmarcesible" (l. 8–10). This is the type of epiphany that Hough discussed, on which the imagists depended, unlike the symbolists. In these lines, one sees not only imagism, but imagism in the style of T.S. Eliot with the discovery of the poetic voice outside of himself, in the *imagen atónita*—himself, and yet, not himself—in the water: "En el sitio que tenía que ocupar el personaje, lo que se encuentra es pues, de modo estricto, el *correlato objetivo*. En términos de Eliot: *la imagen de un objeto que contiene la fórmula de una emoción particular*" (Escalante 75).

Aside from the manifestation of imagism in Gorostiza's masterpiece, it is also known that he spent two years (1927–1928) in London in a diplomatic post. *The Waste Land* had already been published in 1922 and Gorostiza arrived to London attracted, partly, by Eliot (Escalante 76). Through his written correspondence with others of the *Contemporáneos* group (and Pellicer) in that time, one can see a literary maturation in Eliot's shadow, and he also leaves clues that he had already begun to work on his masterpiece while there (Escalante 77–83). Certainly, Gorostiza had seen Manguía's translation in the magazine in which he also collaborated, and it inspired him even more,

in another dimension, in his work on the existential, metaphysical, ontological, and in part, imagist poem, *Muerte sin fin*.

In addition to the points of similarity in their poetry, Escalante notes that Eliot and Gorostiza shared a certain conservative worldview (91–92). Although Eliot’s modernizing poetry seemed rebellious, his reliance upon and enjoyment of the classics, like Dante, is evident. His essay production also reflects this conservative view on tradition.²⁰ For Gorostiza, the conservative tendency manifests in his rejection of the *estridentistas* and his peripheral relationship to the Vanguards in general, especially with the more revolutionary (by proclamation if not by practice) ‘branches’. Better put, he “abrazaba una vanguardia bien temperada” (Escalante 91). As Lezama Lima would say, he pertained to analogous or corresponding *eras imaginarias*, with an appreciation of tradition and at the same time a desire to employ innovative artistic styles. There is a displacement of Eliot’s influence, directly in Gorostiza, and later, more indirectly through his contact with Manguía’s translation to Spanish in 1930, as well as their individual (intellectual) relationships and shared membership in a group whose prerogative was to welcome the world into Mexican letters.

Octavio Paz, T.S. Eliot, Translation, and the *Renga*

Not only through space but through time as well, we can even see the influence in one of the most notable twentieth-century Mexican writers, Octavio Paz, who read Manguía’s translation in *Contemporáneos* at seventeen years of age. He has commented

²⁰ This has been well documented in much scholarship and criticism on Eliot, but to see the author’s views on a poet’s relationship with tradition, a good place to start is with his essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919).

that “Entre las grandes revelaciones de mi adolescencia está la lectura de *The Waste Land*” (“Rescate” 42). His relationship with T.S. Eliot—or better yet, with Eliot’s poetry—followed a lifelong arc that would parallel the thematic arcs found in his poetic and essayistic oeuvre, fitting perfectly into his perception of the world as a universe of correspondences. Eventually, in 1988, Paz was awarded the T.S. Eliot Prize by the Ingersoll Foundation. He reprinted his acceptance speech in *Vuelta* under the title “La vuelta de los días: T.S. Eliot.” He described receiving the award as a form of ‘completion’ of a lifelong trajectory, made more visible, of course, by hindsight:

Era un adolescente cuando lo leí por primera vez y esa lectura me abrió las puertas de la poesía moderna; ahora, al recibir el Premio que lleva su nombre, veo mi vida como un largo ‘rito de pasaje’ que me conduce, más de medio siglo después de mi iniciación, ante el que fue uno de los maestros de mi juventud (Paz, “Vuelta” 40).

This is also characteristic of Paz’s *pensamiento* and “mitopoesía” described by Volek in in “Anverso y reverso del laberinto de la soledad: Octavio Paz y cien años de Macondo” (141), a thought process and revisionist form of history focused on identity—lost, perceived, and hidden.

His works, like *El laberinto de la soledad*, *Las trampas de la fe*, and poetry like “Entre la piedra y la flor”, which imitated Eliot (begun in 1941 and revised 35 years later) are often lifelong labors, revisionist histories in themselves, and part of his concept of a text as something alive. He has said that “cada texto es único y simultáneamente, es la traducción de otro texto” (Paz, “Traducción” 2). This conception would complement that all texts and all interactions with them are unique translations, dynamic and not static

objects—as are, therefore, culture, history, societies and most importantly, identities. As Volek eventually concludes:

la búsqueda de la modernidad deviene en Paz, imperceptiblemente, en una búsqueda mítica de la identidad auténtica, perdida—o sacrificada—en las vicisitudes de la historia moderna, Paz, un intelectual ilustrado y liberal, abraza claramente, en esta dimensión tan importante, *una agenda conservadora*. . . . La modernidad mal interpretada y la invención del México ‘profundo’, ‘encubierto’, o ‘escamoteado’, son la otra cara del macondismo. (Volek, “Anverso” 141, my emphasis)

Volek identifies a conservative agenda in regards to identity, particularly its relation to Latin American modernization, by utilizing his own mythopoiesis in his ontological questioning. The flexibility of a mythopoetic rhetoric means that Paz later flips this script by also *negating* a unique identity tied to cultural production in an equally mythical universalist approach—that is, texts exist outside of the bounds of collective or national identity. In *The Limits of Identity*, Hatfield discusses Paz’s anti-nationalism (read: universalist) approach to literature, avoiding claims of “national essence” or “Mexicanness” (Hatfield 70–71). That is, he would prefer to situate literature within a topographical origin instead of chained to a regional identity as mentioned above in regards to Munguía. For example, in 1966 he oversaw the publication of the collaborative anthology *Poesía en movimiento: México (1915-1966)* (i.e. poetry *from* Mexico, not *Mexican* poetry).

Paz followed the example of the *Contemporáneos* in his search for the ultimate paradox—a pluralistic yet universal poetic language—through his connections to world literatures and cultures, not only in his life as an author, but as a diplomat as well. In 1940, he supervised the first collection of Eliot’s poems published in Mexico, in *Taller*,

in which appears that translation titled “La tierra baldía” done by Ángel Flores in the same year as Munguía, among many others, such as Cernuda, Rudolfo Usigli, and Juan Ramón Jiménez (Krauze 176; Serrano 161–62). The magazine also showed “sensibilidad histórica” (Krauze 176) by including studies on and writings of Sor Juana, among other baroque figures. This, incidentally, had also been done in *Contemporáneos*, and Paz’s own continuation and rupture will manifest in his later mythopoetic studies of Sor Juana and baroque inheritance that creeps into his poetry. Paz however, perhaps in his own defense of the posited idea that Mexico suffered from an “innato complejo de inferioridad” (Krauze 186), conserves, as Volek points out, a mythical identity to be revealed behind the simulacrum of Mexican masks, while he also frames the question of influence and nationally-identified literatures as a question of *democracy*, of spaces where poets can be free, speaking to each other through their ‘universal’, and therefore *non-hierarchical* literature. That is, welcoming outside influence is a function (or perhaps mask?) of ‘nation-confidence’: literature *from* Mexico is as good (or bad) as literature from anywhere.

His democratic views of poetic creation, that is, artistic freedom of expression, are what he uses to close his acceptance speech/essay on T.S. Eliot. Before that, he spends the essay explaining the difference between his relationship with Eliot’s poetry versus the figure and person of Eliot. His enthusiasm for *The Waste Land* never waned, but his personal image of Eliot changed over time, as he recognizes that they were ideologically opposed: “¿Qué me unía a *The Waste Land*? El horror al mundo moderno. . . . Ante los desastres de la modernidad, el conservador y el rebelde comparten [*sic*] la misma angustia. . . . Eliot creía en la fidelidad de la tradición y en la autoridad; otros creíamos en

la subversión y el cambio” (Paz, “Vuelta” 41). Here we see two of Paz’s driving thoughts in regards to artistic creation: the belief in a universal poetic language (that which unites ‘the conservative’ and ‘the rebel’), and the dichotomies of continuity and rupture that exist in constant tension and reaction to one another (‘tradition and authority’ versus ‘subversion and change’). That universal poetic language is what unites him to Eliot, and in regards to *The Waste Land*, he notes, in more or less technical terms, “El imán que me atrajo fue la excelencia del poema, el rigor de su construcción, la hondura de la visión, la variedad de sus partes y la admirable unidad del conjunto” (Paz, “Vuelta” 40).

That description could easily be applied to a project carried out by Octavio Paz, Jacques Roubaud, Edoardo Sanguineti, and Charles Tomlinson in Paris, 1969, in the basement of the Saint-Simon Hotel. The purpose of the project? “To see. To see if four voices from the four corners could find a basic harmony. To see if each could remain *I* and *you* while at the same time becoming *us*” (Roy 13), much like the translator who seeks to establish a new, but analogous version of a text. This project was conceived of as a living example of translation and poetic creation working hand-in-hand, or even beyond that, working in conjunction as part of the same craft. It’s form and resulting title, *Renga*, are based on the traditional Japanese form. *Renga* stands as something Paz intended to be a continuous, living work, “un cuerpo en perpetuo cambio” (Paz “Centro” n.p.). It was intended to spiral out through later amendments and subsequent translations, as a dynamic part of the ‘cultural matrix’. Its construction, in an echo of Sor Juana’s *Sueño*, is described by Paz as “una pirámide, una pira piramidal” (Paz “Centro” n.p.). In reality, however, it had little critical reaction and is not often talked about or studied, presumably, in favor of Paz’s ‘stronger’ poetic texts.

Renga is a sort of living hermeneutic, as it is as much about revealing the *process* of creation and interpretation, Paz's own evolving theories about authorship, identity and universal poetic language put into practice. Paz sees a text as always in movement. The (changing) meanings created by reader interaction, and the points of 'indeterminacy' (as seen in reader response theorists like Iser), or the distance between word and object, are important: "If we all see the same texts, they can hardly reflect our identity; if texts are reimagined as objects, they are never exactly 'the same,' and how we experience them as objects will always differ depending on who we are, or where, or when, or in what context we encounter them" (Hatfield 73). Following in Nietzsche's footsteps, who had inverted the process of creation by declaring that the poet is made by the work and not vice versa, Paz notes that in the surrealists "el poeta no es sino el lugar del encuentro". *Renga* takes this one step further; there is a *purpose* in the annulment of the "I" that is a result of the strict form: "en el renga los autores se anulan como individuos en beneficio de la obra común" (Paz, "Centro" n.p.). That "I" was also sacrificed in *The Waste Land* and in Pound's *Cantos*, in exaltation of a new form, dominated by imagism. Paz, in his universe of correspondences, had related *The Waste Land* to one of Picasso's cubist paintings or one of Braque's collages, seeing its "veradero parecido" in avant-garde visual arts (Paz, "Vuelta" 40), which relied heavily on 'defamiliarization' and indeterminacies.

The 'disappearance' of the poetic voice, or better yet, subjugation in favor of polyphony, also reflects the influence of Eastern philosophies in which "I" is an illusion, while simultaneously satisfying Paz's democratic ideals of poetic space as an egalitarian space. In his reflections on *Renga*, and echoing the masks of his *Laberinto*, he writes that

“yo es la máscara de nadie,” and that the *renga* form can be “un antídoto contra las nociones del autor y propiedad intelectual, una crítica del yo y del escritor y sus máscaras” (Paz, “Centro” n.p.). The traditional *renga* annuls this “I” by being a strictly regulated collaborative effort, in everything from who writes each segment, line count, themes, rotation of motifs, possible readings, etcetera. Paz notes that their version is an *analogy* of the original form, not an appropriation nor an exact mimesis. It is a translation, an interpretation guided by the rules of the original. It is also a translation in that it was originally written in the four native languages of the four poets (Paz, Roubaud, Sanguineti, Tomlinson), so that each poem is multilingual and polyphonic. They settled on the sonnet as an analogous form. Each poet started a ‘cycle’ by writing a quatrain, and the others would write in turn, completing each sonnet and starting the next in the cycle or series. Each cycle’s final sonnet would be completely written (monolingually) by the poet who had originated the series, after leaving the subterranean space and returning ‘home’.

The circularity and collaborative nature would have echoes of a practiced imagism in form and content, in the sense that the poems themselves became abstracted images, a “cadena de poemas, cadena de poemas-poetas, cadena de cadenas” (Paz, “Centro” n.p.). The idea of writing a multilingual sonnet has interesting implications, as poetic meter does not have direct equivalence between languages, and sonnets themselves have had evolving and various forms in English, Spanish, French and Italian. None of the poets involved addresses the issue, and furthermore there is a strange final silence from Sanguineti. He is the only of the four to not have included some sort of introductory note, and also did not finish his last sonnet, leaving a missing piece: IV₇. Tomlinson is the only

to comment on this, simply stating “Eduardo Sanguinetti deemed his sequence complete: his silence was his sonnet” (36–37).

The text as object (and the subsequent ‘identity-less’ poet) is carried further in the possible readings, in an iteration of the type of game carried out by Cortázar, for example, in *Rayuela*. It can be read horizontally or vertically, and in a variety of other circular patterns, such as the first quartet (in I₁) and the last tercet (in IV₆), both written by Paz, and followed by Sanguinetti’s silence:

El sol marcha sobre huesos ateridos:
en la cámara subterránea: gestaciones:
las bocas del metro ya son hormigueros.
Cesa el sueño: comienzan los lenguajes.

y la espiral se despliega y se niega y al desdecirse se dice
sol que se repliega centro eje vibración que estalla astro-cráneo
del Este al Oeste al Norte al Sur arriba abajo fluyen los lenguajes

This passage envelopes the Babel problematic, the beginning and flow of languages around the globe, moving and changing through space and time, in a spiral; the paradoxical nature of language that speaks and negates, that speaks through silences (tensions), that must use itself to talk about itself; the limits and possibilities of communication, poetic creation, and translation; and its own microcosm: it is meta-poetry and metonymy in that it alludes to the process of collaborating on the *Renga*, and to the whole, the fruit of the effort. Poetry and language in motion.

Renga was originally published in 1971 in France; Tomlinson translated and published a version in English later that year. Paz followed with his own Spanish version in 1972, in a new type of collaboration: Salvador Elizondo worked as a translator on that

edition, for Claude Roy and Roubaud's introductory texts; Joaquín Xirau Icaza translated Tomlinson's; Paz took charge of the poetry. Paz and Tomlinson are the only two who really continued the effort, post-publication, with any seriousness, as they continued another collaborative project in which they took turns writing sonnets (without rhyme, again) in English and Spanish, based on themes they took turns selecting, which eventually became *Airborn/Hijos del aire* (Dumitrescu 249). Tomlinson had seemed to be the closest to expressing the same level of enthusiasm as Paz for *Renga* when he closed his introductory note with "One still found oneself speaking with a communal voice: speaking with a communal voice, one found—once more—one's self" (Tomlinson 37). Paz wanted to make the poetic practice of annulling the poetic "I"—an intended move away from solipsism for the good of the collective, which is affected by his own political and ontological ideologies—truly a sustainable one.

Domnita Dumitrescu writes about *heteroglossia* in *Renga* in her study "Traducción y heteroglosia en la obra de Octavio Paz." She uses *heteroglossia* to mean "la intercalación de citas directas o paráfrasis de textos ajenos en el propio" (244), which is not the way I use it (I follow Bakhtin's sense although applied to poetic texts). Her use is closer to what Steiner refers to as 'interanimation', which is a natural byproduct of translation and of global literary contact in general. I would argue that this text is polyphonic over heteroglossic, as the variance happens in the voices of the 'annulled' (yet paradoxically present) poetic voices in distinct languages. Dumitrescu does offer some astute observations about Paz's conceptions on translation and their relation to *Renga*, a poem she praises as "la eliminación total de las fronteras idiomáticas individuales a favor del pensamiento colectivo plural y translingüístico, como expresión

genuina de la poesía contemporánea universal” (250). The idea of a universal contemporary poetry, relates to the idea of a universal poetic language, the correspondence among all, and has implications on Paz’s theorizations of translation.

Dumitrescu acknowledges that Paz’s approach is “más hermeneútica que lingüística” (242), as Paz sees parallels between the craft of translation and poetic creation: “es una operación análoga a la creación poética, solo que se despliegue en sentido inverso” (Paz, “Traducción” 7). This is a concretization of his earlier statements that the *renga* presented by the four poets was a *translation*, and analogy of the original form (and not, then, an appropriation), and that he owes this vision in part to Pound and Eliot: “los poetas de lengua inglesa, en particular Eliot y Pound, han mostrado que la traducción es una operación indistinguible de la creación poética” (Paz, “Centro” n.p.). Translation is a craft that complements Paz’s predilection for mythopoetic language, the historical and literary vision of continuity and rupture with tradition, and the universal spirit and poetic language that he sees as the answer to Babel. All of these perspectives lead Paz to conclude that translation is a specialized function of literature, as literature is a specialized function of language (Paz, “Traducción” 6). This nuances the belief that translation is simply a function of language, and adds a dimension of craft and (presumably, poetic) sensibility, and makes of the translator—and by association, his literary production—hierarchically equivalent with the poet. The translator represents the nation, the native tongue, at the same time that he embraces other cultural productions and blurs the boundaries between literary identities, in an analogy with Paz’s changing and sometimes paradoxical views on identity—particularly, literary identity.

Conclusions

Translation follows a parallel and spiraling trajectory in relation to literary movements, criticism and practices, in that a translation is always compared against the original, “parent text,” but also against previous and subsequent translations and criticism. Translation, as seen through the few specific cases shown in this chapter, is undeniably an important part of not only literary movements, but actually re-weaves the fabric of any given ‘topographical culture,’ becoming part of the cultural matrix.

Translations, like literary production, are always defined by or against their predecessors, and *mimesis* is not always the common enemy. The Mexican Vanguard, through the translated offerings of the *Contemporáneos*, exemplified embracing outside influences and easily ‘brought them home’. Juan Rulfo, José Gorostiza, and Octavio Paz proudly imported imagism and T.S. Eliot to add to their pantheon of predecessors, thus effectively rewriting the Mexican ‘cultural matrix’ to have a past now inclusive of Eliot and Anglo-Saxon poetic renovations.

In Steiner’s hermeneutic motion, the early aggression of textual appropriation during the translation process is ideally redeemed in the stage of “restitution” or “reciprocity”. Paz also sees the clear relationship between translation and poetic creation, and translation’s relationship to the principles of continuity and rupture that he sees as guiding changing forces in literary production (or movements), and further blurs the lines in the spiraling hermeneutic motion by the collaborative text *Renga*, in which the poetic “I” is annulled (or, at least, that is the intent). National, regional, particular identity is given up in a search for fusion with the universal. This reciprocally complements universalist translation theories since Walter Benjamin, in which the act of translation is a

sort of key to unlocking some sort of underlying, root language—a vestige from before the fall of Babel.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Conclusions

The writing of this study could in fact be considered a long process of translation: of synthesis of ideas and constant hermeneutic motions with the texts, close readings, textual exegesis, analysis of cultural codes, code-switching, and concretization of indeterminacies. Each of the writers studied—Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, José Martí, and Octavio Paz—are in a continual process of critical dialogue and ‘interanimation’ with texts and contexts produced long after their deaths. All three have an enormous corpus of literary works, as well as critical studies about them and their works, and upon studying them, one is conscious of all that is being *left out* of the study, and all the possible directions it could continue to grow in the future.

However, I have chosen works that are highly ‘representative’ of each, in the case of Sor Juana and Martí, and which offer a clear thread to follow from original text, to English renderings and the texts’ later positioning within criticism and the ‘cultural matrix’. They are more empirical, heuristic studies that lead to observations about theory and practice, and in some cases, the surprisingly uncritical eye of the critic. The chapter on Octavio Paz offers a view of the trajectory of translation in the context of literary movements and practices, particularly through imagism and the poem *The Waste Land* and its displacement in Mexican letters through the vanguard and beyond. I also analyze the profound affect of these translations on Octavio Paz and his lifelong theorizations on translation, poetic creation, and the universal nature of literature. In a sense he embodies Steiner’s claim that “the hermeneutic of appropriation is meant not only to enrich the

translator's native inheritance but to change it radically. *Translation is made metamorphosis of the national past*" (359, my emphasis).

Many of the instances I study are part of Steiner's "incorporative movement" and "restitution" phases of the hermeneutic motion, but in the case of Sor Juana, for example, there is a clear over-identification of the translator with the original author (in the phase of "active trust"). The "elective affinity" of the translator is in constant tension with the "resistant difference" of the text, and these moments of tension have led Sor Juana's translators to the sin of magnification, or wrongful concretization of indeterminacies from the original that should have been carried over as indeterminacies in the translation. These indeterminacies are present not only because of authorial intention, but also because of spatio-temporal distance from the original. Through time, "the phonetic sign, the word, may have remained stable, being arbitrary in its meanings, the *signifié* do not" (Steiner 352). In complex allegorical and metonymical texts like those of Sor Juana and Martí studied here, those arbitrary referents are not only dynamic through different cultural and linguistic codes, but also within the original text, as the signs move in parallel or conjunct relation to one another and to their referents. If the translator or critic has not carefully followed the signs' movements then the motion of 'restitution' or 'reciprocity' will not necessarily be satisfied.

Translation follows a parallel and spiraling trajectory in relation to literary movements, criticism and practices, in that a translation is always compared against the original, "parent text," but also against previous and subsequent translations and criticism. Meanings can be imbued in the text by the author, but a text is not a schematized object and every reading of that text will be a unique experience or

‘translation’, and a history of meanings develops, eventually becoming part of the ‘cultural matrix’. Meaning can be self-augmenting, and translation is one aspect of the histories of meaning of a text. For some, like Paz, translation is a step toward universal meaning, or to unlocking the root language lost at Babel.

In *After Babel*, Steiner discusses the problematic of Babel from various angles, but of course, always from within the limits of paradox and meta-language. Language resists complete schematization and concrete meaning, as does a literary text. As I have pointed out, Steiner says the “discussion of language is unstable and dialectical” (129). He later classifies the translator as “*antitheos*,” producing a synthesis, or translation, in relation to the original text, or thesis (348–49). This thesis has led me to question that assertion. While language is dialectical in nature, it is also *dialogic*, in the sense that Bakhtin uses the word. Seeing a translation as a dialectic synthesis offers it as a sort of ‘resolution’ with primacy over others, although existing in a state of tension with the original thesis. However, the relationship is actually unstable, and therefore in my opinion, the two texts exist relative to one another within an open system. A dialogic view of the texts complements the hermeneutics of translation and poetry in that it is more relativist or circumstantial. This allows for each original text and translation to always exist in a unique, dynamic relationship to each other that changes through time and space. The text, its translations, and studies on both, all become part of the spiraling critical dialogue, the exegesis and augmented meaning of the original, and in some way, all exist in response to one another—and perhaps, on a deeper, imperceptible level, in response to the problematic of Babel.

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APPENDIX I

OUR AMERICA (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

Our America²¹

The smug villager believes that his village is the whole world, and as long as he can become mayor, or the rival who stole his bride gets humiliated, or his piggy bank fills up, he assumes the universe to be in good order, ignorant of the giants in seven-league boots that could crush him, ignorant of the comets' cosmic scuffle, hurtling through the sleepy air, devouring worlds. What remains of the village in America must wake up. These are not times for sleeping in nightcaps, but with arms for pillows, like the elegiac heroes of Juan de Castellanos:²² arms of reason, which defeat all others. A trench made of ideas is worth more than a trench made of stones.

No prow can slice through an aurora of ideas. An energetic idea, fluttering at the right time before the world like the mystical flag of Judgment Day, can detain a fleet of warships. The peoples of the continent who don't know one another should get acquainted, and quickly, as those who are going to come together in arms. Those who threaten one another with fists, like jealous brothers who desire the same land, or like one who lives in a smaller house and envies the brother who lives better, need to bring their two hands together as one. Those who, under the safeguard of a criminal tradition, amputated the lands of a defeated brother already punished far beyond his offenses, with a sword stained in blood from his own veins, must return their brother's lands if they do not wish to be called thieves. The honorable man does not call in debts of honor with money, at so much per wallop. We can no longer be a people made of leaves, living in the air, our crown loaded with flowers, crackling or humming with caresses from the capricious sunlight, or beating and thrashing from the storms: the trees must stand in line, so the giant in seven-league boots cannot pass! Now is the hour of reckoning, the time to march united, shoulder-to-shoulder, like the silver coursing through the veins of the Andes.

Only those born prematurely are lacking courage. Those who don't have faith in their land are premature-born weaklings. Because they are lacking courage, they deny it to other people. Their puny arms fall short of reaching the tree—their arms with bracelets and painted nails, arms of Paris or Madrid—, yet they say the branches are out of grasp. We must load our ships with these destructive insects gnawing at the bones of the very patria that nourishes them. If you are Parisians or from Madrid, then go stroll through the Prado passing as coxcombs, or go to Tortoni's caffè in high hats, posing as sipping straws. These carpenter's sons, ashamed of their carpenter fathers! These sons of

²¹ This translation was based on “*Nuestra América*, texto cenital de José Martí” edited by Cintio Vitier and published in *José Martí a Cien Años de Nuestra América* (Coord. Jesús Serna Moreno and Ma. Teresa Bosque Lastra, 1993). Four other English translations were consulted: Onís (1953); Randall (1977)/Shnookal and Muñiz (2007); Allen (2002). I made use of footnotes from Vitier, Allen, Randall, and Shnookal and Muñiz when creating my own.

²² “Elegiac heroes of Juan de Castellanos”: (1552-1607) Spanish epic poet, soldier and later priest. The heroes Martí refers to are from Castellanos's *Elegías de varones ilustres de Indias* (1589), written in Nueva Granada (now Colombia), 113, 609 lines that recount various aspects of the Conquest. Here Martí establishes a connection with Latin American history since the Conquest, as well as with literary antecedents.

America, ashamed because they were raised behind the Indian apron of their mother, and then they reject that ailing mother, the scoundrels, abandoning her on her sickbed.

So then, who is the real man? The one who stays with his mother, to cure her illness, or the one who puts her to work out of sight, and lives from her sustenance on the corrupted lands, with a worm for a tie, cursing the breast that nursed him, displaying the sign of the traitor on the back of his paper coat and tails? These sons of Our America, who must save herself along with her Indians, and is moving from worse to better, these deserters that ask for a rifle in the armies of North America, which drowns its Indians in blood, and goes from better to worse! These dandies, who are supposed to be men, and don't want to do the work of men! Well, the Washington that made this land, did he go live with the English in the years he saw them threatening his own country? These effete *incroyables* of honor, who drag that honor across foreign soil, just as their namesakes during the French Revolution, dancing and putting on airs, affected their speech.

In what other patria could a man have more pride than in our suffering American republics, which rose up amongst masses of silent Indians, to the sound of the struggle between the book and the cassock, upon the bloody arms of a hundred apostles? From such disparate factors, never, in less historic time, have such advanced and solid nations been forged. The arrogant man believes the land was made to serve as his pedestal, because he has an easy way with the pen or a colorful tongue, and accuses his native republic of being impotent and irredeemable because the pristine jungles don't provide him with the means to travel the world like a famous pasha, guiding Persian mares and spilling champagne. The impotency is not in the nascent country, seeking suitable forms and utilitarian greatness, but in those who want to govern original nations, of a unique and violent composition, with laws inherited from four centuries of their free practice in the United States, from nineteen centuries under monarchic rule in France. A decree from Hamilton²³ does not halt the charge of the plainsman's colt. A phrase from Sieyès²⁴ does not move the stagnant blood of the Indian race. In order to be able to govern well, one must attend to things as they are; the good leader in America is not he who knows how the French or the German govern themselves, but he who knows with which elements his country is made, and how to harness them in order to arrive, through methods and institutions born of the country itself, to that desired state where all men achieve self-fulfillment and exercise their rights, and everyone enjoys the bounty provided by Nature in the lands they enrich with their labor and defend with their lives. The government must be born of the country. The spirit of the government must be that of the country. The form of government must comply with the natural constitution of the country.

Government is nothing more than equilibrium of the natural elements of the country. Because of that, in America the natural man has vanquished the imported book. The natural man has defeated the artificial, learned man. The autochthonous Mestizo has

²³ Alexander Hamilton (1757?-1804): A soldier in the Revolutionary War and founding Father of the United States, economist, Secretary of the Treasury under George Washington (1789-95), founder and leader of the Federalist Party.

²⁴ Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès (1748-1836): French clergyman and author of *Qu'est-ce que le tiers-état?* (*What is the Third Estate?*) preceding the French Revolution (1789), later became one of its leading figures. Involved in drafting the Declaration of the Rights of Man (August 26, 1789).

defeated the exotic Creole. There is no battle between civilization and barbarism, but between false erudition and Nature. The natural man is good and obedient and prizes superior intelligence in others, as long as that superior intelligence doesn't use his humility against him, or offend him by finding him dispensable, which is something the natural man doesn't easily forgive; he is disposed to use force to recover the respect of those who injure his sensitivities or are prejudicial to his interests. The tyrants of America have come into power by conforming to its disdained natural elements, and have fallen as soon as they betrayed them. Through those tyrannies, the republics have purged their inability to grasp the true elements of their country, to derive from them a form of government, and to govern with them. Leader, in a new nation, means to say creator.

In nations composed of both cultured and uncultured elements, where the cultured don't learn the art of governance, the uncultured will govern by their habit of bullying and resolving problems with their fists. The uncultured masses are lazy, and feeble in questions of intelligence, and they want to be governed well; but if the government hurts them, they will rebel and govern themselves. If there is no university in America that teaches the rudiments of the art of governance, that is, the analysis of the singular elements of the peoples of America, how are leaders supposed to emerge from those universities? As it stands, the young enter the world looking through Yankee or French spectacles, and aspire to lead a nation they don't know. In political careers, entry should be denied to those who are unfamiliar with the rudiments of politics. Competition prizes should not go to the best ode, but to the best study of the factors of the country in which one lives. In the newspapers, in professorships, in the academy, the real factors of the country should be investigated. Knowing them without bandages or embellishments is enough; because he who puts aside part of the truth, voluntarily or from forgetfulness, will fail in the long run from that missing truth, which grows in its negligence, and topples that which is raised without it as a base. Resolving a problem after knowing its elements is easier than resolving it without knowing them. Here comes the natural man, indignant and strong, demolishing the justice accumulated through books because it is not administered in accordance with the clear necessities of the country. To know is to resolve.

Knowing the country, and governing it in accordance with that knowledge, is the only way to liberate it from tyrannies. The European university must cede to the American one. American history, the history of the Incas, should be learnt by heart, even if that means the archons of Greece will not be taught. Our Greece takes priority over the Greece that is not ours. It is more necessary to us. National politicians need to replace exotic ones. Let the world graft itself onto our republics; but the trunk must be our own. And the defeated pedant can be silent; there is no other patria in which a man can have more pride than in our suffering American republics.

With our steps guided by the rosary, with a white face and a bronzed body, Indians and Creoles, we came, undaunted, into the world of nations. Under the banner of the Virgin we went out to meet the conquest for liberty. A priest, a handful of lieutenants and a woman raise up the Republic in Mexico, on the shoulders of Indians.²⁵ A Spanish

²⁵ "Under the banner of the Virgin... A priest, a handful of lieutenants and a woman": The Virgin of Guadalupe, whose image was used by the armed forces led by Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla (1753-1811), an elderly priest. He initiated the Mexican Revolution in the town of Dolores on September 16, 1810. The

cleric, under the cover of his priestly cope, instructs some magnificent young students in the French concept of liberty, who then make the Spanish general the leader of Central America against Spain.²⁶ Dressed in monarchic habits, and with the sun on their chest, nations began to arise, the Venezuelans in the North and the Argentines in the South. When the two heroes clashed, and the Continent was going to tremble, one, who was not the lesser man, gave up the reins.²⁷

Since heroism during peacetime is less common because it is less glorious than during wartime, it is easier for a man to die with honor than to think with order. Governing when sentiments are unanimous and exalted is more feasible than leading diverse, arrogant, exotic, or ambitious thinking after wartime. The powers invested in the epic assault undermined, with the cunning of the feline species and the weight of reality, the building that had raised—in the coarse and singular regions of our mestizo America, in the nations where bare legs clash with tailcoats from Paris—the flag of a people nourished by vital juices governing in the continual practice of liberty and reason. The hierarchical constitution of the colonies resisted the democratic organization of the republic, or the bow-tied capitals left their country boots and horse shoes in the vestibule, or the bibliogenic redeemers didn't understand that the revolution that triumphed with the soul of the land upon the voice of its savior, must be governed by the soul of the land, not against her nor without her. America began to suffer, and still suffers, from the fatigue of accommodation between the discordant and hostile elements that it inherited from a malicious, despotic colonizer, and the imported ideas and patterns that have been retarding, due to their lack of correspondence to local reality, the logical form of government.

The Continent, disjointed for three centuries because of governance that negated man's right to exercise reason, overlooking or unheeding the ignorant masses that had helped it to redeem itself, entered into a government based on reason, of everybody for the common good, and not one man's university-learned reason over the homegrown reasoning of others. The problem of independence wasn't the change in forms, but the change in spirit. With the oppressed there needed to be made a common cause, to establish a system opposite to the interests and habits of command of the oppressors. The tiger, frightened from the fire, returns at night to the place of his prey. He dies with flames shooting from his eyes and with his claws in the air. He can't be heard approaching; he draws nearer with his paws of velvet. When the prey awakes, the tiger is

woman Martí refers to is Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez (1768-1829), wife of the chief magistrate of Querétaro.

²⁶ “Put the general of Spain as leader”: Martí is referring to General Gabino Gaínza, of Basque origin, who on September 15, 1821, was named leader of the new Central American government, separated from the Spanish crown.

²⁷ “When the two heroes clashed...”: Simón Bolívar (1783-1830) and General José de San Martín (1778-1850). Bolívar led revolutions of independence beginning in 1810 in Venezuela and moving south. San Martín began in Argentina in 1813 and moved north. On July 26-27, 1822, they met in Guayaquil. San Martín accepted Bolívar as uncontested leader, renounced his title as Protector of Peru and retired to France.

upon it. The Colony continued living on in the Republic; and Our America is saving herself from her grand errors—the arrogance of the capital cities, the blind triumph of the scorned countrymen, the excessive importation of extraneous ideas and formulas, the iniquitous and imprudent disdain of the aboriginal race—by way of the superior virtue, fertilized with necessary bloodshed, of the Republic that combats the Colony. The tiger waits, lurking behind every tree, crouched in every corner. He will die, with his claws in the air and flames shooting from his eyes.

But, “these countries will save themselves,” announced the Argentine Rivadavia,²⁸ whose only sin was being a refined man in rough times; a machete isn’t housed in a silken sheathe, nor can a country that was won with the sword leave it behind, because it becomes angered, and stands in the door of Iturbide’s Congress²⁹ demanding that “they make the fair-haired guy emperor.” These countries will be saved because—due to the moderate temperament that appears to reign, due to the serene harmony of Nature within the continent of light, and due to the flow of critical thought in Europe succeeding the utopic experimentation and Fourier’s imagined phalanstery that saturated the previous generation—in America, in these real times, the real man is emerging.

We were a vision, with an athlete’s chest, the hands of a dandy, and the forehead of a child. We were a mask, with English breeches, a Parisian vest, an American short coat and the cap of a Spanish bullfighter. The silent Indian hovered around us and went to the mountain, high up to the top of the mountain, to baptize his children. The Negro, under scornful vigil, sang the music of his heart throughout the night, alone and unknown, among the waves and the beasts. The countryman, the creator, blind with indignation, revolted against the disdainful city, against his own creation.

We were epaulets and togas, in countries that came to the world with rope sandals on their feet and headdresses on their heads. The genius would have been in uniting, with the founders’ boldness and charity of heart, the headdress and the toga; in stirring the stagnant Indian; in making space for the able Negro; in bestowing liberty upon the bodies that rose up and fought for her. We were left with the judge, and the general, and the scholar, and the prebendary. The angelic youth, as if rising from the arms of an octopus, threw their heads to the heavens, only to let them fall in sterile grace, crowned with clouds. The native people, driven by instinct, blind with triumph, crushed the golden staffs that ruled them. Neither European nor Yankee books provided the clues needed to crack the Hispano-American enigma. Hatred was tried out, and the countries worsened

²⁸ Bernardino Rivadavia (1780-1845): Argentine politician and dignitary, involved in the independence struggle and elected as the first president of the United Provinces of Río de la Plata in 1826. He promoted a Unitarian Constitution and improvements to the cultural institutions and infrastructure of Buenos Aires. Faced with Federalist opposition he resigned in 1827 and spent his life in exile, eventually dying in the Spanish city of Cádiz.

²⁹ “Iturbide’s Congress”: Agustín de Iturbide (1783-1824), Mexican general and leader of a conservative faction in Mexico’s independence movement. On May 18, 1822 Sergeant Pío Marcha declared him emperor, an act that the new Mexican Congress had to ratify, and to which Martí is alluding here. Iturbide’s conservative ideology was not in line with the liberal state envisioned by many during the Revolution, and in March of 1823 he abdicated and was eventually executed.

each year. Tired of useless hatred, of the resistance of the book to the sword, of reason against the cassock, of the city against the countryside, of the impossible empire of urban castes spread across the tempestuous or inert natural nation, love, almost inadvertently, begins to be tried out.

The nations rise up and greet one another. “How are we?” they ask each other, and one-by-one they say how they are. When a problem arises in Cojimar, they don’t look for the solution in Danzig. The frockcoats are still French, but the thinking begins to be from America. The youth of America roll their sleeves up to their elbows, put their hands in the dough, and make it rise with the leavening from their sweat. They understand that imitation happens too often, and that salvation is in creation. To create is the prerogative of this generation. The wine, from plantains; and if it comes out sour, at least it is our wine!

It is understood that the forms of governance of a country should conform to its natural elements; that absolute ideas, in order not to fail due to an error in form, should become relative forms; that freedom, in order to be viable, needs to be sincere and complete; and if the republic doesn’t embrace all and move forward with all, it dies. The tiger within enters by way of the crevice, as does the tiger without. In the march, the general holds back the cavalry to the pace of the infantry. If he leaves the infantry behind, the enemy surrounds the cavalry. Strategy is politics. Nations must live criticizing one another, because criticism is health, but only with one heart and one mind. Stoop down to those who are miserable and raise them up in your arms! With the fire in your hearts, thaw out the frozen America! Send the natural blood of the country bubbling and burning through her veins!

On foot, with the happy eyes of workers, the new American men greet one another, from one nation to another. The natural statesmen arise out of the direct study of Nature. They read to apply knowledge, but not to imitate. Economists study the origins of problems. Orators begin to wizen up. Dramatists bring native characters to the stage. Academies discuss practical topics. Poetry cuts its romantic Zorrilla-esque mane and hangs its red vest on the glorious tree.³⁰ Prose, sparkling and sifted, is loaded with ideas. Leaders, in the lands of Indians, learn to speak Indian.

From all of her dangers, America is saving herself. Over a few republics the octopus still lays dormant. Others, because of the natural law of equilibrium, run like mad to the sea to recover, with crazy and sublime haste, the lost centuries. Others ride on a carriage of wind with soap bubbles for a coachman, forgetting that Juárez rode around in a mule-cart;³¹ poisonous luxury, the enemy of freedom, corrupts the fragile man and opens the door to the foreigner. Others refine their virile character with the epic spirit of threatened independence. Others raise, in predatory war against their neighbor, a military that can devour them.

³⁰ “Zorrilla-esque mane...glorious tree”: A reference to Spanish Romantic poet José Zorrilla (1817-1893), and the *gilet flamboyant* described by Victor Hugo, symbolizing the triumph of Romanticism in France. The glorious tree, according to Vitier, is the laurel, the tree of artistic fame. History is to be revered but Martí is calling for a change in aesthetics and ideology.

³¹ Benito Juárez (1806-1872): Of Zapotec origin, Juárez served for five terms as constitutional president of Mexico from 1858 until his death. He is a widely revered nineteenth-century liberal political figure.

And, perhaps Our America runs the risk of yet another danger that doesn't come from within, but from the differences in origins, methods and interests between the two continental factors. Soon the time will come when an enterprising, booming nation that disdains her and isn't familiar with her, draws near, demanding intimate relations. Virile nations that have made the shotgun and the law their own love and only love other virile nations. The time of excess and ambition—from which North America will hopefully escape, thanks to the predominance of the purest of its blood, or into which she may be plunged by her sordid and vengeful masses, the tradition of conquest, and the interest of an able caudillo—is still not so close to the eyes of the timid that there not be time to test discreet and continuous high-mindedness, with which it could be challenged and diverted. As her decorum of a republic before the attentive nations of the Universe puts a brake on North America that should not be removed by foolish provocation or ostentatious arrogance, to the parricidal discordance of Our America, the urgent task of Our America is to show herself as she is, one in soul and intent, fierce defeater of a suffocating past, only stained by the fertile blood drawn out of hands that battle against ruins and from the veins that our masters left open.

The biggest threat to Our America is the disdain of a formidable neighbor that doesn't know her; and it is urgent, because the day of the visit is nigh, the neighbor must know her, and know her soon, so as not to scorn her. Avarice may enter into her out of ignorance. But, upon knowing her, he would take his hands away out of respect. One must have faith in the best of man and mistrust in the worst of man. You must give occasion that the best of man will reveal itself and prevail over the worst. If not, the worst prevails. Nations should have a pillory for those who foment useless hatred, and another for those who don't tell the truth on time.

There is no hatred among races because there are no races. Feeble thinkers, candlelight thinkers, mix up and reheat bookshelf races, which the just traveler and the cordial observer look for in vain in the justice of Nature, where instead the universal identity of man stands out, in victorious love and turbulent appetite. The soul emanates, equal and eternal, from bodies diverse in shape and color. He who foments and propagates opposition and hatred among races sins against Humanity. But with the proximity of other diverse peoples, in the dough of the nations are condensed peculiar and active characteristics—of ideas and habits, of expansion and acquisition, of vanity and avarice—that from a latent state of national preoccupations could, in a period of internal disorder or of the precipitation of the accumulated national character, become a grave threat to neighboring lands, isolated and weak, which the stronger country determines to be perishable or inferior. To think is to serve.

Nor should one presume, out of provincial antipathy, an innate and fatal evilness in the fair-skinned peoples of the Continent because they don't speak our language, nor see the home as we do, nor resemble us in their political scars, which are different from ours, nor esteem much the querulous mulatto, nor look charitably, from their as-yet unsecure eminence, at those who, less favored by History, build the way to republics through heroic deeds. The patent information should not be hidden about the problem that can be resolved, for the peace of centuries, with the opportune study and tacit and urgent union of the continental soul. The unanimous hymn is already sounding; the current generation carries, along the path fertilized by our sublime forefathers, industrious

America. From the Río Grande to the Strait of Magellan, the Great Cemí,³² seated on the back of the condor, has sown, among the romantic nations of the Continent and the suffering islands of the sea, the seed of the New America!

³² “Cemí”: Martí closes with a particularly Caribbean image, connecting it with the condor, symbolic of the Andean peoples and the South American Continent in general. The cemíes were spirits worshipped by the Taino peoples, and the term also refers to the (often) tri-cornered clay objects that represented and housed those spirits.