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The Truncated Independence of Latin America:
Alejo Carpentier's Historical Realism

By

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

Comparative Literature

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DAVIS

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2024

Abstract:

The Haitian Revolution won national independence through ardent battle with successive European colonial powers, simultaneously sparking a wave of slave abolition and aligning with the most radical sectors of the French Revolution. Against that standard, the states then detaching from Spain like Bolívar's Gran Colombia appear as deeply ambiguous victories, dangling abolition cynically before the slaves in part to reduce their numbers as cannon fodder, repressing the persistent attempts at state-formation by the descendents of Inca, and preserving the economic and political power of a narrow national bourgeoisie.

This dissertation analyzes the role of independence in Latin America, beginning with a close reading of a key narrative of the region's genesis, Alejo Carpentier's *El siglo de las luces.* I focus on Carpentier's concept of Latin American reality as a bridge connecting the elite structure of the Creole Republics in the 1820s to what ensues: an idiosyncratic mix of endogenous vanguard movements with unextinguished tracts of pre-colonial ecosystems, and an ethnically heterodox *mestizaje* reflecting histories of migration, African chattel slavery, and extant indigenous nations – all in perennial antagonism under the United States' regional hegemony.

Aiming to retrieve Carpentier from the staid tomb of a reputation determined by the Yale Lit Crit of González Echevarría, I track the continuity of his fiction, and folkloric studies like *La música en Cuba,* with landmark works on the continent's liberation struggle like *The Black Jacobins* and *Las venas abiertas de América latina.* Applying the framework of his musicology in the Caribbean to case studies on Chile and the U.S., the second chapter sketches a genealogy of national-popular aesthetics in the Americas through artists such as Violeta Parra and Woody Guthrie.

The Latin American reality that developed out of the colonial and pre-Columbian periods is also given a surprisingly insightful description in writings by Karl Marx. My third chapter is an exposition of those little-known texts and their reception by thinkers like Álvaro García Linera. I argue that the historical materialism of Latin American independence that they articulate finds a complementary narrative form in Carpentier's realism.

In these three long-form chapters, I articulate the historical, cultural, and political valences of the reality represented in Carpentier. Key issues raised include abolition, reification, folklore, the capitalist unconscious, the indigenous peasantry, ecology and the national-popular. The central thinkers considered include C.L.R. James, García Linera, Violeta Parra, Marx, Fredric Jameson, and Eduardo Galeano.

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This copy prepared by Patrick Cabell in May, 2024, for the committee, Department of Comparative Literature and Graduate Studies at UC Davis. Please borrow at will and contact author for issues with use.

Dedication:

Davis

for Peter Dale Scott

Resplendent flags of Azov whipped up by the stochastic leaf-blowers' alarum trumpets,

On the back of someone in from Esparto, nowhere exotic enough to pay this rent

Little campesino towns out there that still know the Delta breeze and tule fog

Where once Alcatraz occupiers hijacked the primate center turned military base

Aztlan murals across their sides like the UNAM, how DQU tribal university could have been

But Governor Reagan sicced his agents to 'turn indians and mexicans against each other.'

Then the first attack in North America by the Animal Liberation Front,

Impassioned youth burnt down property not people in defense of wild land and animals

Talk of primate torture center I found statistics online once that quickly disappeared[*]

Legal activism in the main quad passing out whistleblowing photos of vivisection

An industry term from Latin *vivus* - alive, *sectio* - cutting

Oh, the things students can discover with the right tools, you will be amazed at the scope

Until Huntingdon Life Sciences consulted to write the 2006 Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act

Goodbye deep ecology wing, Gary Snyder, organic utopians under geodesic domes

Hello laureate pæans to Monsanto whose executives enter the revolving door of admin

Bought again by Bayer, fascist pharma-chemical nexus spawned by indigo colonies, Zyklon B

Like John Pike's freaky Seurat eyedrops soaking stoic balaclavas in meme-history

UC Pepper Spray,[†] the spot now occupied by Popular University for Liberated Palestine,

Demanding, #5, that Chancellor Gary May resign from the board of Leidos,

Who armed Israel's genocide to the tune of $340k sale of personal stocks on 02/21/2024.[‡]

Parents stroll quaint ice-cream boutiques, tourguide majors in STEM ‘so I can payoff my loans’

Free taxis for the homeless to a place of our choosing

A glorious superabundance of Covid-19 tests and masks that partially block

Strange pollens on winds from droopy, red-eyed Cowschwitz

Blown across the emaciated topsoil of big ag’s breadbasket.

Good liberals fundraise futile campaigns in Kentucky against senator Rand Paul

Know better than to repeat him asking in 2022 why UC Davis passed funds as middleman

Between USAID and Biosafety Level 4 lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (BSL-4)

Ecohealth Alliance, Project Predict, Peter Daszak, we eschew the DOE’s conspiracy theories.[§]

Those from the Kansas heartlands, who got into Pelican Bay instead, can follow up on

John Philip Nichols,[¶] implicated in the 1981 Cabazon triple-murder, and somehow

General manager of Coca-Cola in Sao Paulo while involved in Allende’s overthrow,[#]

Writing on 2/15/1983 to DARPA’s Tactical Technology Office that, I will send you

“A unique list of agents and production techniques related to biological warfare.

The Stormont Laboratories, Inc… products could be utilized in small countries bordering Albania

Or large countries bordering the Soviet Union. You will be amazed at the scope.”

As in UCD School of Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Genetics Lab founder Clyde Stormont

Retired emeritus in 1982, with colleagues start in nearby Woodland that Stormont Laboratories

Which within months had U.S. Military plans for viral warfare with espionage firm Wackenhut.[**]

But I don’t get out there much, would rather do surveys from my room, read forwarded emails,

Teach the next generation on online platforms, letter grades and pre-recorded lectures,

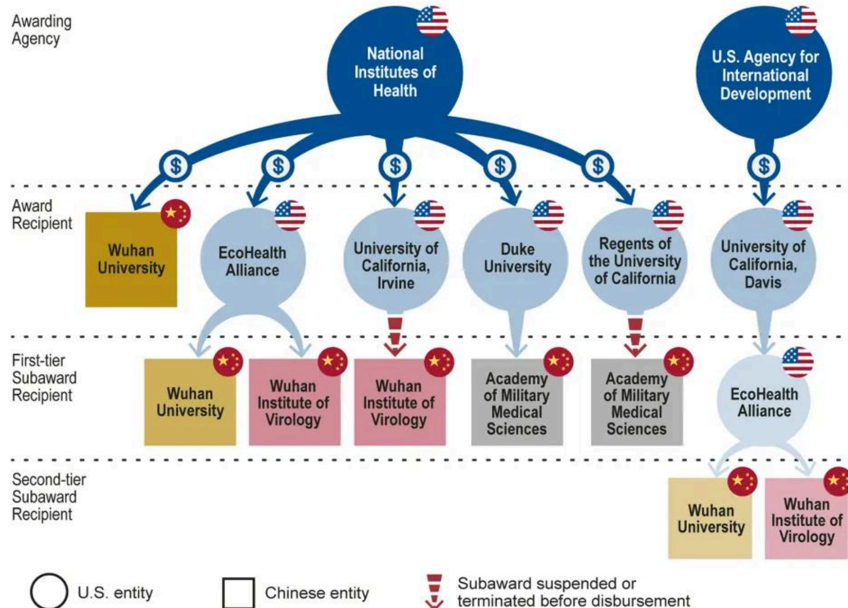
Caught as they are between being stripped of all sense or, I’d tell them once in a while,

From a certain angle between the sky and tree tops, you can still make out what’s coming.

[*] Anonymous online source, circa 2014. “The University of California, Davis imprisons over 7600 primates including rhesus monkeys and titi monkeys. The animals at this facility suffer terribly in experiments which subject them to infectious diseases, and other highly invasive procedures. These procedures include confining primates to restraint chairs with heads bolted in place and extended periods of water deprivation.
The health and well-being of primates at this facility are clearly very bad based on information from UC Davis primate health care records. Postmortems for 404 primates show 117 diagnoses of colitis, and inanition – a bodily condition resembling starvation – was diagnosed 108 times. Dehydration is noted 91 times. Treatment records for these animals disclose 403 instances of traumatic injuries, including 143 amputations. There were 387 wounds, 221 bites, 70 abrasions, and 40 fractures.”

[†] Stanton, Sam and Lambert, Diana. “UC Davis Spent Thousands to Scrub Pepper-Spray References from Internet.” *Sacramento Bee*, April 13, 2016.

[‡] Clover, Joshua. “Form, Content, and Palestine.” *The California Aggie*, May 12, 2024.



[§] Press Release: “COVID Origins Hearing Wrap Up: Facts, Science, Evidence Point to a Wuhan Lab Leak.” House Committee on Oversight and Accountability, March 8, 2023. Source: Christenson, Josh. “US Taxpayers Funded $2M Worth of Research in Wuhan, China.” *New York Post,* June 14, 2023. Caption: US taxpayer money funded research in three Chinese labs that included risky gain-of-function experiments with coronaviruses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, a new government report found: U.S. Government Accountability Office.

[¶] FBI public FOIA request (# 1344360-000, subject: NICHOLS, JOHN PHILIP) to Mr. Michael Best.

[#] “Research should adhere to a specific region, language, identity, and time period.” (cf. Latin America)

[**] NSA documents photographed by Christian Hansen from Danny Casolaro's research files at the Missouri State Historical Society.

Preface

The Americas name both one of the globe's geographic regions, as well as a unique experience in world history. José Martí's "*Nuestra América,"* is one of the best known iterations of a political and cultural identity bound up with the geographical integrity of North, South, Central America and the Caribbean. The Cuban revolutionary sang of a common spirit imbued in the land, people, and history from the Río Bravo to the Strait of Magellan, in fraught tango with its northern step-brother. Another Cuban born a few years after Martí's death, Alejo Carpentier, may lay claim to the most profound representation of such a shared reality. Narrated across a set of historical novels, ethnographic and musical writings, what Carpentier labeled Latin American reality emerges as a nuanced experience sundered in the continents' colonial history, indigenous base, new creole and mestizo racial demographics, lush flora and fauna, and idiosyncratic political and cultural expressions. Carpentier's personal life was marked by the necessary universality of the Caribbean islands, a constellation traced through letters, radio, revolutionary contagion, and periodic exile. The literature that emerged presents a reconception of the region and forces us to confront aporias such as the conjoining of Latin American reality with the "non-latino" North. Replacing the prevailing reading of Carpentier, this dissertation aims to determine how contemporary literature is relevant to the struggles that form the modern world.

The first chapter grounds Carpentier's concept of history through a reading of his masterpiece, *El siglo de las luces.* The novel gives narrative form to the core events in the making of the contemporary Americas: the abolition of slavery and the independence of the former colonies. Assessing the insufficiencies of the leading scholarship on Carpentier, I demonstrate how this analysis failed to align with his own political commitments and note the importance of

pan-American revolutionary movements to Carpentier's life and work. Articulating the radical historical causality at play in the novel's history of the 19th century Caribbean revolutions, the chapter draws comparisons with two foundational histories of the region, Eduardo Galeano's *Las venas abiertas de América latina* and C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins.* Another chapter gives an overview of the wars of independence in New Spain that *El siglo de las luces* foregrounds. From this I reconstruct a vital debate, sparked by an overlooked attack from Karl Marx on the icon of Simón Bolívar, about the nature of Latin American reality by two leading theorists, Álvaro García Linera and José Aricó. Carpentier's literary realism is seen to overlap with a shrewd political realism regarding the determining logic of the historical process, underpinned by a vision of communism characterized by its national-popular component. That last figure is explored in Chapter 2 as a category that binds together the region's natural, political, demographic and cultural history. Here, the musical analysis that Carpentier first applied to Haiti and Cuba is shown to work across the greater region, as he intended, distinguishing the national-popular from traditional conceptions of the folkloric. That distinction demonstrates the migratory and universalist principles that lie at the core of his Latin American reality.

As a dissertation in the field of Comparative Literature, these chapters follow in the tradition of Fredric Jameson in enlisting Marxist reading strategies, practicing interdisciplinarity, and working both within and against the conventions of period, linguistic, and area studies. For example, a materialist reading of *El siglo de las luces* moves amongst a variety of interpretive levels: philology on the author's life, genre comparisons around historical fiction, analysis of the period spanning the novel's action and the author's own, close formal readings of the work, and discussions on the key themes of independence in the Americas, revolutionary internationalism, cosmopolitanism and exile.

Chapter One introduces *El siglo de las luces*, examining its critical reception and situating it within the framework of historical realism articulated by Jameson, Perry Anderson, and Lukács. I argue that the core of the work, from which its profundity and effect extend, is a question about the operation of history itself, with its dwelling on the ambiguity of epochal transformations: first and foremost the independence of the Americas, the abolition of slavery, and the liberatory measure of the revolutions in Europe and the New World. In other words, what did independence accomplish, and what tasks did it leave unfinished?

Chapter Two addresses Carpentier's critical and aesthetic manifesto, *La música en Cuba,* and situates it as a key moment in the development of his mature worldview. Drawing from Brennan's introduction to the work, I emphasize Carpentier's anti-essentialist politics and his important leap from negrismo to revolutionary 'transculturalism', a concept borrowed from his predecessor, Fernando Ortiz. Three components are identified in Carpentier's conception of the uniqueness of Latin American reality and its aesthetic representations. The first is the continent's history of *mestizaje,* which places a premium on the creolization of the former slaves, indigenous, and immigrants as a historical process, over and above any nativist assertions of national, ethnic or identitarian boundaries. The second is the shape, quality, and biodiversity of the territory itself, what he deems its extant nature that colonialism fell short of liquidating. The third is a species of endogenous vanguardism that inverts the misconceptions of *surréalisme* as a formal radicalism opaque to the masses, instead identifying its futurist and innovative elements as emerging from the 'low' dances and culture of the popular classes. These categories are then used for an expository reading of two distinct traditions of folk music in the U.S. and Chile. I demonstrate that Carpentier's classification works to unveil the relationship between particular musical developments and their political context. In the U.S., we consider the effect of sound recording, the production of 'black' art for market consumption, and the pairing of folk art and protest. In Chile, I offer a comprehensive analysis of Violeta Parra's

largely untranslated work, examining her reinvention of the folkloric vanguard and the role this played in the national struggle that made Salvador Allende an international icon.

Chapter Three takes up the ambiguous result of the independence movement determined in *El siglo de las luces.* Its implications for Latin American reality are first framed by Karl Marx and then rejoined by two significant 20th century Marxists: García Linera and José Aricó. At the core of this debate is the class position of the indigenous peasantry and their failed assimilation under the nation-building project. A framework emerges from these thinkers for grasping the historical movements animating Carpentier's novel as essentially two-pronged: an interpenetrating cycle of causality between the Great Power contests for economic dominance and the self-determination of civil society. This conflict is presented in a chronology moving towards the United States' assumption of the colonial system and its reorganization along new guidelines, situating the world of Carpentier's birth and early formation.

Chapter 1.

El siglo de las luces: The Americas in World-History

"The problem for independence was not the change in forms, but the change in spirit."
- Jose Martí, "Nuestra América"

This chapter considers the history of Latin American reality through an extended reading of Carpentier's 1961 novel, *El siglo de las luces,* which narrates the Caribbean theater of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. Behind this setting, the novel gives representation to the most profound historical processes of the epoch: the abolition of slavery and the independence of the Americas. I build on Perry Anderson's argument that Carpentier's elevation of the Historical Novel genre lies in finding a narrative form adequate to these fundamental questions about how history is made. This discussion includes a digression through the central place that history takes in the philosophical system of Fredric Jameson, noting that Jameson relies as a figure for the complexity of historical causality on the same geographical images used in Carpentier. The bulk of the chapter demonstrates the affinity and complementarity of Carpentier's narrative with the revolutionary tradition of the Caribbean, emblemized by a comparison to C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins.* I conclude with a close reading of the shortcomings of the independence movement, as anticipated in the novel, which are seen to foreshadow the underdeveloped character of the subsequent creole republics.

Introduction

- In this section, I introduce the novel and evaluate the conclusions of the present scholarship.

2023 marked the release of a new English translation of Alejo Carpentier's masterpiece, *El siglo de las luces (Explosion in a Cathedral).* The forward by Chilean novelist Alejandro Zambra contemplates, somewhat inconclusively, what new insights might emerge from readers today whose world is so different from the one that produced the novel, let alone from the history it narrates. However, he mentions in passing the central question that the novel asks of readers in any era, "Is it possible to change history without violence, without thousands of innocent dead?"[1] Today, when there is little movement towards fully realizing the achievements of independence and abolition that mark the novel's horizons, the question is even more to the point: Is it possible to change history at all?

The most significant Cuban novelist of the 20th Century, Carpentier (1904-1980) is often cited alongside Borges and Asturias as the forerunners of the Latin American literary boom. Widely educated and well-traveled, he was born to a French man and Russian woman, and lived much of his youth in France. He wrote broadly across disciplines, was a radio pioneer, a trained musician, a political dissident, and, after 1959, a member of the Communist Party government of Cuba. His two most celebrated literary contributions are the early elaboration of *lo real maravilloso,* and the later exposition of the baroque spirit of the Americas.[2] A comprehensive study of Carpentier in English written by Roberto González-Echevarría was once celebrated by Ángel Rama as "the best work to date on Carpentier."[3] Rama applauds the situating of Carpentier alongside Neruda, Picasso, and Asturias in the 1930s "double vanguard" that fused aesthetic and political concerns; while his primary censure is for expanding Echevarría's account to grapple more completely with the difficult later novels. Echevarría is the institution when it comes to Carpentier studies, although the ubiquitous references to his authority include

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[1] Forward to Carpentier, Alejo. *Explosion in a Cathedral.* Penguin Random House, 2023.
[2] Carpentier, Alejo. "Lo barroco y lo real maravilloso." *La novela latinoamericana en vísperas de un nuevo siglo,* Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1981.
[3] Rama, Ángel. "Los productivos años setentas de Alejo Carpentier." *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1981.

critical comments. Frances Wyers wrote the opening salvo of dissent in a review of Echevarría's book, which, he says,

> leads away from the historical and ideological formations that Carpentier's later novels evoke and toward a criticism that denies any reality beyond the text, 'as in Kabbalistic thought, writing is the world'. Thus, the spiraling dialectic is restricted to 'the constitution of the text itself,' and revolutionary writing is that which shifts perpetually 'around an absent source'... Carpentier, a declared Marxist, is made out to be a model Latin American deconstructor.[4]

Indeed, Echevarría's antipathy towards the Cuban Revolution and Communist Party stands in stark contrast with the fidelity of Carpentier's commitment. This would suggest that an alternative analysis enriched by an affinal standpoint is long overdue, especially in the case of *El siglo de las luces* that treats so directly the issue of political commitment, where even the failed revolutionary Víctor Hugues is redeemed by inspiring the participation of his protogées in the 1808 Madrid uprising.

How Carpentier's political motivations nourish his literature can be best disclosed by reviewing a third development in his work: what he called Latin American reality. In Chapter 2 of this dissertation, I identify the three defining characteristics of this concept as follows: a) The predominant experience of *mestizaje* that entails the mixing of colonial, indigenous and immigrant populations, emphasizing the transcultural passage of Africans in the New World above indigenous nativism. b) The large swaths of nature, land and water, containing extant flora and fauna that the colonial process failed to extinguish. And, c) an endogenous vanguard with aesthetic and political formations proper to and reflecting the first two categories.[5] These

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[4] Wyers, Frances. "Review of *Alejo Carpentier: The Pilgrim at Home." Modern Philology*, Vol. 77, No. 4, 1980. Wyers' terminology of Marxism versus poststructuralism is based in the '80s theory wars that Jameson often sought to overcome. Echevarría's expertise over the material is commanding, but it does position Carpentier as inward facing, hence his 'spiral dialectic' where the meaning is the text itself. Rather, I read him as facing outward and locate the meaning of the text in external reality.

[5] The Cuban Revolution of 1959 figures centrally in Carpentier's life as a veritable before and after for his standing vis-á-vis that nation. His unequivocal support for the pariah state would hurt his literary reception in the West, with the covert support once offered from Venezuela manifesting afterwards as a significant international ambassador. In 1964, he returned to Cuba from a tour through the Socialist and Third Worlds to revise his original essay on *lo real maravilloso*, celebrating a newfound realism in the practice of internationalism cutting across China, India, the Islamic World, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.

themes are strongly featured in the widely read novels of his ‘American Cycle’: *El reino de este mundo, Los pasos perdidos,* and *El siglo de las luces*, but are also expanded upon in essays following the author’s return to post-revolutionary Cuba.[6] The dissertation as a whole examines the historical, political and cultural valences of the concept, and argues that Carpentier should be read in conversation with the region’s major revolutionary works. In this chapter, I explore the historicism of Latin American reality, locating at its foundation the incomplete struggle for abolition and independence narrated in *El siglo de las luces*.

Prior to its composition in the late 1950s, according to Echevarría, Carpentier “aimed at a convergence or correspondence between the natural world of Spanish America and its history.” In resolving this tension, *El siglo de las luces* provided “a model of how to write fiction in Latin America that is based on the history of the New World.” Echevarría readily acknowledges the merit of the novel’s interweaving of natural and social history in the Americas, and this claim is justified with an exhaustive analysis of its formal features. Yet, the binding element of this narrative formula is lacking. In his sustained study of Carpentier, Timothy Brennan posits the work as a critique of bourgeois ideologies – of revolution, enlightenment philosophy, and democracy – that represents the feelings and praxis that impel a revolutionary movement to realize the universal program carried in the womb of the Enlightenment. Brennan’s attention to the work’s historical context and the broad intellectual currents that inform its political motivations offer a useful correction to the “spiral-shaped” direction of Echevarría’s inward-facing study. In another outward-facing approach, Perry Anderson places the novel in a

---

Appending his original essay on *lo real maravilloso* to the end of that global overview, he concludes that the realism he had earlier assigned to the Americas was found to emanate from various sources in the international scene, among their nature, social organizations and cultural heritage. See Carpentier, Alejo. Carpentier. “De lo real maravilloso americano.” *Tientos y diferencias*, Montevideo: Arca, 1967.
And Alexis Márquez Rodríguez’s Prologue to Carpentier, Alejo. *Los pasos recobrados: ensayos de teoría y crítica literaria,* Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 2003.

[6] Carpentier explored the themes of ‘Americanidad’ in light of the Cuban Revolution in a series of lectures collected as *La cultura en Cuba y en el mundo (2003)* and excellently reviewed by Dianelkys Martínez Rodríguez in “Americanidad y Cubanidad en Alejo Carpentier.” *Cuadernos Inter.c.a.mbio sobre Centroamérica y el Caribe*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 2022.

genre study that locates its meaning in the concrete history of the French Revolution and its vicissitudes.

Many have noted that *El siglo de las luces* narrates a pre-history of the early independence movements in the Americas, but this is not considered to be its central conceit. It is true that Carpentier avoided the movement's obvious protagonists like Toussaint and Bolívar, instead helping to rescue the memory of Hugues' relatively minor figure. Similarly, the main events it represents are peripheral to the independence struggle. However, the novel's coda in the Spanish Revolution is a moment of decisive importance for the wars that then break out across the Americas, and the fact of it occurring on European soil only underscores Carpentier's notion of its global stakes and significance. Therefore, if Carpentier has combined some of the more intrinsic and geographically disparate moments of independence, it makes up a narrative that spiritually aligns itself with the concatenating logic that drives revolution. For the sake of unfamiliar readers, a brief overview of the novel's storyline traces the telos of its historical events.

In late 18th century Havana, three youths, Carlos, Sofía, and their cousin Esteban, inherit the estate of their late father. They live there free from parental authority until which time they make the acquaintance of the merchant and adventurer Víctor Hugues who piques their wonder with knowledge of the vast world beyond the island. This halcyon state is suddenly pierced when Víctor and his associate, the black doctor Ogé, are outed as Freemasons in league with a revolutionary conspiracy emanating from France. The group escapes arrest and makes it to Port-au-Prince only to see the city razed by revolting slaves, an episode known to history as the Ogé Rebellion for the brother of Víctor's companion. Bringing his tryst with Sofía to a halt, Víctor absconds back to France with only Esteban in tow, arriving in time to participate in the heady days of Robespierre and the Mountain's rise, thus furthering the youth's sentimental education.

While Víctor's star in the vanguard rises, Esteban becomes instrumental for his ability as a scribe and publishes revolutionary propaganda against the Spanish Crown in that country, whose conditions he soon finds more putrid than ripe. (Historical record confirms that late 1794 saw a defeat for Spain to France leading to the forfeiture of its San Domingo territory, and while territories like the Basque sided with France, the rising never came.)

Esteban then escapes the suffocating anti-French repression that descends as Víctor recalls him to accompany a ship bound for the Caribbean, with orders aboard to abolish slavery. As the new governor of Guadeloupe, Víctor achieves huge victories for the revolution, but in Esteban's eyes has corrupted and compromised his youthful idealism. The piracy in the Caribbean and geo-political conflicts encircling Víctor's reign in Guadeloupe are some of the novel's richest sections, both in terms of prose and the teeming complexity of the forces in flux. Víctor is later relocated to the prison colony of French Guiana, where amidst the miserable prevailing conditions the former Jacobins have revived the slavery system. After Esteban finds a way home to reunite with Sofía, she is shocked by his cynical appraisal of their former hero, she and Carlos having become devout Jacobins over the intervening years. Making her way to Guyane to reunite with the lover who had set her life on a course of meaning and revolution, she too eventually succumbs to disenchantment with Víctor's myriad justifications and vacillations to maintain allegiance to the Revolution. The novel's coda follows Carlos years later, as he gathers traces of Sofía and Esteban's final movements in Spain where she launches them into the eruptions of a new, spontaneous revolution there.

The work's dramatic force surrounds the disillusioning of Víctor's revolutionary principles, from the early pages' inspirational élan to the desperate compromises struck in the mortifying Guianese swamp. That tension finds a productive resolution in the coda where the revolutionary

contagion reassembles itself on new terrain as a radical sovereignty movement, showing a "way out" of the disenchantment.

The Historical Novel

- This section places *El siglo de las luces* in the tradition of historical realism, identifying the launch of national independence as the bridge of meaning that connects the subject of the French Revolution with its own context of the Cuban Revolution.

For Perry Anderson, the backdrop of the Napoleonic wars links *El siglo de las luces* genetically to the great historical novels of the 19th Century. In a 2011 genealogy of the Historical Novel, Anderson assigns Carpentier a unique position within that genre. Its arc of development begins, in Lukács' foundational account, in the early 19th century with Walter Scott's *Waverley.*[7] Anderson identifies an initial highpoint of the form in the various national literatures that materialized after 1815 in response to the Napoleonic Wars. These emerged out of romantic movements nominally mobilized in defense of the *ancién regime,* but which in practice took on the final sloughing off of absolutism. If the European war's multiple theaters gave a singular, world-uniting cause to the reactions, the individually distinct conditions of the national construction projects that resulted produced a flourishing of difference. "If the historical novel began as a nation-building exercise in the backwash of romantic reaction to the French Revolution and Napoleonic expansion, the results varied according to context." While the Caribbean is a seemingly far-flung site of this process, it is an extreme case that proves the rule, as Carpentier narrates the admixture of the Americas' enduring pre-colonial temporality with the revolutionary agent of modernity. For Anderson in fact, the 20th century rebirth of the Historical Novel is above all a Latin American affair (this being the literary Boom that Carpentier and Bolaño bookend): "There is little doubt where meta-historical fiction began. It was born in the

[7] Anderson, Perry. "From Progress to Catastrophe." *London Review of Books,* Vol. 33, No. 15, July, 2011.

Caribbean with Alejo Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom of This World)*, which appeared in 1949, followed by his *Siglo de las luces (Explosion in a Cathedral)* of 1962." *El reino de este mundo* is known above all for inaugurating the widely imitated genre known as magical realism. Carpentier's introduction to the novel was in fact a short essay coining the term "*Lo real maravilloso,"* to which it is not an exact corollary in English.[8] Meanwhile, it is commonly held that magical realism is born with the 1967 publication of Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad,* the most famous work of the Latin Boom. Such periodizations inevitably lead to category disputes: while Roberto Bolaño (1953-2003) is sometimes seen as the final Boom figure, since his death there has been a swell of interest in another another Chilean, Alejandro Zambra; meanwhile a key original Boom author like Mario Vargas Llosa has continued to publish serious work as recently as 2019's *Tiempos recios*. However, easily missed in Anderson's broad sweep is the standard of historical realism used to tie Carpentier to the likes of Galdós and Balzác.

The remainder of his comments on Carpentier and the region largely regard the slide from the utopian horizon of the early '60s to the bloody repression and foreclosure of possibilities that marked the '70s. That turn accompanied an aesthetic shift typified by the cluster of dictator novels to which Carpentier contributed *El recurso del metodo* (1974). In linking Carpentier with the genre's earlier focus on the Napoleonic catalyst of new national constructions, Anderson thereby draws attention to the difference in Cuba's post-revolutionary nation building: the promise of completing the amputated struggles for independence and abolition. This, we are told, distinguishes Carpentier from his contemporaries, whose postmodern Historical Novels are backdropped by "not the emergence of the nation, but the ravages of empire; not progress as emancipation, but impending or consummated catastrophe." We might add that in *El siglo de las*

[8] See Neil Larsen's excellent account of the slippage from Carpentier's *lo real maravilloso* to Márquez's magical realism in *Determinations,* Routledge, 2001.

luces we find in equal measures the utopian and the catastrophe of progress; both the promise and unfulfillment of emancipation. This layering is in part one of temporalities (the ancient, pre-colonial Americas; the timeless present of colonialism; the revolutionary futurism of modernity), which in turn is complemented by the spatial diversity of the Antilles and the sea. The "lurid diversity of forms" taken by the ocean and archipelago in the novel refract figures of each era: The interconnected and interspecie nature of the pre-colonial continent; the sea as a figure of the colonial mode of accumulation and expansion; and in the trans-national theater of naval wargames, the coming globalization of capitalism. Taken together, this constitutes "the tragic collision between historically distinct times and their characteristic social forms – what Bloch would later call *Ungleichzeitigkeit,*" which Anderson praises in Scott and Tolstoy's *Hadji Murad,* but finds lacking in *War and Peace.* That the slaves, campesinos, mulattoes and natives in *El siglo de las luces* register as contending historical forces is a reminder that the *mestizaje* component of Carpentier's Latin American reality is much closer to this simultaneity of non-synchronous worlds than it is to run-of-the-mill ethnic or national pluralism. Such ideological romanticism is for Anderson the fault with *War and Peace*, which projects the Russian peasantry into "a continuous present" with "little sense of the passage of historical time," redeemed only by Tolstoy's "rationalist dissection of motive and feeling" that is "the Enlightenment antidote controlling and redeeming the melodrama of national salvation."

How can we distinguish Carpentier's matrix of historical realism from "entertainment literature" about similar periods, as Anderson brands works like Patrick O'Brien's? If Anderson decidedly avoids the self-referential void of Echevarría's raft where the novel is entirely adrift from history, he also argues that events of historical importance and decision must be complemented and tempered by a grasp on the causality and relations between the moving parts in process. Otherwise we are left with the bevy of entertainment literature that, in subject and style only, follows the realist formula. Anderson seems to eschew Jameson's suggestion that popular

responses to historical narratives awaken Lacanian desire for the real, contrasting best-sellers like Dumas with ignored or overlooked achievements like Lampedusa's *The Leopard,* Joseph Roth's *Radetzky March,* and Mahfouz's Cairene Trilogy.

Therefore, Anderson's Marxist or materialist typology of the Historical Novel helps us to arrange a tripartite structure for the temporal referents in Carpentier's work. 1) The **past** referent to the Napoleonic era that makes up the historical content, what Oswaldo Zavala (glossing Echevarría) calls the verifiable archive. 2) the **present** experience that constitutes the context lived and intervened in by the author, an obvious example of being, in Carpentier's case, the milieu of the Cuban Revolution. 3) And finally where "we look, not at the sources or themes of this literature, but at its forms," its formal dynamism, which according to Lukács can represent embryonic forces and unresolved, **future**-oriented contradictions between classes or modes of production. The formal elasticity of narrative can represent the individual's contact with the awesome forces of history, "the interlocking of historical and existential registers that for Lukács and Jameson defines the [Historical Novel] form." In *El siglo de las luces* this occurs in the person of Víctor Hugues who forstands, up to a point, the withering contradictions of his role in bestowing and then partially retracting the abolition of slavery in the Americas.

Indeed, the world-historical stakes of the movements for abolition and the independence of New Spain are underscored by the anti-romantic treatment of their tragic ends. In the novel's coda, that revolutionary energy instead swings against France in the form of Spain's national defense, nominally in favor of restoration amidst the clash of 1808. In a preface to Ronald Fraser's prosopography of those battleforces, Anderson's eye is drawn to the same concerns with new and embryonic historical forms, posing the Peninsular War as a conflict between pre-modern Spain and the modern French army. Spain was still the holder of the largest colonial empire in the world at the time, despite 150 years of decline, and the political reaction of the Inquisition

persisted. Its backward state of development lacked any “social basis among local elites for modern post-feudal administration,” with little homegrown support for “the enlightened side of Napoleonic rule.” The French army, on the other hand, with its rapid, dispersed command, heavily exploited Spanish peasants for their provisions. This deepened their enmity for the invaders and resulted in the appearance of the ‘guerrillas’ as a popular expression. “The tragic paradox at the centre of *Napoleon’s Cursed War*, is the heroism of so many of the common people in defence of a political and ideological order – a stagnant absolutism and benighted church – which had always given them so little, and then paid them back with vicious post-war reaction.”[9] Forces like tragedy and irony, their cyclical patterns and their sudden ruptures, catch the eye of the historian and critic alike as they trace the ruse of history that escapes any algorithmic or formulaic condensation.

We are wont to name representations that grasp that cunning of history as “realist,” a term that confusingly can also refer to a genre. Depending on its use therefore, Realism sometimes signifies an achieved representation of reality, and other times a genre or style vulnerable to reproducing stick-figure or surface impressions that lack the messy idiosyncrasy and depth of the real. This was a cornerstone of the famous ‘Realism Debate’ between Lukács and Adorno, which Anderson edited and wrote a much admired introduction to years before “From Progress to Catastrophe.” In the latter, he relies on Lukács and Jameson for their value assessments of Scott, judging that the early Historical Novel was initially only “a precursor of the great realistic novel of the 19th century.” For Anderson, that realism is embodied by Balzác, who first adapts the historical novel’s techniques and vision of the world to the present rather than the past. However, perhaps in response, Jameson would later write that the operation is in fact reversed, in that Realism is itself a dynamically historical technique, essentially historicizing the present by representing its various points of contention, moving parts, and utopian or nascent elements of

[9] Fraser, Ronald. *Napoleon’s Cursed War,* London: Verso, 2023.

futurity.[10] Realism is a central concept for literary analysis whether for the Marxist Frankfurt School or non-Marxist registers such as Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis,* where it figures as the category for narrative's mimetic reflection of humanist or social truth. It distinguishes a plebeian aesthetic capable of and demanding analysis from a static one that shuns any articulation of its social meaning.

For our purposes, it suffices to note the distinction between the 19th century genre of the realist novel, and the standard sought by Lukács of a work whose formal dynamism captures the social order's underlying mechanism. Building on Lukács, Jameson preserves the nuance in the tension between realist representation and historical fact. The author's present reality is the product of history's sediment, yet Jameson resists the vulgar degradation that a novel can only reflect the author's own present, or that it presents a photographic verisimilitude of the past.[11] Anderson's emphasis on philology flirts with the first of these where he associates Carpentier's major novels with the Chinese and Cuban revolutions successively. In fact, the historical rupture providing the source for *El reino de este mundo* (1949), according to Carpentier, is more complex and closer to home.

In his famous introduction to the work, *lo real maravilloso* is first disassociated from two erroneous tendencies Carpentier diagnoses in the European vanguards: the macabre fascination with the marvelous as something bizarre and out of place on one hand, and then a return to the quotidian or banal politics that are merely real and nothing more. These are the practices of artists and poets who "laud Sadism without practicing it, who admire hyper-masculinity out of impotence." The real and marvelous in the Americas, importantly

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[10] Jameson, Fredric. *Antinomies of Realism,* London: Verso, 2015.

[11] This preoccupation in many of Jameson's writings on narrative goes back to the distinction made in *The Political Unconscious* between a text symbolizing the narrow political horizon of a particular era, and 'the historical' in a broad sense that enlarges the analytical frame to a period's organizing structure; ie. the mode of production.

unified without opposition in his term, are seen as yet to be worn away by the depravities and weakening of experience in Europe. Rather, they are abundant in the persistence of black and native mestizaje, collective dances that remain in touch with ritual practices, in the faith practiced by the Haitian revolutionaries, in the medicines underfoot and the riches the land offered beyond the limitations of slavery. *Lo real maravilloso* is in this way at once futurist, traditional, and modernist as evinced by the "magic of the tropical vegetation, the naked Creation of Forms" portrayed in the panoramic canvases of the Cuban painter Wifredo Lam.[12]

Lam's strikingly advanced work, like Carpentier's, is emblematic of the paradox underscoring the liberal nationalism that was in march in Cuba during the first half of the 20th century. While radical aesthetic production was spurred by the far-reaching internationalist currents humming through the island's cultural life, this was contrasted by the stark political unfreedom granted under its status as a neo-colony of the U.S.. As Brennan has shown, both Lam and Carpentier were swept up in the clash between the elite and popular-folk cultures, as radical rural and mestizo ideas quickly transversed the archipelago through radio and letters. That centrality of the Caribbean world for Carpentier's production extols the truth in Anderson's philology, in that the milieu of *El siglo de las luces* is indelibly the 1959 Cuban Revolution.

[12] Image: *Mofumbe,* Wifredo Lam, 1943, Hodes Collection, Chicago.

In an essay detailing Carpentier's travels during the novel's composition, Luisa Campuzano reconstructs that it is simultaneously a pre- and post-revolutionary work.[13] The primary material on Víctor Hugues is composed from Barbados and Caracas between 1956-'58; however, Víctor and Sofía's relationship would be significantly revised in Havana after the revolution. Furthermore, library research and oral accounts of Hugues' popularity in Guadeloupe contrast with a conservative written record in French Guiana. This evidence calls for seeking in the novel an intersection between the French and Cuban Revolutions, the two events that separate its subject from its moment of writing. Holding those events together reveals the incompleteness of the formal independence gained during the first period, the 'bourgeois' revolution, in that the *raison d'être* of 1959 became the universal realization of this principle's radical basis. Opponents of the revolutions point to their failures and pyrrhic victories. In one sense the novel concurs, preserving both the inspirational elán of Guadeloupe amidst the process of abolition, but also the disillusion that follows slavery's reestablishment in the French Guiana. That conservative implacability, finally, is the amoral twist in Anderson's criteria, celebrated for example in the prodigious series of novels by Galdós, which reflect the afterlives of Spain's Liberal Revolution: its nominal opposition to the First Empire sublimating many of the French Revolution's aspirations.

All of this supports the assertion of the Antilles archipelago as a privileged site for the confluence of ideas and revolutionary contagion, and thus contextualizing Carpentier with the region's remarkable internationalists like Aimé Césaire. In this sense, the story of Víctor Hugues' revolution in the Caribbean grows into a story about the liberation of the entire Americas. It is the sort of world-changing event, a revolution in fact composed of many revolutions, that has at its center a *koan,* a riddle in which its posing is part of the problem and yet leads to its own

[13] Campuzano. "Dos finales para *El siglo de las luces:* de «Le roman de Sophie» al triunfo de Goya." Revista *Casa de las Américas*, No. 295, April-June, 2019.

unfolding. In one of the great moments of cinematic realism, Gillo Pontecorvo's *Queimada (1969)* captures the contradictions and universality of the Caribbean revolutions against slavery, where a character resembling Toussaint L'Ouverture is offered his freedom by a young soldier tasked with guarding the captured revolutionary. "Don't you want to escape?" he asks. "No. Freedom is not something that can be given. You must only take it. Do you understand? [*shakes head*] No… That is okay. Because you have begun to ask the question. And once a question is posed it works its way towards an answer."[14] The interaction captures the tragedy and promise of the Haitian revolution, which, failing in a limited sense, sparked an example that could not but find responses across the Caribbean and indeed in the abolition of slavery across the continent by the end of the century, with Brazil officially yielding to international and internal pressures in 1888.[15] If the question is how history is made, the answer is: Through the manifold causes of revolution.

Jacobins at Sea

- This section ventures a close formal reading of *El siglo de las luces.* I argue, against Echevarría, that its use of the baroque is necessarily political. Noting the disparate elements and levels operating in the novel, I conclude that they are bound together formally within the physical descriptions of the Antillian sea, shorelines, and the pathways between its bio-regions. The rich particularity of the ocean works figurally to ground the narrative's concerns with the complexity of historical causality, the

[14] Toussaint's actual words are distinct, but it is the gift of cinema to render their reality through artifice. He said to the frigate captain in the harbour of Le Cap upon his deportation to France, "In overthrowing me, you have cut down in San Domingo only the trunk of the tree of liberty. It will spring up again by the roots for they are numerous and deep."
[15] For Walter Rodney, "slavery ended when it did in the West Indies mainly because of having exhausted itself politically and economically in terms of the system of international exchange," not primarily because of the rebellions. From *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881-1905,* where this context for the slave rebellions' success is articulated in the interest of determining propitious contemporary conditions for a proletarian victory.

transubstantiation of revolt, internationalism, and the liberation of the Americas.

Perhaps as a nod to Pontecorvo's influence on screenwriter Oliver Stone, *Scarface (1983)* features one of the low-level traffickers talking about making a cameo as an extra on *Queimada*'s set. The acknowledgement allows us a momentary reflection on the narco-narrative inaugurated by *Scarface,* which has dominated the Caribbean in the years since Carpentier's death.[16] Oswaldo Zavala, the most trenchant critic of the Spanish language *narco-narrativa*, distinguishes from the typical glorifications of narco culture those realist exceptions like Bolaño's *2666* that posit sensational violence as subordinate to the hidden hand of the state. In the Caribbean, the genre's highpoint is Marlon James' epic of Jamaican history, *A Brief History of Seven Killings,* which unveils the CIA's hand in manipulating shantytown kingpins like Lester Coke as part of its grand Cold War strategy. In his 1988 *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord reflects on the seemingly perverse rise of organized crime in tandem with the democratic rules-based order. His insight there, complementing Zavala's, is the usefulness and pliability of criminals to intelligence agencies, both in carrying out state terrorism and also as a bogey-man to justify defense spending. Often overlooked in these discussions is the crucial role the Cuban Revolution had on the metastasis of organized crime after it was purged from the island, spurring the integration of exiles like Carilles Posada and Félix Rodriguez into the CIA's nexus of drug trafficking and political terrorism. *Scarface's* backdrop of the 1980 Mariel boatlift of Cuban 'undesirables' and Tony Montana's self-aware posing as a 'product of the system' suggest that the political underside of this Hollywood blockbuster has largely been eclipsed by its iconic depiction of the drug-lord. His final downfall comes about by the slim act of humanism in defying the cartel assassination of the children of a socialist

[16] The film's precedents, like *The French Connection (1971/'75)* and *The Godfather (1972/'74),* not to mention Hawkes' *Scarface (1932),* contain only hints of the drug-lord matrix described by Zavala. Furthermore, if *Dirty Harry (1971)* marked the change-over to crime films from the Western, Heimlich convincingly identifies the neo-Western backdrop of the narco world typified by *Breaking Bad.*

journalist reporting on the Bolivian government's middle-man role between US officials and cocaine smugglers.

Why do the narco-narratives that follow *Scarface* seem to delineate such a transformed Caribbean from the one inhabited by Carpentier? One could begin fusing the two worlds by looking at the region's timeless association with contraband smuggling. In the colonial period, the dominant sugar, tobacco and coffee crops were indeed narcotic agents whose economic power descended from altering states of consciousness. But placing this to the side, it was especially indigo that "was most closely identified with international contraband," due to its high profitability and necessity to the booming textile manufacture of the industrial revolution.[17] It must be remembered, furthermore, that indigo cultivation gave way to synthetic dye production, genetically providing their chemical formulas, and it being Bayer and IG Farben that inherit this power as they launch the modern pharmaceutical and chemical industry. If our recent memory of the drug trade begins with the Opium Wars and has its most recent chapter in Purdue Pharma's opioid epidemic, it is difficult to ignore the realization that the criminal drug trade is adjacent with a longer process of colonialism and the expansion of markets.

Most pertinent to the present discussion is the genre's aesthetics. Zavala notes that the battles over smuggling routes, gang hierarchies, and their role in the region's economic development offer audiences an entertaining vessel for the consumption of world history. Where these elements combine to create works of realism, we see a skilled deployment of local color serving to demonstrate how particular actors come up against systemic limits like state repression, class immobility, and exclusions to the national project. For example, *7 Killings'* cinematic voicing of Jamaican *patois* and the lyrical interweaving of Bob Marley's verses (the book's precipitating

[17] Garrigus, John. "Blue and Brown: Contraband Indigo and the Rise of a Free Colored Planter Class in French Saint Domingue." *The Americas,* Vol. 50, No. 2, October, 1993.

event is the failed 1976 assassination attempt on the reggae star) attract us into the scene of the shantytown gang-hierarchy, from which, like in detective fiction, we begin navigating out to the global level of CIA involvement, Cuban arms training, Colombia-to-Miami cocaine shipping lines, and the Cold War alliances of presidential candidates. Hunger for authentic accents, music, cooking, dance and fashion have seen a potent revival of local color as a stamp of realism, evinced by the acclaimed trend of casting local youths in *The Wire (1999-2005), Cidade de Deus (2002),* and recently *Ya no estoy aquí (2019).*[18] Chris Chitty, glossing Benjamin's theory of cinema, notes how the isolated idyll of laptop streaming, social media, and on-demand porn provokes viewers' desire for the hyper-reality of gritty streets, exotic suffering, and lawlessness. Today, the Netflix business model finds in the narco-narrative a winning formula for AI scriptwriting that can be rebooted *ad nauseam* across its international studios while indulging in the timeless clichés of local color.[19]

This helps us to distinguish the use of local color in Carpentier's prose and its relation to the baroque. This latter term for Carpentier is a protean spirit that "arises where there is transformation, mutation, or innovation," and occuring in an expansive phase of vibrant civilization or as the premonition of a new social order.[20] Not meant to mark any specific period or style, Carpentier defines the baroque as an architectural revolt against the symmetry of empty spaces without ornamentation typified by the classicism of the Parthenon. Rather, the baroque is constituted by "decorative elements that completely fill the space of construction, motifs that contain their own expansive energy, that launch or project forms centrifugally." He uses the adjectives 'fullest' and 'juicy' to define the baroque in the context of Rabelais' use and

[18] I am indebted to Neil Larsen's reading of Borges' stories such as "Sur" and "Funes, el memorioso," for this notion of local color (translated from Borges' *criollo*). See Larsen, "Borges as Realist," forthcoming.
[19] These comments have the benefit of being a reader for Corey Heimlich's dissertation project on narco-narratives at the University of Lausanne. See also Zavala, Oswaldo. *La modernidad insufrible,* University of North Carolina Press, 2016. And Chitty, Christopher. "The Antinomies of Sexual Discourse." 2016. www.blindfieldjournal.com/2016/04/19/sex-as-cultural-form-the-antinomies-of-sexual-discourse
[20] Carpentier, "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real." *Magical Realism,* Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, Eds., Duke University Press, 1995.

exploitation of the French language, “An inventor of words, and enricher of the language who, when he lacked verbs, gave himself the luxury of inventing them, and when he did not have adverbs, invented those as well.” That inventiveness is found in India, Moscow, and especially the “American continent of symbiosis, mutations, vibrations, *mestizaje*.” Unlike the magical realism that lusts for the surreal but avoids “concrete political agendas” and revolutionary criticism, the marvelous baroque is found in reality itself, whether the images of social life in Teotihuacán and the *Popul Vuh*, or the miraculous guerrilla wars of Benito Juárez and Juana de Azurduy. Local color then (the *criollo* that propounds in the Americas) for Carpentier takes on a fullness without kitsch where it engages with its “concrete social agendas.” Its richness radiates outwards, from the diversity of forms to the altering of world history.

Carpentier’s baroque account of social life among the various Caribbean ethnicities and nationalities identifies one of the richest aspects of the prose in *El siglo de las luces,* as the geo-political developments remain narrated in passing as a backdrop for the foreground of various page-long descriptions of the lurid Caribbean world. This achieves the standard he admired that Unamuno elaborated thus: to conjure “the universal from deep within a local, circumscribed, eternal reality.”[21] The vivid minutiae of the island chain (which Carpentier boasted of knowing better than few others alive) similarly amount for Zambra to a “cult of the specific that… still manages not to compete with the story.”[22] This material detail constitutes a celebration of difference that incarnates the relatively abstract ideals motivating the French dissolution of the *ancien régime.* On the level of the sentence, his style exhibits a wide, learned vocabulary that engages its subjects measuredly without slipping into pastiche or cliché. It is expansive and its shifts in modes are both subtle and cataclysmic. Those changing registers mark off different nodes in the novel’s structure: the exciting voice that emerges for Esteban in

[21] Carpentier. “The Latin American Novel.” *New Left Review,* Vol I, No. 154, Nov/Dec, 1985.
[22] Zambra. Forward to *Explosion in a Cathedral. Op. cit.*

France, the panoramic of the Guadelupe period, the ‘primordial’ passage of the Arawak from the continent that evokes Asturias either as an improvement upon or an unflattering imitation of, and the nervous desire and unflinching resolve of Víctor’s betrayal with Sofía. The command and range of Carpentier’s aureate lexicon, resembling the German of Thomas Mann or Heinrich Heine,[23] reaches its stride mid-novel with the action of the revolution underway. These lengthy indulgences often take a list-like form, pacing and spacing out the action, creating tapestries in the mold of Bosch or Goya (whose *Disasters of War* is cited regularly for chapter epigraphs) of the myriad trans-Atlantic world.

Echevarría attends closely to this aspect, observing the transformative spirit of the baroque behind Esteban’s use of hyphenated neologisms. “Sofía is reaching into the Confusion of Features, of marks, searching out in the back of the letters their secret meaning which is not apparent on the visible surface. What Sofía is looking for is the ‘de-forming’ by which Roman art becomes Byzantine art, the ‘mis-shaping’ at the core of the Latin American Baroque. This process of changing something into something else appears to Esteban as characteristic of the Caribbean. The proliferation of shapes changing constantly into something other forces the language to hyphenate words in order to be able to designate the continuous act of changing, of being transformed.”[24] The examples he goes on to cite, “una fantástica zoología de peces-perros, peces-bueyes, peces-tigres,” not surprisingly draw their forms above all from the sea. For Echevarría, this is because Carpentier’s secret meaning is that all history is cyclical: “The text of the novel, like a ritualistic object, has its own value as a system of symbols, as

[23] Heine, like Carpentier, developed his style through essays on the countryside, ‘lower’ literatures, and wily satires. George Handley sees a comparison to Faulkner’s English, a speech not meant to mimic the past world so much as place us within the contours of a collective, Homeresque dream. Nabokov would be another parallel, although Carpentier’s Spanish showed French traces from his youth in Paris and he was raised bi-lingual, rather than learning it later in life. In an obscure preface to Mann’s *Der Zauberberg,* Carpentier highlights the Brazilian branch of Mann’s family line and praises the work’s assault on bourgeois morality. Published by the Instituto Cubano del Libro in 1973, the spanish translation is reproduced alongside Lukács’ essay “En busca del hombre burgués.”

[24] González Echevarría, Roberto. “Socrates among the Weeds: Blacks and History in Carpentier's *Explosion in a Cathedral.*" *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 24, No. 3, Autumn, 1983.

access to an arcane gnosis wherein its complicated numerology and emblematic quality are more important than the ebb and flow of concepts." This is persuasive, especially when the linguistic acts he cites – peces-perros, etc – result from feats of the physical world itself. However, does this materialist quality really downplay the importance of the work's political and ideological concepts? Above the ebb and flow, abolition and independence leave their own high-water mark on the ambitions of human liberation. Brennan also notes the prose's "sheer delight in *thingliness,"* where "sensuality and crisis go hand in hand" among the emporium of objects coursing through Old Havana – "La Manca cheeses, barbers' instruments, green parasols, and Andean blankets from Maracaibo."[25] These heterogeneous temporalities rather drive forward the epic of historico-political forces like capital and empire, which derive their power from what they seek to overcome. Hardly a work of pure formalism or post-structuralism, Carpentier's prose thrives on interweaving the dueling realities of nature and politics.

In the early chapters of *El siglo de las luces,* the stagnancy and inequality of 20th Century Cuba that Carpentier knew from the small farm of his childhood in "El Lucero" outside of Havana is reflected back onto the city's 18th Century, depicting a timeless childhood free from ruptures, where essentially anything is possible for those with means (and domestic employees). Echevarría adeptly notes that "the scenes of the bustling Havana port with vessels from various nations at the docks" and the family's "general store replete with stock from all over the world" are faithful to the class dynamics and economic tumult of a period marked by the rise of a commercial bourgeoisie dependent on foreign trade and the international price of sugar.[26] He might have added that the Hugues family were silk traders, a business that then tied the old China route of the Pacific Galleon trade to the new Atlantic trade where newer products like indigo and tobacco, powered by slavery, grew in dominance. This is important because it shows

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[25] Brennan, Timothy. Introduction to *Explosion in a Cathedral.* University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
[26] González Echevarría, Roberto. *The Pilgrim at Home,* Cornell University Press, 1977, pp. 227.

Carpentier beginning to narrate the Americas as a chapter of world-history, with Spain and Portugal's sugar plantations in Cape Verde and the Canaries by the 1480s already expanding the Mediterranean's western edge towards the Caribbean.[27] To the youths who become the acolytes and emissaries of Víctor's radical project, the world overseas above all holds meaning and first captures their imaginations, eventually breaking up the halcyon reverie. That fascination and hunger with the beyond strongly recalls the balms Carpentier advocated for the Machado dictatoriship's neo-colonial isolation: an international, transcultural, and intellectual philandering.

The novel's stylistic energy matures just as its political and philosophical scope comes into view, as Esteban has been inducted into Freemasonry and the Jacobin club, and we leave the front with him, so to speak, to his downtime spent with the Parisian prostitutes.[28] These revolutionary *damiselas* flaunt a Weimaresque sexual advancement, with pronounced characters and nationalities, furthered in their agency by the rich and colorful roles they wear and discard – living all of history at once in a passionate theater that puts payment to the *calendrier républicain*.

This passage is shortly followed by the details of Víctor's embarkment from France, bound ultimately for the Antilles. We are reminded here of the potent capacity of language for naming things, as the nautical has done for Melville and so many others, or with Cormac McCarthy's formidable vocabulary for ornate equestrianism, carpentry, and alchemy. For this military voyage immediately impresses us with its variation on an otherwise worn-in theme of the Atlantic

[27] The Christian world became smitten with the 'al-zucar' that had been discovered and confiscated from the Islamic world during the Crusades, occupying the profitable plantations in Africa that were back under Muslim control by the 1600s. Charles Mann notes that this conflict, and the sparse lands with the necessary humidity for cane bolstered the expansion across the Atlantic.
[28] Carpentier, Alejo. *El siglo de las luces,* Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1965, pp. 124. This edition used for all citations unless otherwise noted. Translations are my own.

voyage: whether Spanish colonization, refugees fleeing from Marseille, the enslaved of the Amistad, even the promise of exploration for Eric the Red, the blissful sublime of bourgeois escape in Henry James or upon the Titanic. Rather, the scene is quietly charged with the affirmative possibilities of the revolutionary project, granting the characters and crew an overwhelming protagonicity utterly impossible in the alternatives just listed (for the promise of combating the genocidal implications otherwise always present), reaching its trembling summation as Víctor breaks through the British blockade and confides in Esteban, intimately amidst disciplinary easing, that he carries on board the Decree of 16 Pluviôse declaring the abolition of slavery in the Americas.

The implications of that order are not fictionalized. They are merely accounted across the events of the novel in all their tragedy and cynical unfulfillment. Their potential is explored through formalizing into language the Americas' rich soil for freedom that was the decree's intended destination. As the breakdown of Jacobin discipline gives way to the guerrilla filibusterism of Víctor's corsair fleet (producing the fantastic historical fact of Pointe-à-Pitre as the richest city in all of the Americas for those years), cosmopolitanism and utopianism converge in the variety of nationalities that compose the privateers' cabin crews. Here is the place to mention that despite the marvelous realities accounted for in the earlier *El reino de este mundo, El siglo de las luces* proves definitely Carpentier's distinction from the European surrealists in never stooping to fetishize the islanders as noble savages. Esteban's downtime amidst his literary subversions with the corsairs reads like a melting away of European *ennui* before the marvelous flora and fauna of the Caribbean. Entire pages are dedicated to the subtleties of tropical rains, of his methods for climbing trees, for swimming, for observing the vacillations of the vast maritime and celestial temperaments. The novel's political logic is bound up in this arresting command over narrative temporality.

The lurid scenic changes reach a pharmacological peak in evoking the local flavors of autochthonous cuisines, as a mouth-watering wild-boar roast gives way to a Dionysiac orgy and brawl between libertine conscripts and their cargo of legally-freed Africans. I think the near-absence of psychedelics or intoxicants in the novel supplants the fantastical access to Vudu herbalism found in *El reino de este mundo,* suggesting an interpretation of the contemporary narco-narrative as somehow standing in for or masking the older, dormant world's more dynamic and rationalized relationship to ethnobotany. More importantly, we are tracking how the boundless nature of the Antilles is for Carpentier recuperated into a narrative of disciplined historical and political realism, accomplished by his strict adherence to its actual time and place vis-à-vis the physical world.

The Guadeloupe chapters' ludic energies then give way to Esteban's, and the narrator's, apprehension of the topographical subtleties themselves, in the full passage cited below. "Beyond this, the Antillian world fascinated the youngster, with its prismatic sequence of lights playing over diverse forms, prodigiously diverse, inside the unity of a common climate and vegetation."[29] Taken in sum, the 'prodigious diversity' of the landscape is celebrated as an

[29] [translation mine] Original passage: "Por lo demás, el mundo de las Antillas fascinaba al joven, con su perpetuo tornasol de luces en juego sobre formas diversas, portentosamente diversas, dentro de la unidad de un clima y de una vegetación común. Amaba la montañosa Dominica, de profundos verdores, con sus pueblos llamados Bataille, Massacre, en recuerdo de sucesos escalofriantes, mal narrados por la historia. Conocía las nubes de Nevis, tan mansamente recostadas sobre sus colinas que el Gran Almirante, al verlas, las había tomado por imposibles heleros. Soñaba con ascender alguna vez hasta la cima del puntiagudo picacho de Santa Lucía, cuya mole, plantada en el mar, se divisaba en la distancia como un faro edificado por ingenieros ignotos, en espera de las naves que alguna vez traerían el Árbol de la Cruz en la trabazón de sus mástiles. Suaves y abrazadas al hombre cuando se las abordaba por el Sur, las islas de este inacabable archipiélago se hacían abruptas, fragosas, desgastadas por altas olas quebradas en espumas, en sus costas erguidas contra los vientos del Norte. Toda una mitología de naufragios, tesoros perdidos, sepulturas sin epitafio, luces engañosas encendidas en noches de tormenta, nacimientos predestinados —el de Madame de Maintenon, el de un taumaturgo sefardita, el de una amazona que llegó a ser reina de Constantinopla— se unía a estas tierras cuyos nombres repetíase Esteban en voz baja, para gozarse de la eufonía de las palabras: Tórtola, Santa Úrsula, Virgen Gorda, Anegada, Granaditas, Jerusalem Caída... Ciertas mañanas el mar amanecía tan quieto y silencioso que los crujidos isócronos de las cuerdas —más agudas de tono cuanto más cortas fueran; más graves cuanto más largas— se combinaban de tal suerte que, de popa a proa eran anacrusas y tiempos fuertes, appoggiaturas y notas picadas, con el bronco calderón salido de un arpa de tensos calabrotes, de pronto pulsada por un alisio. Pero en la navegación que hoy se llevaba, los vientos leves se habían hinchado repentinamente, impulsando olas cada vez más alzadas y densas. El mar verde-claro se había

instantiation of the vast differences in existence at a single moment. The passage is a highpoint of the work's linguistic marvels, and it can be both linked and contrasted to the creation myth at the waters of the Dragon's Mouth that is told after Esteban's flight from Paramirabo – the work's most distinct rupture of form. As is often the case, this formal break reveals both what the text is striving for and what it fails to attain.

The break comes as an account of the continent's pre-history, tying together the written historical model that is the basis for the Napoleonic period with the oral and mythic histories that descend from the pre-Columbian world's radically different experience of time and space. A 'materialist' account of the myths, the quest begins in the 13th Century after long centuries of development, with the collective dream of spreading across the Mayan Empire of the north. This journey starts from deep in the Amazon and rises north as a warrior people, who there craft naval vessels and then slaughter the Taíno non-warriors, those peaceful agrarians and fishermen. In this they resemble the Austronesian advance across the South Pacific that we know occurred in concurrent years, crossing out the 'little people' who knew secrets beyond the conquest of war, and which was also still in process when it was met by the European invasion. Thus, Carpentier narrates Spanish contact from the perspective of the competing tribes: Carib warriors from the South American mainland who had not yet wiped out the original Taíno. In sum, the passage revives the faint trace of Carpentier's life-long appreciation for Miguel Ángel Asturias's project of transliterating a lost Mayan worldview; but it also demonstrates that as a whole the novel had left that influence behind and moved on to narrate world history itself in the Americas.

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transformado en un mar verde-de-yedra, opaco, cada vez más levantisco, que de verde-tinta pasaba al verde-humo. Los marineros de colmillo husmeaban las ráfagas, sabiendo que olían distinto, con ese negror de sombra que se les atropellaba por encima y esos bruscos aquietamientos, cortados por lluvias tibias, de gotas tan pesadas que parecían de mercurio." *El siglo de las luces, op. Cit.*

The movement from the Orinoco's upper reaches to the sea also reflects a maturation beyond the cyclical irony and symmetry of *Los pasos perdidos*. The Goya-like quality of the prose that delights in listing and naming the variations of the sea also constrains the action to its specific time and place, rather than drifting into the endless associations the marvelous real throws up. It is a claim to the concrete that defends against a symbolic reading vulnerable to the numerology that steers Echevarría's chapter on *El siglo* off-course. The novel aims towards adamant restraint even in the face of the most intriguing permutations of its historical conjunction: Might Esteban's name recall that first African in the Americas, Esteban the Moor, Cabeza de Vaca's companion who was taken up as a medicine man and disappeared among the Pueblo peoples (therefore the first maroon)? Was Hippólito Bouchard in Guadelupe after the Saint-Domingue expedition, before becoming the Argentine privateer who would attack Spain's missions in California?[30] The anarchist imaginary of the Caribbean's pirate utopias has been a powerful narcotic for British historians and Chicago surrealists, but Carpentier's sober discipline resists swerving from the unromantic course of an inevitably flawed, even morose journey towards liberation. The work is provocative of such connections, but the development it charts is guided above all by a realist approach to the question of liberation in the Americas, its causes and limits.

If our focus on the novel's geography excludes analysis of some of its powerful symbols, such as the 'Explosion in a Cathedral' oil painting, or the unveiling of the guillotine in Guadeloupe, it still attempts to encompass something unitary in its underlying logic. For example, in examining the novel's coda in the Spanish Revolution, one can arguably determine aspects that would also

[30] Were there adequate space, it would be useful to note the synchronicity of the novel's coda with the real-life revolutionaries who, dismayed with France's volte-face, don the coats of Spain's revolting colonies. Sofía's participation in the Madrid revolt is an ellipsis to the full-circle taken by Hippólito Bouchard and other international members of the independence struggle. Merely the most exemplary and 'marvelously real' of his comrades, the globe-spanning pirate Hippólito survived France's ruinous *Saint-domingue* expedition and realigned as a fighter for the United Provinces of South America, miraculously planting the Argentine flag over a California harbor in 1818. See Appendix A.

be lodged in the razor-image of the executioner's blade. The latter is at once rational, horrific, and a sleek whisper of a world being born; its ambiguity is deeply embedded in the progressive and reactionary emporium that composed the theaters of the French Revolution. That ambiguity also underlies the translocation of what is arguably the Lacanian “Real” of the revolution, its popular and liberatory energy, which abandons France as a vessel sometime after the Thermidor and reappears in the independent republics of the Americas and anti-French insurgents on the Iberian peninsula. The unflinching representation of that ambiguity without moral recrimination places the act of revolution at the heart of the work’s meaning. Its historical conditions are rendered for aesthetic interpretation, but in itself it is inexorable and unavoidable. In contrast to the direction taken by Echevarría, its meaning should be sought in the contested space of the external world, beyond any closed symbolic order, such as in its shared commitments with the continent’s revolutionary literature. That canon includes Walter Rodney and Eduardo Galeano, whose conception of Latin American reality is probably the most widely purveyed, and especially the other most famous work on the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins.*[31]

To review, we began by noting where *El siglo de las luces* stands vis-á-vis the Historical Novel genre, identifying the launch of national independence as the bridge of meaning that connects its subject of the French Revolution with its own context of the Cuban Revolution. Taking stock of the leading critical responses to the novel, I shift the polarity of Echevarría’s arguments to conclude that Carpentier’s use of the baroque is a political operation that forces us to confront the historical conjunction of independence in the Americas. Distinct from kitsch deployments of

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[31] Frantz Fanon would be the obvious exception here, but much more than for Rodney, Africa eclipsed his attention to the Americas. In “Caribbean Masks: Frantz Fanon and Alejo Carpentier,” the Canadian author Stephen Henighan has written a comparison favoring Fanon to Carpentier, noting their shared influence by Césaire. More compellingly, for Neil Larsen, *El siglo de las luces* reflects the revolutionary truth that Fanon expresses thus: “The bourgeois phase of history in underdeveloped countries is useless… Nothing new has happened since independence.”

local color, the novel indulges in a material etiology of the revolutionary process. That close attention to physical detail, in style and method, guides us first through Havana's plantation capitalism, the ideal of internationalist action, the radicalism of the French masses, and the achievement of abolition, then linking Latin American reality to its position within the history of the globe. Finally, hewing unswervingly to a materialist causality, the novel's commitment to the anti-romantic goal of liberation is sundered in a sober reckoning with the independence project's tragic consequences. Far from an elliptical treatise on the self-referentiality of history, the novel's spirit and subject judge that it be read in conversation with its contemporary Caribbean proponents of world revolution.

In Comparison with *The Black Jacobins*

- This section first engages with Carpentier's account of the Haitian Revolution and what he contributes to its historicism. Secondly, we distinguish his approach to the representational challenges posed by world-history from that of James. Third, we see the embryonic rise of the U.S. hegemon and its recuperation of the revolution's universal goals, noting the overlap of Carpentier's concept of Latin American reality with that found in Galeano's *Las venas abiertas de América Latina.*

All of this dictates that we investigate how Carpentier represents abolition and the radical events of the Haitian Revolution in *El reino de este mundo* and then *El siglo de las luces,* seeking to determine the relationship between that history and his narrative. Both works pursued the non-subordinate position of the Caribbean vis-á-vis Europe, what at its most mature we can name as his transcultural internationalism – that is, the cross-pollination of revolutionary theory between these two, and other, hemispheres. C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins,* too, is deeply concerned with the French impact on the events, and its alternatingly progressive and

reactionary role.[32] In comparing the two, we can distinguish their approaches to this ideological transposition. Additionally, having established that the narration of history (and the lessons drawn from it) are central to Carpentier's operation, the comparison will distinguish where his literary approach overlaps with that of the historian as well as how this fits in his wider order of meaning.

The Trinidad-born James published his history of the Haitian Revolution in 1938 just before Carpentier's return home led to a deepened engagement with Haiti, the politics of *negrismo,* and the beginning of the American cycle. In his 20s, Carpentier wrote extensively for left-wing publications and was part of the milieu that launched the first Communist Party of Cuba with Soviet backing. In 1927, he was arrested for signing a manifesto against the Machado dictatorship, which led to his first major literary effort from jail, *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó!,* a class-based anthropology of Afro-Cuban folklore. Fleeing political repression and arriving in Paris, Carpentier dismayed at the regime's shameless efforts to keep the island cut off from broader regional currents and the arts in general, spurring his research to recover the suppressed and scorned richness of African and indigenous cultures.

If Carpentier spent most of the '30s in France looking back favorably to the Caribbean, James too was abroad, in England, and more deeply involved in his home region's swell of labor and emancipatory organizing. James saw emancipation in the Caribbean as crucial to the worldwide struggle underfoot: Ethiopia's beacon for revolutionary pan-Africanism, the situation in Moscow's bearing on the fate of the international workers' movement, the rise of European fascism, and the novel racial exploitation coalescing in the U.S.. Both men sympathized with Republican Spain and were radicalized by its defeat. But they would take distinct approaches in how to subvert the French historiography of the Haitian Revolution. Like Carpentier, James' study of

[32] James, C.L.R.. *The Black Jacobins,* Vintage, 1963.

Toussaint L'Ouverture helped clarify historical questions such as the character of the French Revolution in the Caribbean, the fate of abolition in the West Indies, and the class position of the indigenous peasants vis-à-vis the former slaves.[33]

El reino de este mundo may for a time have been the most widely read book on the Haitian Revolution, especially during the late 20th Century fascination with World Literature and its association with Magical Realism. But today, following the explosion of interest in the Black Radical Tradition, *The Black Jacobins* can surely claim a wider readership.[34] In the only sustained attempt at comparing the two works, Víctor Figueroa argues that each uses Haitian self-consciousness to destabilize Eurocentric subjectivity, and that Carpentier somewhat better posits Voodoo, rather than any assimilation of French revolutionary ideation, as the common principle for solidarity among the aggregate former slaves.[35] Figueroa rejects the justification given by Carpentier for emphasizing Christophe to the exclusion of Toussaint: "tenía el defecto de ser ya un personaje demasiado conocido, en mi opinión, que ya había sido objeto de una serie de poemas, de estudios, hasta de dramas e incluso novelas. Ha sido tratado varias veces, el personaje de Toussaint."[36] Figueroa inexplicably doubts that Carpentier knew of James' work in spite of evidence that James' production of *The Black Jacobins* is the most likely drama about Toussaint that Carpentier would be referencing.[37] Be that as it may, Carpentier's exclusion of the Catholic Toussaint, who outlawed Voodoo, clarifies the complementarity of the two texts: James' centering of Toussaint emphasizes the inescapable path of development through which the

[33] Just as James recognized that the San Domingo plantation workers were tethered to the land like peasants but organized in a factory like proletarians, Rodney argues against labeling as peasants those rural laborers that after slavery became bound or free wage-earners, important in the context of Guyana where the capitalist class chose to import an indentured population to secure "planter control over the entire labor process."

[34] Amazon book sales in 2022 reflect approximately ten times the magnitude of readers for *The Black Jacobins.*

[35] Figueroa, Víctor. "The Kingdom of Black Jacobins." *Afro-Hispanic Review,* Vol. 25, No. 2, Fall, 2006.

[36] From a 1963 interview with Radio Televisión Francesa. Carpentier, Alejo. *Entrevistas*. Ed. Virgilio López Lemus. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1985.

[37] Carpentier's "hasta de dramas" makes it almost impossible to believe that he did not know James' text, which had been highly publicized and performed on stage in London in 1936 by Paul Robeson.

revolution must run, while the subaltern in Carpentier nourishes his representation of the island's totality.

To wit, James is writing history, however well narrated, while Carpentier is writing historical fiction, however grounded in real events. That tension is evident in some of the events that overlap in their accounts, such as the early Mackandal rebellion. Here is the unembellished tone of James' description:

> Mackandal was an orator[…] He was fearless and, though one-handed from an accident, had a fortitude of spirit which he knew how to preserve in the midst of the most cruel tortures[…] he himself ranged from plantation to plantation to make converts, stimulate his followers, and perfect his great plan for the destruction of white civilisation in San Domingo[...] For six years he built up his organisation, he and his followers poisoning not only whites but disobedient members of their own band. Then he arranged that on a particular day the water of every house in the capital of the province was to be poisoned, and the general attack made on the whites while they were in the convulsions and anguish of death[...] His temerity was the cause of his downfall. He went one day to a plantation, got drunk and was betrayed, and being captured was burnt alive.

An even-handed account without undue adulation. In 1803, the children and grandchildren of the Mackandal rebellion would fight France to preserve their recent manumission from slavery. James testifies to their unspeakable valor on the gallows.

> Why do you burn everything? asked a French officer of a prisoner. We have a right to burn what we cultivate because a man has a right to dispose of his own labour, was the reply of this unknown anarchist. And far from being intimidated, the civil population met the terror with such courage and firmness as frightened the terrorists. Three blacks were condemned to be burnt alive. A huge crowd stood round while two of them were consumed, uttering horrible cries. But the third, a boy of 19, bound so that he could not see the other two, called to them in creole, "You do not know how to die. See how to die." By a great effort he twisted his body in his bonds, sat down and, placing his feet in the flames, let them burn without uttering a groan… When Chevalier, a black chief, hesitated at the sight of the scaffold, his wife shamed him. "You do not know how sweet it is to die for liberty!" And refusing to allow herself to be hanged by the executioner, she took the rope and hanged herself.

A remarkable passage, in which the opening Prodhonian thesis is taken to the logical extreme by the former slaves exercising the use/abuse value of their personhood. In Carpentier's prose,

el manco Mackandal gathers wild plants and mushrooms with sensitivity from the lush woodlands, receiving instructions for Voodoo potions from a priestess in a mountain cave. His comrades attribute his omnipresence during the uprising to a magical capacity for shape-changing into the island's animal inhabitants, until he finally returns to be captured. Here, the valor seen in the second passage seems to mix with the Mackandal legend, using fiction and *lo maravilloso* to depict the event as not an ending but a fertilizing moment at the beginning of a long rebellion.

> Mackandal estaba ya adosado al poste de torturas… El fuego comenzó a subir hacia el manco, sollamándole las piernas. En ese momento, Mackandal agitó su muñón que no habían podido atar, en un gesto conminatorio que no por menguado era menos terrible, aullando conjuros desconocidos y echando violentamente el torso hacia adelante. Sus ataduras cayeron, y el cuerpo del negro se espigó en el aire, volando por sobre las cabezas, ante de hundirse en las ondas negras de la masa de esclavos. Un solo grito llenó la plaza.
> –*Mackandal sauvé!*
> Y fue la confusión y el estruendo. Los guardias se lanzaron, a culatazos, sobre la negrada aullante[…] Y a tanto llegó el estrépito y la grita y la turbamulta, que muy pocos vieron que Mackandal, agarrado por diez soldados, era metido en el fuego, y que una llama crecida por el pelo encendido ahogaba su último grito.[38]

Certain elements separated temporally in James' work are crafted together by Carpentier in a way that preserves both the victory and unceremonious destruction of the Haitian rebels. Recognizing the distinct representational strategies of James and Carpentier allow us, as Susan Gillman proposes in her treatment of the two, to sidestep ritual academic comparison and draw historical implications from them directly as collaborators with a common purpose.[39] For example, *The Black Jacobins* makes explicit its concerns with the 'world-historical' questions that we identified in *El siglo de las luces;* namely, the abolition of slavery and the independence of the Americas. To James' credit, these victories of humanity are tempered by a shrewd eye to their cynical employment by capitalist interests: Abolition of the slave *trade* being trumpeted by the British who would continue to benefit from lucrative slave *labor* in colonies like Jamaica;

[38] Carpentier, Alejo. *El reino de este mundo,* Alianza Editorial, 2004.
[39] Gillman, Susan. "Black Jacobins and New World Mediterraneans," in eds. Peter Hulme, Owen Robinson, et al, *Surveying the American Tropics,* (Liverpool University Press: 2013).

Independence meanwhile being demanded by the planter class to secure stability for their slave economy from turbulence in the metropole. Let us examine each of these examples in depth.

James begins by describing the class composition of colonial slavery. Immediately, race complicates the divisive struggle between the three great classes representing land, labor, and capital. The racial factions are composed of the black slaves who are the overwhelming majority, the big and small whites (plantation owners and poor citizens), and the mulattos, whose rights to own property are levied by the second group to the disadvantage of the first, and with whom the few freed blacks sometimes align. Toussaint is able for a brief but significant period to balance these interests in a functional interracial cooperation, but is superseded by another contradiction altogether, the purse-strings of the colonial powers. So productive were the sugar plantations of Hispaniola that it became a contested prize in the long 18th Century war between Britain and France for maritime dominance, if not to possess its riches than to deprive them from their rival. British-held Jamaica close by has its fate closely tied to the outcome of Saint-Domingue with former slaves from each colony sharing revolutionary developments and resources.

This ultimately determining instance of the economic runs both ways: as revolutionary France tilts towards abolition, the Saint-Domingue planter class calls for independence in order to preserve their system of slavery. Independence actually protecting the institution of slavery for a class of creole elites whose productive capital has outstripped their reliance on the colonial metropole: the inflection upon the ambiguous War of Independence by the 13 colonies of New England is inescapable. Indeed in *El siglo de las luces*, the U.S. vessel *The Arrow* is a ubiquitous herald of the prosperous and progressive local power: its jocular Capitán Dexter aiding Víctor's privateering in a laissez-faire that sails above all under the banner of commerce.

In *The Black Jacobins*, any assistance or temperance offered by the United States is betrayed by its embargo on Haiti, which is only lifted out of interest prior to the 1812 war with England.

However, as author Christian Parenti argues in *Radical Hamilton,* the libertarian ideology of the newborn United States was not merely facetious. He sees its novel system of tax collection for public infrastructure to break the largess of the reactionary plantation owners as a cornerstone of the progressive 'science' for nation-building and the welfare of social equality. Parenti's argument parallels James, who admires Toussaint's remarkable acts of social construction under the barrage of constant naval incursions, blockades, embargos and the legacy of slavery. Those nigh-insurmountable challenges see James almost excusing Toussaint's military dictatorship.[40] Yet, by severing the synchronic bond between the former slave and his base among the people, it incurs James' partial blame for the collapse of Haiti's prosperity in 1804, for the last time.

The Dominican Republic's path is instructive of the bitter fruit born from Haitian independence. Dessalines routs the French from the island in 1805 and shortly after in 1806 is overthrown by Pétion and Christophe, who rule the south and north respectively. Each govern until their deaths, after which Pétion's successor Boyer reunites the island in 1822. By then, Spanish Hispaniola had been severed from Haiti since 1808 under French, then Spanish hands. Independence from Spain was proposed first through annexation by the new Republic of Gran Colombia and then in actuality under Haiti, which abolished slavery there for a second time. The DR then seceded in 1844. Gran Colombia is significant here in recalling the regressive slant

[40] Toussaint's revolutionary discipline is applauded for among other things razing the contraband trade, an impressive achievement given the region's long struggle against smuggling. One of Fidel and Che's first tasks was to eject the mafia from Cuba, restoring our attention to the longer continuity between the capitalist empires and the trafficking cartels.

taken by independence (its loss of Panama being the emblematic case), where Bolívar's dream of a regional bloc falls before the rapacious interest of the aptly named United States.

Haiti's early development and lasting destruction resembled the fate of Paraguay 60 years later in the War of the Triple Alliance, which provided the basis of Eduardo Galeano's influential call for independent development (echoing James) in *Las venas abiertas de américa latina*. Galeano drew from these lessons a conception of Latin American reality predicated on its incomplete independence, alongside an affirmative national-popular character similar to that articulated by Carpentier (I explore this in Chapter 2). The denial of national independence is evident in that the loot of the war on Paraguay ended up "in the pockets of British merchants, bankers, and industrialists," Galeano writes. "The invasion was financed from start to finish by the Bank of London, Baring Brothers, and the Rothschild bank, in loans at exorbitant interest rates which mortgaged the fate of the victorious countries."[41] For Galeano, it is Paraguay's insulation from foreign capital that set it on the path of self-sustained development and, like Toussaint, "breaks the internal power of the landlords and merchants" through a fierce military dictatorship (whose tearful critics like Neruda, he derides, dutifully suffer "the optical distortions imposed by liberalism.") But above all Galeano seizes the opportunity to describe the sort of development possible in the Americas following liberation:

> Begging, hunger, and stealing were unknown; travelers of the period found an oasis of tranquility amid areas convulsed by continuous wars… In 1845, there was no child who could not read and write… When the invaders appeared on the horizon in 1865, Paraguay had telegraphs, a railroad, and numerous factories manufacturing construction materials, textiles, linens, ponchos, paper and ink, crockery, and gunpowder.

This picture is rounded out by strong trade surpluses, a state-owned steel industry, a stable currency, great public works, and the employment of hundreds of foreign technicians. With soaring admiration, the section titled "How the War against Paraguay Wrecked the only

[41] Galeano, Eduardo. *Open Veins of Latin America,* Trans. Cedric Belfrage, Monthly Review Press, 1997.

Successful Attempt at Independent Development" depicts the social prosperity that the Triple Alliance massacred, with the bulk of the ranks violently recruited by Brazil, where again manumission and land were dangled as incentives before the plantation slaves of Bahía.[42]

Paraguay's example of progressive nation-building was of the sort that James foresaw for Haiti on Toussaint's path, which was gaining in strength and stability until being drowned in the crib by Napoleon. A fateful letter from Bonaparte to Toussaint in March of 1801 promising peace and a mutually beneficial military pact is to James the bitter end of a road not taken. For, Napoleon aims again to oust Britain from India, this time in league with a Russian land invasion, until England discovers the plot and arranges Tsar Paul's assassination with his successor Alexander. At that point Napoleon retrieves the letter never read by Toussaint and prepares Leclerc for the Saint Domingue expedition that seals Haiti's fate. These are the capricious, course-altering 'what-ifs?' of the Napoleonic Wars dramatized by the great fabulist Alexander Dumas, his family history a case in point: Dumas' father, born a slave in San Domingo, rose to unprecedented heights in the French military, but the animosity and betrayals suffered for his color inspired his son's narratives of imperial intrigue, revenge, and stolen destiny. With a good eye for drama himself, James grasps the poison pill of LeClerc's secret order, unknown even to his second Rochambeau, to reinstate slavery. The thrilling tension attending the embarkment of Víctor's order of abolition in *El siglo de las luces* finds its inverted match here in the unsensational rationale with which the freedom of millions is snatched away.

[42] Gimlette, John. *At the Tomb of the Inflatable Pig: Travels through Paraguay,* London: Hutchinson, 2003. The anarchist geographer Elisée Reclus also marveled at the revolutionary quality of Paraguayan society and its bioregionalism, depicting the Triple Alliance as a tropical version of the Second Empire of Napoleon III from which he took exile. Hervé Théry et Sébastien Velut. "Élisée Reclus et la guerre du Paraguay." *Terra Brasilis (Nova Série)*, December, 2016.

Recalling Carpentier's decision to foreswear Toussaint in favor of the Antillian baroque and plebeian, Galeano grasps the marvelous tragedy of Paraguay's entwined processes of underdevelopment and genocide. Prior to the Triple Alliance's slaughter and depopulation of the Guaraní people, first the Jesuits and then the national development of the López family incorporated the indigenous peasantry as a means of breaking the power of the oligarchy. Whereas, *The Black Jacobins'* 400 pages make no mention of the Taíno Arawaks native to Hispaniola: only a two page prologue narrates how the peaceful 'Red Indians' were wiped out by the Spanish and eventually replaced as forced laborers by the import of African slaves. So complete is the erasure that there are scarce moments where a reader might ponder the indigenous question, and only then obliquely, as with the mention of subaltern brigands and maroons who resist Toussaint's authority and are hunted down by Dessalines. These groups worship Voodoo in spite of Toussaint's Catholicism, and their lifestyles and fighting techniques reveal a close communion with the land. The association is confirmed by the historian Charles Mann, who writes that the Taíno's DNA was preserved in the maroons of San Domingo in which there had been interbreeding between the natives and escaped slaves.[43]

In fact, the French war on Haiti narrated by James reveals striking overlaps with the island's first European war, with Spain (the one recounted briefly, from the Taíno perspective, in *El siglo de las luces)*. Here, in Mann's description, the historical role played by the natives resembles that taken on later by the mestizo maroons and ex-slaves,

> A loose alliance of four Taino groups faced off against the Spaniards and one Taino group that had thrown its lot in with the foreigners. The Taino, who had no metal, could not withstand assaults with steel weapons. But they made the fight costly for the Spaniards. In an early form of chemical warfare, the Indians threw gourds stuffed with ashes and ground hot peppers at their attackers, unleashing

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[43] Mann, Charles. *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created,* Vintage, 2012. Furthermore in Cuba, free indians possessed territories prior to 1850 that somewhat paralleled the *pueblos* of California, then escaping white settlers from the sugar boom to remote hideouts over the mountains. Barreiro, José. "Indigenous Cuba: Hidden in Plain Sight." *National Museum of the American Indian,* Vol. 18, No. 4, Winter, 2017.

> clouds of choking, blinding smoke. Protective bandannas over their faces, they charged through the tear gas, killing Spaniards. Their intent was to push out the foreigners– an unthinkable course to Colón, who had staked everything on the voyage. When the Spaniards counterattacked, the Taino retreated scorched-earth style, destroying their own homes and gardens in the belief, Colón wrote scornfully, 'that hunger would drive us from the land.' Neither side could win. The Taino alliance could not eject the Spaniards from Hispaniola. But the Spaniards were waging war on the people who provided their food supply; total victory would be a total disaster. They won skirmish after skirmish, killing countless natives. Meanwhile, starvation, sickness, and exhaustion filled the cemetery in La Isabela.
> Humiliated by the calamity, the admiral set off for Spain on March 10, 1496, to beg the king and queen for more money and supplies. When he returned two years later– the third of what would become four voyages across the Atlantic– so little was left of La Isabela that he landed on the opposite side of the island…

Several parallels arise, such as the use of scorched earth, the retreat to Europe, the Europeans' flirting with genocide but recoiling for economic rather than moral purposes, and their seeming manipulation of cyclical inter-tribal competition; but also the natives' closeness to the land, use of territorial knowledge, greater casualities in battle, and the diseases that wreck the invaders as the seasons pass. The use of local wonders like hot peppers reminds one of the war games recounted in the Popul Vuh or the cahokia sporting ceremonies of the Black Drink, violent certainly, but also surrounded by contests of valor, wit, and ingenuity that obey taboos against total conquest. While this world is long gone by the Haitian Revolution, 300 years after that early war, the land persists in James' account as the shelter of its human stewards, as if the old Duppy still springs from the bowels of physical reality at propitious junctions, echoing the people's heroes that Galeano sees as the demi-gods of the national-popular.[44]

[44] The overlapping of sport, war, mythology and politics have forever linked James' writing on cricket with Galeano's book on soccer, perhaps to the detriment of the connection emphasized here on independent development or 'self-determination'. Several failed attempts at doing the same for baseball, including one by Echevarría, have fallen short of Galeano's and James's achievement. For Roberto Schwarz, soccer is, alongside popular music, "the cultural expression closest to the Brazilian heart." James also contributed a valuable analysis of the national-popular in the Caribbean and wider Americas, the topic of an excellent study by Frank Rosengarten. Rodney, for his part, packaged ludic and popular energy into a series of internationally-themed children's books. See the links made between the national-popular and children's pedagogy in Chapter 2.

One effect of rescuing the place of indigeneity in Haiti is to re-suture the commonality of *mestizaje* in the Americas beyond the divisions of French, Spanish, Portuguese, or English spheres. By refocusing on the longer continental history gestured at in *El siglo de las luces,* several patterns that persist across the pre- and post-Colombian worlds become visible. The perspective of linguistics is telling, in that the celebrated idiosyncrasies of each latino country's Spanish are infused with surviving indigenous vocabularies; famous examples being the Nahuatl word *popote/popōtl* to mean straw in México or the onomatopoetic *guagua* for baby in Quechua. Less common is noting this same tendency in North American English, where Chinook words in the lexicon like 'skookum' and big 'muckety muck' remain especially in purchase in the Pacific Northwest. These linguistics would then disclose the persistence of deeper cultural and political formations whose active suppression becomes much more clear, whether the determination across centuries to prevent the re-establishment of an Incan state in Perú and Bolivia, or the repeated thwarting of Nicaragua's centrality to a united front with its neighbors, such as the short-lived United Central American Provinces or the 1927 Sandino rebellion.

How do the racial distinctions of *The Black Jacobins* appear in Carpentier? In *El siglo de las luces,* Víctor Hugues is merely a French *forastero* ostensibly from a creole family of Saint Domingue merchants.[45] But James says outright that Hugues was a mulatto. Also mulatto in James' work is the intriguing historical figure Vincent Ogé, the younger brother (with whom he is often confused) of the Dr. Ogé that Carpentier skillfully situates as Víctor's compatriot and co-conspirator in the days preceding the late 1790 rebellion in Saint-Domingue in which both brothers perish.[46] That Dr. Ogé is described by Carpentier as alternately *mestizo, negro,* and *de*

[45] Carpentier's postface historical note reads that, "hasta hay motivos para creer que tuviese alguna lejana ascendencia negra, aunque esto no sería fácil de demostrar." *El siglo de las luces. Op. cit.*
[46] Stephen Henighan makes the spurious claim that Ogé's brother is Carpentier's invention. "Carpentier has endowed Vincent Ogé, the historical leader of a 1791 slave uprising, with a fictional brother." His citation for this claim is "F. R. Augier, S. C. Gordon, D. G. Hall and M. Reckord*, The Making of the West*

color quebrado, in the book's early sections when Víctor's romantic anti-racism and revolutionary passion inspires Sofía and Esteban to become *filantropos* and Jacobins. According to Marcus Rainsford, Vincent named two of his brothers his lieutenants, one of whom we can assume is the homonymous Jacques Vincent (also their father's name), alongside Jean-Baptiste Chavannes, who Rainsford calls "another mulatto, a ferocious character named Mark Chavane (sic)."[47] James is excellent on Chavannes, whom he distinguishes as to the left of his superior, the talented but flawed Ogé that brought the Friends of the Negro in Paris to launch the rebellion with secret support from the British abolitionist Thomas Clarkson, but then flinched at striking the hot iron with a call for immediate abolition. Chavannes, on the other hand, a mulatto who fought in the Continental Army against the British in 1778, wanted to free the slaves immediately, and remained steeled and unbowed under gruesome tortures by the French colonists. Their torturing of Ogé, according to James, is a crucial spark of outrage for the Paris masses in 1791, and the twin revolutionary movements between Paris and Haiti begin quickly afterwards to complement and co-fertilize each other. With Toussaint and the former slaves' rise and consolidation of power in 1794, in confluence with the election of the National Convention soon led by Robsepierre and the Mountain, this form of representation is the closest approximation to direct command being exercised by the masses and *sansculottes*.

We have noted the cynical uses of 'independence' and 'abolition' by the great powers in their geo-political maneuvers; in doing so adumbrating the same with 'revolution' itself. If spectacular history associates the American Revolutionary War with free blacks like Chavannes and liberators like Francisco de Miranda, William Hogeland writes that the majority of black participation in reality took the British side, given the belief that the Somerset decision spelled

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Indies (Harlow: Longman, 1960), 113," which contains only a cursory reference to the Ogé rebellion. Rainsford's account here is authoritative.

[47] Marcus Rainsford's 1805 book, *An Historical Account of the Black Empire of Hayti*, republished by Duke University Press in 2013.

pro-abolition policies and a rumored path of freedom from Nova Scotia to England.[48] As with Henri Christophe's neo-slavist indentured labor in *El reino de este mundo* (the black king himself born into slavery and conscripted as a child soldier for the Continental Army), and the Jacobin slavers of Guyane in *El siglo de las luces,* Carpentier shows abolition cajoling a desperate population into marching as foot soldiers. Yet, even for Esteban whose disillusionment embodies this cynical lesson, he returns in the novel's coda to act for the liberation of Spain against *La révolution* instrumentalized by Napoleon.

The revolution in Haiti is world-historically significant for James because of the codification of abolition in the Constitution – and, as he details in the Afterward, the unfulfilled path of self-determination (independent development) it proposed. The ramifications of these lessons were destined to explode in future revolutions: African decolonization at the time of publishing in 1938, and the dissemination of Cuban cadres across the West Indies during the 1962 Afterward. If James is unrestrained in his admiration for the person of Toussaint (the text is filled with glowing encomiums to his tender humanity: we see him once stop to adopt an orphan child), it evinces his Leninist line that the masses throw up the most adequate and capable leadership at decisive moments. Toussaint is seen to flank left and right, here a Royalist, there a sovereign, but always with the central purpose of making the revolution for abolition successful. James honors Toussaint's cunning in service to abolition, and equally that of the brigand maroons who represent a subaltern multitude beneath and often against Toussaint's authority: each allies unrepentantly with a colonial enemy at given points under the greater sign of defending their freedom to the last. This is the Leninist inflection of the Haitian Revolution.

James at this time was engaged in a series of meetings with Trotsky and the SWP militant Charles Curtiss over "Self-Determination for the American Negro" and building "A Negro

[48] Hogeland, William. *Founding Finance,* University of Texas Press, 2012.

Organization" (as their notes were titled).[49] These conversations show the colonial categories being applied to the contemporary U.S. empire and its african-american subjects, grasping Garveyite Independence as subordinate to a necessarily internationalist proletarian rising that will have to confront the U.S. capitalist class. In their own words, "The socialist society will not be built upon subjugated people, but from a free people. The reactionary or progressive character of self-determination is determined by whether or not it will advance the social revolution. That is the criterion." This influenced how *The Black Jacobins* would dispel the mist surrounding independence, ie. self-determination, to grasp the essence of liberation within the context of great power conflicts that necessitate mediating between the masses and the state. James draws a direct line between the barbarism of the colonial powers towards Haiti and the attacks on Blacks and Jews by the fascists during WWII. Trotsky tells him that a fascist victory inside the U.S. would above all target black subjugation. The exchange demonstrates that James was writing a critical history of the present's looming political impasse: the logic of that many-tentacled counter-revolution we euphemistically call U.S. 'foreign policy' has its origin in the 1806 U.S. embargo of the newborn nation of former slaves.

Finally, if Toussaint is the world-historical individual of the great abolitionist victory ("no individual other than Napoleon at the time could count such breadth"), James also shows that his downfall results from diverging from the line of the masses who are the revolution's real engine. Sometimes called *sansculottes* as well, they were perhaps best known as 'barefoot' with all the lived experience on the land and nakedness before the elements that this conveys. James' telling can only be imperfect here. On one side, he has to correct the disparaging record against Toussaint and show the extraordinary gifts and heights risen to by individuals who lead and represent revolutionary masses. On the other side, gaps in the record prevent a perfect picture

[49] "Documents on the Negro Struggle." *Bulletin of Marxist Studies No. 4*, New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1962. Transcription: Marxists Internet Archive.

of where Toussaint's limits are outstripped by the unnamed militants, town-criers, and matriarchs who bend with the current of the revolution like water in the river. James is at his best in giving his class structure the necessary slack to allow for the radicalism of those undocumented by history: "Those whose boldness of spirit found slavery intolerable and refused to evade it by committing suicide, would fly to the woods and mountains and form bands of free men–maroons. They fortified their fastnesses with palisades and ditches. Women followed them. They reproduced themselves. And for a hundred years before 1789 the maroons were a source of danger to the colony." Faithful to his task of showing the world-historical achievement of the Haitian Revolution, James cannot but side with Toussaint as the best available representative of that tale.[50]

Bridging that gap is the job of narrative, whose magical abilities include letting out the line of the imagination into the unknown, and reeling back the narrative closure within the structure of a historical framing. The plant knowledge practiced by Mackandal, the decadent sexualization of blacks by Pauline Bonaparte and her husband Leclerc's ironic succumbing to the Voodoo he disparaged, Ti Noel's collapse beneath Christophe's regime of servitude, the role of the drums and the elliptical Voodoo chants; the arc from Sofía and Esteban's induction into revolutionary

[50] One of the comparisons with the French Revolution that makes this work so extraordinary is found for just this dilemma of the absent role adumbrated by the maroons in Haiti: "It is in Georges Lefebvre, the great contemporary historian of the French Revolution, who on occasion after occasion exhaustively examines all the available evidence and repeats that we do not know and will never know who were the real leaders of the French Revolution, nameless, obscure men, far removed from the legislators and the public orators. G. Lefebvre, *La Fuite du Roi*, p. 187 (mimeographed lectures): «It is wrong to attach too much importance to any opinion that the Girondins or Robespierre might have on what needed to be done. That is not the way to approach the question. We must pay more attention to the obscure leaders and the people who listened to them in stores and the little workshops and dark streets of old Paris. It was on them that the business depended and for the moment, evidently, they followed the Girondins .... Who then are these leaders to whom the people listened? We know some. Nevertheless, as in all the decisive days of the revolution, what we most would like to know is forever out of our reach; we would like to have the diary of the most obscure of these popular leaders; we would then be able to grasp, in the act so to speak, how one of these great revolutionary days began; we do not have it.»" *The Black Jacobins, Op. cit.* William Hogeland makes a similar case in *The Whiskey Rebellion*, albeit more prosaically, that prior to the American Revolution the revolutionary scribes like Samuel Adams who agitated in Pennsylvania and took over Massachusetts with the aim of making it a 'Christian Sparta' worked tirelessly under the cloak of anonymity.

thought by Víctor to their strained rejection of France entirely; all this fiction huddles us into the essence and indiscernible grooves of the era. We have seen that at the crux of the epoch dissected by Carpentier and James lies the liberatory horizon of abolition and independence, behind which lurks the rapidly modernizing capitalist system. In the formal analysis of *El siglo de las luces* ('Jacobins at Sea'), the heart of the novel was found to mirror this ambiguous outcome of the abolition and independence movements.

In Anderson and Jameson's exchange over the powers of historical narrative, they echo Lukács' contention that historical realism can detect even embryonic elements of the era before they become emergent. In the distance between the Haitian and Cuban revolutions, we note the transformation of the U.S. from an emerging power to a world hegemon. Hindsight teaches that the era's crucible was defined by this progressive brand of capital, the 'anti-empire' that between Carpentier and James is seen to here-support-and-there-repress the slave rebellion, as whimsically as the fluttering of the stock index. The clash between the revolution and its instrumentalization: the central visual figure enlisted by each author to address this representational problem reveals their deep complementarity.

There is a triangular causality at work in James' Marxist analysis of the internal class conflict on the island between planters, the big and small whites, and the various shades of Mulattoes deprived of human rights. This extends to the Great Power rivalry between Britain and France, who waged war intermittently all through the 18th Century, and whose carving up of spoils was disrupted by revolution in the colonies. As *Le Pereúse* voyaged around the world, news of events could sometimes take years to cross the sea, confusing the fates of sailors lost on South Pacific islands who could not be rescued if they were still official enemies. The fate of enslaved peoples was more fickle still, as James' wit captures the depths of cynical revolutionary posturing: "With tears rolling down their cheeks for the poor suffering blacks, those British

bourgeois who had no West Indian interests set up a great howl for the abolition of the slave-trade." This is the bitter irony of the Jacobins enslaving the Guyanese in *El siglo de las luces.*

Marxism has long been sought as the scalpel for cutting through such pretenses. In the Italian historical novel *Q,* the Wu Ming collective narrates the anarchist revolt of Thomas Münster's peasant armies against the high priests of Rome, unknowingly being played in a power game by the German princes in league with Martin Luther.[51] Each vertice of this triangle is seen to have agency, but falls short of what we now call class consciousness, which inoculates against being manipulated as the agent of another interest.[52] Histories of the French Revolution like Erich Hobsbawm's *Age of Revolutions* and Jurgen Habermas's *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* give perhaps the cardinal example: In the triangular conflict among the Church, the Monarchy, and the plebeians, the bourgeoisie is revolutionary in its rousing of the rabble, banking on its future leadership. James sees the French and Haitian masses as forming one powerful bloc which can only be defeated by the combined camps of the Haitian planters, the French State, and international finance. Such determinations, qua the method of Historical Materialism, are immanent to both the patterns and permutations of the contending historical forces themselves.

If the triangular struggle among ally-competitors is the central figure in *The Black Jacobins* for the complexity of historical causality, we have seen that in *El siglo de las luces* the sea itself is the visual image representing the commingled strands of historical becoming. Recall that (in

[51] Carrie Gibson argues that Luther prefigures much of the dynamic that would prevail between colonists and creoles seeking autonomy from the papacy and Holy See, as the Reformation spread disorder in the colonies around the authority over questions like, for example, the right to enslave. Gibson, Carrie. *El Norte: The Epic and Forgotten Story of Hispanic North America,* Grove Atlantic, 2019.
[52] Closer to today, both Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyards* and Raymundo Gleyzer's *Los traidores (1973)* seize on this problematic in the guise of the 'astroturf' strike called by management at phases of over-supply, inserting union and party bosses as the dubious middle figure between labor and capital.

‘Jacobins at Sea’) the text’s formal elements were bracketed under a celebration of difference, with the investigation into the tragic heights of revolution and historical transformation being subtended by the geographical particularity of the archipelago – the island chains themselves provoking the novel’s most sustained and descriptive sections.

In the comparison with James, we have adumbrated the novel’s affinity with the underlying spirit of the independence period – adhering not to a verisimilitude of historical facts, so much as to decisive points in the process and determinations of causality as evinced by James’ political realism. But now we want to return to that expansive orientation of Carpentier, because his very different aesthetic formula discloses its object to be not a successful Haitian revolution at all, but rather an entirely inconclusive alteration in the world system marked by Spain’s ejection from the Americas. An effect, furthermore, of Carpentier’s diffuse and layered narration is to push against the limits of the era, registering at the fulcrum of independence a decidedly international significance. This recalls the already cited quote by Fanon, drawing the incisive distinction between independence and decolonization. Therefore, that just-mentioned formal feature of the novel, indeed of the entire American cycle – the immersive detailing of the flora, fauna, geology and geography of the Americas – has the effect of widening the contextual scope used to interpret this chapter of world-history.

Figures of the World-Historical

- Returning to the novel’s oceanic narrative form as a figure for its meditation on historical causality. Placing class struggle within the geological durée. Independence as the effect of a defeat.

The epic treatment of the Haitian Revolution and independence of Spanish America conveys a tectonic view of the continent's main events within the lens of the *longue durée*. Such a list might include the creation of the Atlantic Ocean and division of Pangaea, the Chicxulub asteroid impact in Yucatan, the population of the Americas by *homo sapiens,* collapse of megafauna, exchanges with Asia and Oceana, neolithic and Bronze advancements, coupled with the advent of writing, cosmology, and agriculture, the waning of empires like the Maya or Chaco, Incan and Aztec expansions, the post-Columbian conquest, and perhaps abolition and independence. Does all of this suggest that human history can be described as a georgic dynamic of technological and social development haunted by the problem of liberation? As argued in *Valences of the Dialectic,* Jameson's treatment of Braudel's massive history of the Mediterranean world under Philip II (we could equally substitute Jean-Pierre Chrétien's *The Great Lakes of Africa*)*,* all human struggles and dynamics have taken form within the shaped grooves and ruts of a particular landmass. The roads and paths therein are the casting mold for millennia of not just human history but plant, animal, and fungal kingdoms as well, reminiscent of the combination of sciences like linguistics, archeology, and anthropology that are required for penetrating the oldest known cuneiform texts. The life sciences seem to confirm aspects of this account, such as the discovery by mycologist David Arora that mushrooms and wildflowers are most prolific along edges, whether of trails, slopes, thoroughfares or transitional zones.[53] Provocatively, Arora likens the ethnobotanical recognition involved in interspecies identification to the most mnemonic mediums of connectivity, such as the processing of human facial expressions and vocal intonations. Indeed, one of Jameson's arguments in *Valences* is that we need the subjective categories from Aristotle's poetics, among which recognition is central, to properly narrate the history of the globe. Note the recurrence of physical and geographical shapes in this passage of just such global-historical events as Jameson describes 'the fog of history':

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[53] Arora, David. *All That Rain Promises and More,* Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1991.

> [O]nly gradually do world-historical events and the institutions they leave behind them begin slowly to emerge, in shadowy outline…For world history is itself imaginary: it is the distant horizon of legendary events unfolding beyond the immemorial daily life and rounds of peasants whose time is incompatible with it. It is a distant frieze of events with a time of its own, some distant privileged time that flows uninterrupted on and on, as in that magnificent passage from Hebel which Walter Benjamin so admired:
>
> «In the meantime the city of Lisbon was destroyed by an earthquake, and the Seven Years' War came and went, and Emperor Francis I died, and the Jesuit Order was abolished, and Poland was partitioned, and Empress Maria-Theresa died, and Struensee was executed. America became independent, and the united French and Spanish forces were unable to capture Gibraltar. The Turks locked up General Stein in the Veteraner Cave in Hungary, and Emperor Joseph died also. King Gustavus of Sweden conquered Russian Finland, and the French Revolution and the long war began and Emperor Leopold II went to his grave too. Napoleon captured Prussia, and the English bombarded Copenhagen, and the peasants sowed and harvested. The millers ground, the smiths hammered, and the miners dug for veins of ore in their underground workshops.»[54]

Given, furthermore, that Aristotle's *anagnorisis* was recognition of the heart of a situation or a given reality's determining conditions, one sees two dominant layers of historical causality in Hebel's snapshot: Above, a chain of interdependent wars among states – no Bolivarian Republics without U.S. Independence, no United States without the Seven Years War, and so on; below, the unmappable millions of workers toiling a land itself in flux due to earthquakes and climatic shifts. For Joshua Clover, "Anagnorisis designates the disclosure of the real (which is to say, productive) content concealed behind the surface of political form," and this formulation would rule decidedly that it is the proletariat that is productive of the reality whose surface and form is capitalism.[55] But as we will see in Chapter 3, it is Marx's writings on pre-capitalism that are the key to grasping the class whose vitality is excluded from the independence movement, which renders it a merely formal change of appearances. It is from that critical perspective that the tides of independence in *El siglo de las luces* lap against the shores of the world-historical, linking the early cracking of the colony to the milieu of the Cuban Revolution that in substance releases the island from immurement. How this comes about, and the new contradictions it

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[54] Jameson, Fredric. "The Fog of History." *London Review of Books,* Vol. 44, No. 6, 2022.
[55] Clover, Joshua. "Genres of the Dialectic." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 43, No. 2, 2017.

births, are part and parcel the problem being addressed by Carpentier's concept of Latin American reality: the historical experience of the creole republics – formally independent states but within which significant aboriginal and colonial components remain unincorporated – then maintained in underdevelopment by the local hegemon of the United States, where the winning formula for post-colonial capitalism has taken seat. The natural world then is somehow specific to the narrative matrix that drives his representation of the causes and conditions of independence.

Why estrange this story in the medium of natural description? In Carpentier, the physical descriptions that at times produce the marvelous real may be meant to reproduce true phenomena that stand vis-á-vis the European surreal and absurdist as a vital original to an inert copy, but their effect on the reader is the displacement of the political content to be benign and unperplexing. That is to say, the story narrated by way of metaphor or allusions is not therefore less real. For Freud, the subject's difficulty in recognizing causes can stem from a disgust at envisioning the primal scene, which is therefore more likely to appear disguised in the associative and imagistic syntax of dreams. In this way, the long passages of natural wonder experienced especially by Esteban during the height of Víctor's revolution in the Caribbean allow the reader to indulge in an otherwise irrational pursuit of the era's utopian content, necessarily brutal machinations, and the geopolitical maneuvering capable of overthrowing the dominant order.

This emphasis on causality recalls Benjamin's contrast between Historicism and Historical Materialism, where the latter finds surprise meanings and links towards redemptive ends from out of the empty, linear time composed of past names and dates. The Historical Note on the real life of Víctor Hugues appended to the end of the novel is indeed a reminder that the work is in its own right a contribution to rectifying the oversight by historians of this fateful 'Robespierre of

the tropics'. Yet, I have argued that the effect of its literary rendering is to bring the reader into contact with the structure of social conditions underlying the event of independence in the Americas, and out of which can be sounded potential associations and lessons about the logic of liberation. Such an analysis presupposes the approach taken to musical composition, Carpentier's trained profession that bears upon all of his literary output (such as the novel *El acoso,* which takes its form from Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony)*. Accordingly, our attention is drawn to *El siglo de las luces*' multiple endings or crestings, with Esteban's various stops along the maturation process, the odd re-working of his earlier infatuation with Asturias now into a materialist account of the Americas on the eve of European contact, and the wrestling with disillusion that returns the insurgents to a new battlefield this time under an altered sign and uniform.

From *Valences of the Dialectic* onward, Jameson argues that as much as narrative form discloses about a given historical process, the limits of representation are indicative of impasses with regard to the 'broadly historical' register of the mode of production. A common foil in these writings is the experience of war that defies and limits allegory, even as that limit provokes extraordinary feats of aesthetic innovation for conveying the human species stripped of all its pretensions. Because war in this sense is a collective more than individual act, it constitutes a moment of decision not unlike the intrigues of plots, putsches, and revolutionary overthrows of a given order, offering a privileged glimpse into the totality of the epoch and its determining forces. The endurance of narrative as a source for social recognition makes it appear in Jameson as an almost transhistorical container of meaning. But his focus on allegory ultimately places the emphasis on the critical or pedagogical apprehension of historical truth, a justification I take for the 'outward-facing' inversion of Echevarría. Jameson stretches conventional conceptions of the *recít* as the homeseat of narrative in a long essay on Mahler's history-telling symphonies, and in a public lecture on the utopian content dwelling within the current world-system, where the U.S.

Military is taken allegorically to demonstrate the potential for universal health-care, full employment and socially useful international relief.[56] Some of the better critical responses to this work have noted that the breadth of Jameson's discoveries is frequently produced by his own representational style, which uses Lefebvre's spatial categories to animate the shrewd Marxo-Freudian aesthetic critique of the Frankfurt School.[57]

The Mahler essay in particular enlists an exceptional visual metaphor on the final pages that brings together many of the ocean's allegorical uses already noted here, (including the odyssey of war, the Mediterranean world-system, the empire on which the sun never set) above all under a radical conception of material causality. Mahler's audible histories evoke for the listener a maritime figure that scrambles the vectors between culture and wilderness typical to ecocriticism. Jameson cites a science-based account of oceanic currents, their sub-visible but overwhelming interconnectivity with the global climate, jet-streams, atmospheric pressure, temperature, chemical components, and finally, a spatial figure of radical dimensionality (conjuring the adjacent resonance and 'strange' relationality of Brian Greene's superstring theory) in which the depth currents spanning the world's oceans are composed of tiny molecules all interacting to create a multitude of phenomenal categories contained within the massive web of interconnected currents. That image of vertiginous interrelationality complements the preceding 40 pages on Mahler's narrative form, illustrating the historical field as a heightened permeation of past causes, contingencies, and new combinations.

As such, the 'prodigious diversity of forms' taken by the sea in *El siglo de las luces* complement and sharpen the reader's movement amidst the labyrinthian causes determining the historical

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[56] Jameson, Fredric. *Allegory and Ideology*, Verso, 2019. For the CUNY lecture, see Jameson. *An American Utopia.* Verso, 2016.
[57] Michael Wood, "Report from the Interior." *London Review of Books*, Jan., 2014, a review of *Antinomies of Realism;* Terry Eagleton, "Jameson and Form." *New Left Review*, Vol. II, No. 59, Sept. 2009.

events of abolition and independence. Furthermore, that prodigious diversity underscores a baroque experience of Latin American reality – its extant nature, *mestizaje* and endogenous aesthetics at once archaic and vanguardist – that is both cause and result of the amputated movement towards liberation depicted in its pages. In this way, its narrative experience is singularly expansive, guiding readers through both the supporting conditions of independence and its furthest-reaching effects, which are demonstrated in the concluding section.

The Way Back

- Here I reconstruct the wars of independence in the wider context of world-history, noting along the way how the novel leads into and relies on this global geography for its signification. This radiograph of the history that forms the novel's exo-skeleton lays the groundwork for examining the debate over Latin American independence that is carried out in Chapter 3.

As Freud incomparably showed, the etiology of a process, historical or psychological, requires a stoic and remorseless gaze when faced with its horrors, detours, and deceptions. The close reading of the 'Jacobins at Sea' section noted how *El siglo de las luces* withstands the Jacobin terror unflinchingly and thus uniquely witnesses the fruits it produced; a stance mirrored, we might say, in Carpentier's pre-revolutionary nationalism that is later preserved as unbending support for any Napoleonic aspects of Castro's government. Through this morally neutral posture, in the mold of Balzác, the novel captures the ambiguous achievements sitting at the fulcrum of reality in the Americas: the struggle for independence and the abolition of slavery. Considering the legacy of the Monroe Doctrine and Cuba's oppression under the Yankee boot, independence was indeed a victory cleft of its universal realization. I have argued that the novel posits this ambiguous independence as a component of Latin American reality above all in its transposition of the Caribbean revolution that ends with the Spanish uprising, a new beginning.

We must now penetrate more fully into the mystery of independence, reading it simultaneously from the two levels of its liberatory impulses and its machination under the Great Power contest.[58] This will involve a shift in registers: recalling the citation of Hebel on the Seven Years War, let us brush against the grain on the official historicism of the victors in order to grasp its monad of meaning from the perspective of historical materialism.[59]

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[58] Peter Weiss's *Marat/Sade* (1963) captures how the masses' assertion of their historical role through tyrannicide during the French Revolution provoked the ruling class's self-defense in the reasoned language of historicism. Here is Marat's rejoinder to that dialectic between those above and below:
"Our country is in danger
We talk about France
but who is France for
…
you will never shake off the past
you'll never understand
the great upheaval in which you find yourselves
…
You'll never stop talking of the people
as a rough and formless mass
Why
Because you live apart from them
You let yourselves be dragged into the Revolution
knowing nothing about its principles
What we need now is a true deputy of the people
one who's incorruptible
one we can trust
Things are breaking down things are chaotic
that is good
that's the first step
Now we must take the next step
and choose a man
who will rule for you"

[59] In "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin distinguishes the two forms of historiography as such: "**Historicism** rightly culminates in universal history. It may be that materialist historiography differs in method more clearly from universal history than from any other kind. Universal history has no theoretical armature. Its procedure is additive: it musters a mass of data to fill the homogeneous, empty time. **Materialist historiography**, on the other hand, is based on a constructive principle. Thinking involves not only the movement of thoughts, but their arrest as well. Where thinking suddenly comes to a stop in a constellation saturated with tensions, it gives that constellation a shock, by which thinking is crystallized as a monad. The historical materialist approaches a historical object only where it confronts him as a monad. In this structure he recognizes the sign of a messianic arrest of happening, or (to put it differently) a revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past. He takes cognizance of it in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history; thus, he blasts a specific life out of the era, a specific work out of the lifework. As a result of this method, the lifework is both preserved and sublated *in* the work, the era *in* the lifework, and the entire course of history *in* the era. The nourishing fruit of what is historically understood contains time in its *interior* as a precious but tasteless seed."

The American Revolutionary War between the 13 Colonies and Britain runs from 1775 to 1783. The action of *El siglo de las luces* begins following U.S. independence, and although the war's effects are felt, it is not mentioned. In 1780, the Spanish treasure of Potosí in Upper Perú is threatened by the uprising of the indigenous leaders Tupac Amaru II, Thomas Katari, Tupac Katari and Bertolina Sisi, being put down with the help of the creoles in 1783.[60] In 1788, the British seize the great uncolonized continent of the Dutch South Asian Sea territory. More advanced by centuries than the advent of American colonization, in the midst of sustained great-power maritime contests, the conquest of Australia is swift, savage, and modern in its public relations, anticipating eugenics in its successful branding of the aboriginal population brought back to Europe as spectacles of "the most primitive people on earth."[61] The events and impacts of the French Revolution fill the succeeding years (including the Haitian Revolution and the entirety of the novel's action) until 1810, at which point several regions of New Spain witness the first declarations of autonomy. The wars of independence then rage until 1826, when the last Royalist holdouts are ousted in the Chilean isle of Chiloé and Callao, Perú by Bolívar. Metternich's designs for great-power alliance at the Vienna Congress see Spain allowed to retain the remnants of its empire in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines until the Spanish-American War in 1898.[62]

The Spanish Empire entered the years of the Napoleonic Wars already in long decline, eclipsed above all by Britain. Spain's West Florida and Cuban colonies offer covert support to the 13 Colonies' war against its British rival, only to see that ally extirpate the Spanish and French footholds in the North American mainland by 1803. The United States, not yet a world-power,

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[60] Felipe Quispe, *Tupac Katari vive y vuelve…Carajo!*, Ediciones Ofensiva Roja, La Paz, 1988.

[61] See Marcia Langton's scholarship on Australian contact, and SBS's *First Australians (2008).*

[62] The Jefferson-Monroe repression of slave revolts following the Haitian rebellion also helped motivate the extension of prison colonies in Panama and the Philippines after 1898. In this way, Weber sees the unfreedom of the Monroe Doctrine visited on other continents within a broader strategy of domestic counter-revolution. Weber, Benjamin. *American Purgatory: Prison Imperialism and the Rise of Mass Incarceration,* The New Press, 2023.

nonetheless recognized its interest in weakening imperial reach anywhere in the Americas, complementary with Jefferson and Paine's sway under French libertarianism. Bolívar's mentor and forerunner, Francisco de Miranda, would participate in both the American and French Revolutions, developing the ideas and support for his first sorties to liberate Venezuela prior to 1810. He is supported by those governments, as well as occasionally the British in their efforts to weaken Spain, but the most reliable and dedicated support comes from revolutionary Haiti and the other Caribbean territories in the motions of liberation like Dutch Curaçao.[63]

We can also note the perverse boomerang effect of the 1810 juntas that spring up from Mexico to Quito and Buenos Aires, nominally in Spain's defense against France during the Peninsular War. The irony at work in this causality is captured by Marx notes in this causality the irony of the unambitious reaction of the *independistas* of New Spain compared with the radicalism of the 1812 constitution. That document, 'with and against' France, inspired a series of revolutions against Spain's monarchy into and past 1826, and was memorialized in the silent rage of Goya's *Disasters of War* which is cited in epigraphs for most of the novel's chapters. But the junta in Quito was already a reaction to Spain's desperate reorganization of the vice-royalties and *audiencias,* in which what are now Ecuador and Bolivia feel aggrieved at being placed under distant peninsular authorities in Perú and Río de la Plata respectively. When France invades Spain and Ferdinand's government establishes the council of Cadiz in exile, the juntas comply, seizing their chance at gaining greater privileges and local autonomy under the proposal. This is the reversal witnessed in *El siglo de las luces'* final chapter: Sofía and Esteban, having spent years as partisans of the French-affiliated wars for abolition in the Caribbean, only to become fully disillusioned with the post-Thermidor reactions, now fling themselves unabashedly into the

[63] Robin Blackburn argues that "In 1816 the president of the Haitian republic helped Simón Bolívar to radicalize the Spanish-American revolutionary struggle and to ensure that none of the new Spanish-American republics would be based, as were colonial Cuba, imperial Brazil, and the antebellum United States, on a slave economy."

liberal revolution in Spain against France's invasion. The journey of Esteban, who earlier attempted to propagandize the Declaration of the Rights of Man within Spain and failed, traces the diffusion and adaptation that the spirit of liberation goes through in its translocation from France to other social conflicts.

A comment must be made here on Víctor's reputed final resting place in the Guyanas, today the smallest countries of South America and in every sense exceptional. At the onset of colonization, the greater Guyana was a distinctive geological craton on the continent's north-east that allowed for several maritime empires to make beachheads, but the high plain Sabana, elevated *tepuis,* and dense rain forests made the hinterland impossible to penetrate. This had several effects. Amidst territorial wars, the British, Dutch, French, Spanish, and Portuguese all came to establish trading outposts, only to encounter great difficulty in endemic economic development.[64] Constant flood and drought necessitated the excavating, by hand, of millions of tons of mud for the dams, dikes, canals, drainage, and irrigation to enable the Dutch polder method for arable land that would bring a return on outlays from the court. What King Sugar viewed as the perilous loss of capital reflected immense human toil, suffering and loss of life.

The most brutal impositions of a slave system were called upon to render profit from this satanic endeavor. The Dutch and French outposts were major disembarkation points for the respective Atlantic Trade of those empires in African slaves. Their gross numbers of slaves almost rivaled the absolute dominance of the Portuguese trade to Brazil and the British trade to Jamaica and Barbados. While the populations of African descended slaves between North America and the

[64] The Portuguese and Spanish Guyanas were assimilated into Brazil and Venezuela respectively, while the others are now known as Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana (or Guyane). My sources for this section are Rodney, Walter. *A History of the Guyanese Working People, 1881-1905,* Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981. Rodway, James. *History of British Guiana from the year 1668,* Georgetown, 1891. Rodway. *Guiana: British, Dutch, and French,* Scribner's Sons, 1912. And Mann's *1493.*

Caribbean were commensurate by the early 19th Century, North America represented less than 4% of the actual Atlantic traffic, due to much higher rates of reproduction and survival. The abysmal living conditions in the tropics that caused this discrepancy give an idea to the general misery that prevailed in the Guyana colonies, which we see enveloping Víctor in the novel's penultimate chapter. Nor are the distinctions between the territories lost, Paramaibo appearing to Esteben as civilized in comparison to Cayenne. For Víctor to have escaped the latter, where much of the French Revolution's parliament had been banished and perished, leading it to become known as the Dry Guillotine – which need not wet its blade to kill – is as statistically remarkable as Hippólyto's survival of Saint-Domingue. Furthermore, the malarial, swampy terrain away from the coast became the base and refuge for sustained maroon communities able to effectively support insurgencies that impeded colonial stability and security. Yet, the surplus so badly needed for infrastructure was extracted instead, this being the planned disaster for the population that Walter Rodney calls underdevelopment, one which Carpentier has the good sense not to celebrate. Where we last glimpse Víctor in personal and political failure, it is a dismay shared much more by the former slaves being returned to bondage – while only Sofía finds her convictions sharpened as she reaches out for new horizons.

Casting an eye over this reconstruction, we see the interpenetration of the levels from the anarchic, anti-state energies emerging from the maroons (as celebrated in the work of Linebaugh and Rediker), to the unsung importance of the Caribbean's 'minor states', all the way up to the contested space of the state itself, where the once-revolutionary governments of France and the U.S. support first Miranda and then Bolívar in successfully denying Spain of their colonies. Several further nuances follow in the guarded support of Bolívar by Imperial Britain, and then the fate of the new territories of Mexico that are shortly laid upon again by the European powers, amidst the dramatic loss of territory at the hands of the U.S. in 1848. To the North of the California spoils, the British settle for the Canadian territory and the expulsion of the

French and Russians in exchange for avoiding another disastrous conflict with the U.S.. Canada then continues in the pattern of the crown's overseas possessions: mineral extraction and total dispossession of the natives. This plunder finds useful disguise under the patina afforded by associations of the Americas with independent, democratic states.

Finally, the popular optics of Bolívar's centrality to independence further downplays the Brazilian exception. Ironically, the great power status sought by Gran Colombia was partially achieved in the massive Brazil, whose size and economic power measures that of the rest of South America. The governor of a province like Minas Gerais lacks the profile of presidents from Bolivia, Uruguay, or Paraguay, but its population is greater than all three countries put together. Portugal's colony profited in the enslavement of Africans and the local Tupi, who in turn became more 'raw materials' to the Brazilian Empire than any part of 'civil society'. The further Guaraní people were also feasted on more as a resource than any territorial limit, and we have already seen how Brazil enriched its regional power at the expense of the proto-socialist Paraguay during the War of the Triple Alliance. Having eliminated that example of an anti-colonial path to independence, Brazil's 'extractivist capitalism' would be overseen by a top-heavy state in which racism and regionalism excluded the majority from political and civil rights. Roberto Schwarz emphasizes the role played by US imperialism in Brazil's (under)development, suggesting that beyond other differences this is a unifying characteristic of 'Latin America'.[65] Distinct in the independence story is that, far more extreme than the dislocation of Ferdinand to Cadiz, royal

[65] The Schwarz quotes here come from his seminal "Culture and Politics in Brazil: 1964-1969." Elsewhere, he depicts independence as circumstantial – "In the wake of his flight to Brazil, to escape Napoleon's invasion of Portugal in 1807-8, in which he was escorted by the British fleet, King João VI opened the ports of the colony for the first time to non-Portuguese (largely British) shipping" – and resulting in the ideological confusion attending to a slavist state based on patronage that identifies with postcolonial enlightenment: "It is well known that Brazil's gaining of independence did not involve a revolution. Apart from changes in external relations and a reorganization of the top administration, the socio-economic structure created by colonial exploitation remained intact, though now for the benefit of local dominant classes. It was thus inevitable that modern forms of civilization entailing freedom and citizenship, which arrived together with the wave of political emancipation, should have appeared foreign and artificial…" Schwarz. "Brazilian Culture: Nationalism by Elimination." Pp 12. Both essays are collected in Schwarz, Roberto. *Misplaced Ideas,* Ed. Gledson, John. Verso, 2003.

Portugal flees all the way to Brazil after Napoleon's invasion in 1807, raising fears among neighbors such as those who form the Buenos Aires Junta that the Portuguese would seize on the continent's instability to invade. Over and above this difference, the constitutional revolutions in Spain and Portugal are intertwined with the movements for anti-colonial independence, and we will pursue the meaning of this interdependence in deconstructing the Bolivarian myth.[66]

Colonial Brazil is largely absent from the novel aside from a single mention of the Quilombo Palmares by the Swiss Sieger, who is recounting the long subversive war by maroons against the colonial Americas. That section is the most nakedly historical and didactic, thus forming a formal opposition to the mythic tone of the Arawak migration. As such, it comes closest to broaching the critical lens afforded by Brazil on Carpentier's concept of Latin American reality. In fact, Schwarz conceives Brazilian reality as the encounter between two modes of surplus extraction: a new and progressive bloc motivated by 'the most advanced manifestations of international imperialist integration', and the indentured local reactionaries moved by 'the most ancient - and obsolete - bourgeois ideology, centered on the individual, on the indivisibility of the family and on its traditions.' As this passage continues, a contrast or sharpening can be seen with respect to the determining factors of Carpentier's Latin American reality. "Superficially, this combination only represents the coexistence of symptoms linked to different phases of the same system. (For the purposes of this argument, we are not interested in the celebrated cultural variety of Brazil in which it is true that one finds African religions, indigenous tribes, workers sometimes sold as slaves, share-cropping and industrial complexes.) The important thing is the

[66] As we will see in Chapter 3, Aricó sees Brazil as the explicit model on which Bolívar sought to construct the Gran Colombia. Furthermore, Marx depreciates Bolívar as a poor copy of Bonaparte in the midst of his own persecution and harassment by the Bonapartist regime of the Second Empire. In other words, what we have noted of the French duplicity, that its masses were surging during a world-wide upheaval for liberation, and even temporarily at its forefront, but that Bonapartism stood as the masquerade of that movement, its substitution by the shallowest sector of petit bourgeois who ruled through falsification of the historical record and the rousing of the lumpen. In the place of a true 'social vitality', that is a bloc of workers and the popular classes, Bonaparte (and, for Marx, his imitators like Bolívar) substitute the supposed leadership of the oppressed or dangerous classes, the most vulgar elements of the revolution shorn of its slightest pretense to universality.

systematic character of this co-existence, and its meaning, which can vary." This juxtaposition of the old and new becomes a central emblem,

> [O]f the countries which were once colonized and have now become underdeveloped… This is because these countries were incorporated into the world market - to the modern world - in an economically and socially backward role, that of suppliers of raw materials and cheap labour. Their link to what is new is made *by means of,* structurally by means of, their social backwardness, which reproduces itself, instead of cancelling itself out. In the insoluble but functional combination of these two terms, then, the plan of a national destiny is laid out, there from the beginning.

For Schwarz, critical of an anti-imperialist politics that ignored the treachery of the nationalist bourgeoisie, an 'independent Latin America' in the post-colonial era is at its best an ironic aesthetic that draws attention to this coexistence of different capitalist phases; where local color as well as the cultural imperialism of the US are both instances of the particular, while the universal is apprehended in their mutual perpetuation and co-dependence.

Early in this discussion on Anderson's typology of the Historical Novel we noted the spatial co-existence of historical phases as a stamp of accomplished realism, and a key example of how *El siglo de las luces* exceeds the antecedent *lo real maravilloso.* I have shown how the novel draws us towards a radical re-examination of the independence era and its relationship to the social reality lived out by the successive creole republics. A conclusion to that discussion will come in the final chapter where we analyze the Marxist approach to independence, but it is possible here nonetheless to name some of the hitherto disparate elements that through analyzing Carpentier are now seen to revolve around the nucleus of that relationship. Key among these are the ambiguous results of independence and abolition. Abolition figures cynically into the schemes of the First Empire as it absorbs the French Revolution's achievements, while Bolívar extolled the humanism of blacks after recognizing the tactical value of former slaves on the battlefield.[67] The class of creoles who were *independistas* after 1810,

[67] Bolívar, in a letter addressed to his principal general, Santander, on April 20, 1820, actually suggests that using the slaves as cannon-fodder would intercept the danger of a Haitian-like revolution afterwards,

meanwhile, are those in 1780 who crush the self-determination of the Inca on behalf of Spain, and those who again in the 19th Century deny Peru and Bolivia the power of forming an allied indigenous state. Furthermore, in the landlocking of Bolivia by Chile and England during the War of the Pacific, we see the persistent hand of the European powers, shortly to give way to the US as the region's hegemonic imperial power. In turn, the renewed surge for liberation from that yoke typified by the Cuban Revolution grants a central protagonicity to the guerrilla and peasant armies whose base are the mestizo, indigenous, former slaves and maroons – in short, the civil society reflecting the continent's *mestizaje.* Finally, in passing through Jameson's figure of oceanic currents, the splendor of material nature itself is seen to formally subtend the interwoven levels of the liberatory drive from below and the geopolitical struggle of Great Powers. In that light, the guerrilla is a link to the contours of the land itself: close *conocimiento* of the terrain is its military advantage; its nourishment and human subsistence comes from those who work the land; even the continent's birdsong, plant medicine, and the whole host of biodiversity is exploited for victory, to avoid defeat, or to die with dignity. Schwarz warns against the fetish of armed struggle where it champions the endemic nation against external competitors, but upholds the militant pedagogical mission, broadly conceived, that raises popular consciousness of the international situation.

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writing that "[My abolition order] is not declaring the freedom of the slaves and is using the facility that the law gives me.... Would it not be useful that they acquire their rights in the field of battle and that their dangerous numbers be reduced by a powerful and legitimate means?" Bellotto & Corrêa. *Bolívar*. São Paulo: Ática, 1983, p. 50.

Chapter 2.

Music of the National-Popular

This chapter distinguishes Carpentier's approach to *folklórico*, situating it as a living element that makes Latin American reality, for him, contested, unconquered, and insurgent. In Part 1, I articulate the key terminology made use of by Carpentier in his analysis of Cuban folklore, *La música de Cuba,* proceeding in Parts 2 and 3 to the implications of his discoveries when applied to the United States and Chile.

Part 1: Havana Dance Syndrome

The history of folk music offers a valuable insight into the seeds of socialist internationalism that sprouted in the Americas during the early 20th Century. For Alejo Carpentier, its genealogy was a passionate object of research during a key period of his intellectual formation, strongly influencing his theory on the continent's endogenous aesthetic production. According to Guadalupe Silva, Carpentier's 1946 ethnographic study of Cuban music, *Music in Cuba,* marks the key turning point in the maturation of his writing. In the essay "Alejo Carpentier, del negrismo a lo real maravilloso," Silva tracks the emergence of realism in the 'American cycle' (the novels of the Americas that begin with *El reino de este mundo*) as a transition out of his early immersion in negrismo.[68] His unique form of realism, for Silva, was the tonic produced by his analysis of the colonial and subjugated past brought to bear on the social tensions he engaged with via journalism and political activism. Negrismo was an intellectual movement in the Caribbean contemporaneous with the Harlem Renaissance that rejected the prevailing

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[68] Silva, María Guadalupe. "Alejo Carpentier, del negrismo a lo real maravilloso." *Anclajes,* Vol. 19, No. 1, 2015.

anti-black racism in Cuba under U.S. control. As such, Carpentier joined fellow-travelers in affirming the culture's afro-roots and centrality to national identity, especially influenced by currents in Haiti. Timothy Brennan connects this period of development to Carpentier's admiration for Jacques Roumain and the Haitian Peasant Novel movement of the '20s and '30s, "A 20th century blending of colloquial speech and socialist realism that went beyond the coloristic autochthony of 'folklore' in a bid for an avant-garde originality that would shun the avant-garde's subservience to form."[69] In other words, the years prior to the American cycle see the artist-journalist trying out strategies and concepts adequate to the task of representing an insurgent Caribbean subject. That subject emerges in *Music in Cuba* through the process of creolization as almost polymorphous in its myriad innovative musical expressions, describing an interwoven history of slavery, the peasantry and indigenous in the Americas' *folklórico*, which Brennan suggests translating as simply plebeian or 'the national-popular.' It may be no coincidence that Carpentier produced this definitive analysis of folk music in peregrination from Cuba, recalling Siegfried Kracauer's similar accomplishment for German cinema in *From Caligari to Hitler* and *Theory of Film* while exiled in the U.S..

Brennan, who went to lengths to see *Music in Cuba* published in English as one of Carpentier's major works, is no incidental commentator. Occupying a rare position in the academic culture wars as an outspoken opponent of identity essentialism from the Left, he is one of the most prominent comparatists in the US today after Jameson. In acerbic works such as *Wars of Position,* he staunchly asserts that the political always underpins culture (shorthand for art, productions, and the gamut of identity categories like gender, race, nationality, ableism…). Often cutting against the grain, he poses the ahistorical and absolute embrace of feminism, cosmopolitanism, or anti-racism as politically reactionary for its rejection of any modification or

[69] Carpentier, Alejo. *Music in Cuba.* Brennan, Timothy, Ed. and Introduction. Trans: West-Durán, Alan. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 2002.

determination by material conditions. Intellectual histories of older critics in the philological mode make up a constellation of expository essays on Vico, Hegel, Adorno, Edward Said, Salmon Rushdie, Gramsci, and W.E.B. Du Bois; connected by themes tracing the intellectual in exile, academic scandals (such as the Rushdie fatwa affair), and a bold defense of conceptual and cultural appropriation against nativist assertions of disciplinarian boundaries. Carpentier would fit into this array most obviously, or facetiously, due to allegations of his non-Cuban ethnicity: a European-educated orientalist in Caribbean drag, lacking ethnic roots to the latino world he coldly observes. Brennan's introduction to *Music in Cuba* does not bother to refute this position with Carpentier's credentials, but instead demonstrates the cross-Atlantic generation of Carpentier's vanguardism, which foregrounds the work's decentered subject: an anti-essentialist history not of the island region or even the ethnicities themselves so much as the experience of creolization.

This creolization is broadly shared across the Caribbean and the Americas, imprinting the *folklórico* of each nation differently but in each case affording insight into the prevailing social conditions. For Cuba, where Carpentier ultimately bases his study (largely sourced at first from Haiti), his early comparisons fall into two groups of classical music. One of these, exemplified by his friend Igor Stravinsky, sets a radically universal standard of formal achievement that Carpentier seeks to show is matched by Afro-Cuban compositions. The other is represented by composers like Russia's Glinka and Brazil's Villa-Lobos, whose material draws from national-folk music, following an example made famous by Greig and Bartok in employing peasant songs for the building of national identity. He concludes that when the contemporary Latin American master (Manuel Samuell or Amadeo Roldán for example) "turns his eyes to his own world," he finds the very thing that the Europeans have long gazed at; but rather than

seeing “an exotic and unexpected element,” it is a music that “comes from deep within.”[70] According to Carpentier, that Cuban spirit is captured by Unamuno in the quote, “We find the universal in the core of the local, and in the confined and limited, we find the eternal.” Unamuno’s disputed retort against Spanish fascism emphasized the ‘centrality’ of the empire’s peripheries like his own Basque country and Rizal’s Philippines.[71]

The journey of the *contradanza* demonstrates Carpentier’s estimation of creolization, over nativism, in the creation of what he calls Cubanness. The musical steps first arrive in France as a British import, danced mainly among the bourgeoisie, and then move to the Saint-Domingue colony. But the line dance formation, with its primordial attraction and pursuit between the two genders, is there recognized as familiar to African group dances, and the ex-slaves exploit its rhythm to enrich it with their own syncopations and spirit. With the French exodus from Haiti to Cuba after abolition, and paradoxically the fervor of the slave trade too, there the *contradanza* is “adopted with surprising swiftness” and quickly becomes the island’s first creole genre, exported widely, and proliferating a “family of types” of “hybrid offshoots” that include the *clave, criolla, guajira, danza, danzón,* and *habanera* from the 2/4 and “considerably Cubanized” 6/8 beats.[72]

That notion of creole identity is expounded by a trio of concepts that are developed in his own practice prior to writing the major novels: vanguardism, *mestizaje,* and *el folklórico.* Carpentier put these visions together in original musical experiments as an early pioneer of radio broadcasting, a medium that brought together his journalistic and aesthetic interests. Europe’s first radio programs had aired in 1923 only a few years before Carpentier arrived in flight from

[70] Carpentier, Alejo. *La música en Cuba* (Editorial Letras Cubanas) 1979. [Translation mine]. Elsewhere, citations are from *Music in Cuba,* where Alan West-Durán excels in the musical terminology.
[71] Delgado Cruz, Severiano. *Arqueología de un mito: el acto del 12 de octubre de 1936 en el paraninfo de la Universidad de Salamanca,* Madrid: Sílex ediciones, 2019.
[72] Later, Carpentier glosses the voyage as such: “The English country dance, by way of France, taken to Santo Domingo, introduced to Santiago, rebaptized and amplified in Matanzas, enriched in Havana with mulatto, black, and Chinese elements, had acquired a level of *mestizaje* nothing short of vertiginous.”

Cuba's desperate political situation. Radio was particularly effective in linking common histories and identities across the Caribbean islands; and in difficult to traverse countries like Haiti, its importance has lasted right into the 21st Century. Carpentier's prolonged engagement with this then-cutting edge communication technology begins to reveal the popular character that he envisioned the avant-garde could sustain. Indeed, we will see that even in the narrow breadth allowed to an emerging socialist vanguard in the United States, radio broadcasting was used as a vehicle for linking distinct regions through a common language and culture. Unlike the online communities created by the internet a century later that exist in an empty and neutral space, Carpentier saw radio as a means of production to be seized and utilized in the manner of communal property.

One radio practitioner that Carpentier admired and shared interests with was Bertolt Brecht. In particular, Brecht's interest in bawdy humor and the low or popular theaters like vaudeville, as a concrete space where political contention could be expressed and altered, finds much commonality in the attention Carpentier granted the 'low' Afro-Cuban music and dance disparaged in the casinos and by the cultural elite. Black dance itself was still outlawed in the 1920s even as black dancers made the cabaret a tourist magnet, confirming Stuart Hall's insight into the sexual desire underpinning racial subordination in Harlem at the same time, indeed by many of the very same *voyuers*.[73] Carpentier was all too familiar with the inter-war vogue that 'raged for blackness' as a cultural commodity and later criticized his own use of the term 'Afro-Cuban' as unnecessarily ethnic, even opposing many jazz styles as clichéd, made-in-the-USA africana that overrode distinct local vernaculars. There is thus a tension in his work between, on the one hand, the racial stereotypes of minstrels and blackface that fill the popular *zarzuela* musical theaters, *bufo* comedies and even the work of his pioneering

[73] Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in Jonathan Rutherford, Ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference.* London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990. And *Stuart Hall, Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies,* Morley and Chen, Eds. Routledge, 1996.

predecessor Fernando Ortiz; and on the other, attention to new forms of black music that he shrewdly saw as moving from negrismo's resistance to slavery and colonialism towards more universalist horizons of black liberation and national reinvention. Distinguishing between the two types of popular music, he states that, "One is artificial, reconstructed on the basis of documents and without any contemporary existence or influence – the sorts of Latin American dances, for example, that one performs only at conferences or exhibitions or festivals sponsored by official institutes. Then there are the living, contemporary ones in a continual process of evolution that spring from the people in the cities, mainly. The two greatest examples of these in the 20th Century are jazz and Cuban music." This quote could be paired with Hegel's Lord/Bondsman dialectic where the creative act of labor makes the slave superior to the culturally deprived master, as Carpentier argues that it is the more advanced creole knowledge and labor from the Caribbean that drives European development, anticipating both its political victories as well as its excessive atrocities.

Building on the radical implications of Ortiz's concept of transculturation, Carpentier emphasizes the region not only as a strategic crossroads of the past, but of the future, stating, "I want that the elements of Latin America be integrated into a universal culture." That future orientation (12 years prior to the Cuban Revolution) can be discerned by unpacking Carpentier's particular usage of the interwoven terms vanguardism, *mestizaje,* and *el folklórico*. If his efforts support something like a people's history of the Caribbean, they favor the experiential richness of the ex-slaves over any indigenous primacy, linking musical achievements to regional particularities and above all transcultural mixing over any ethnic essentialism.

In this way, the vanguardism that resulted from the European-Caribbean exchange is best understood as deriving its energy from the Americas' 'extant nature' and national-popular

energies.[74] In other words, there is a vanguardism unique to the Americas, particular to its rhythms and histories, from which the connection to popular folklore is not severed but vibrant. Brennan helpfully clarifies this abused term with its down-home connotations of a benignly rural nationalism:[75] "The word *folklórico…* has a different resonance in Spanish than *folklore* does in English, where it suggests a staid, purely ceremonial and, above all, dead popular culture staged for middle-class audiences under paternalistic conditions. A more appropriate translation for his use of the term would probably be 'popular' or 'indigenous' or, best of all, 'national-popular.' He draws a sharp distinction between the two kinds of meaning, rejecting the spirit of folklore as stilted or (worse) a petrified fraud."[76] For Carpentier, that fraud is perpetuated by the burlesque club that sexualizes the subject's race and spirituality, imitating the results of *mestizaje* but removing their processional context.[77] When that context is left intact, music can uniquely convey the heights of tragedy for the 'national-popular,' such as with the "Má Teadora" *son* that "reveals the marvelous expressive resources of Afro-Cuban percussion now achieving universal status, which were once confined to the slave barracks and the dilapidated rooming houses of the slums." For a tragic experience as great as the Haitian revolution, musical chants would be a key narrative device for both Carpentier and C.L.R. James, who says of the Revolution's climax, "There is no drama like the drama of history." Conversely, James attests to its universality in that the singing of the Marseillaise by the slaves while fighting for abolition was of such extraordinary spirit that the French soldiers could not match it, and only listened in awe.

[74] These idiosyncrasies of the Latin American vanguard are distinguished from the Leninist model in Marta Hanecker's *América Latina: vanguardia y crisis actual.* Montevideo: TAE editorial, 1990.
[75] Once often avoided for the racialized deployment by National Socialism of the Germanic *Volk*, the term remains charged with a problematic innocence in some iterations of populism, as in Obama's infamous admission to the U.S. torture program with the passive, "We tortured some folks."
[76] Brennan, *ibid.* Brennan's translation of this key term for my work is not arbitrary. Gareth Williams has written a sustained study on the national-popular in relation to transculturism in Carpentier. Ortiz also distinguished transculturism from the "living fossil" of folk that refuses to die.
[77] Carpentier, Alejo. "Abuso de la palabra folklore." *Obras completas # 11*: *Ese música que llevo adentro*, Mexico City: Siglo XXI editores, 1987. Pp. 196: "Hoy, la guaracha, la rumba, nacen en el cabaret, con "letras" de doble sentido y una aterradora pobreza de invención en las palabras y en la música."

It is useful here to flush out Carpentier's emphasis on *mestizaje* as a more materialist concept than racialization by looking at Benedict Anderson's inquiry into *El folk-lore filipino,* written in 1887 by the 23-year old indigenous ilocano, Isabelo de los Reyes. *Folk-lore* then had only recently been borrowed from the English word, and Isabelo proposed its translation as *el saber popular* (local knowledge). For Isabelo, folklore was a "new science" offering "an opportunity for a reconstruction of the indigenous past that was impossible in the Philippines by any other means, given… the near-absence of written records. Serious research on customs, beliefs, superstitions, adages, tongue-twisters, incantations and so on would throw light on what he referred to as the 'primitive religion' of the pre-Spanish past."[78] Linking the text to Rizal's contemporaneous project to construct an anti-colonial Filipino identity, Anderson highlights its ultra-modern impulse (skipping over backwards Spain) alongside folk studies in England and Germany to amend "the absence of serious scientific knowledge about almost everything in the Philippines." In a striking passage, Anderson emphasizes the island chain's extant nature as part of its scientific heritage, echoing the late Carpentier's recognition that *lo real Americano* could be found in much of the Second and Third Worlds:

> The indigenes had a much deeper knowledge of medicinal plants, of flora and fauna, of soils and climatic variations than did the colonialists, and this huge reservoir of knowledge, contained in the *saber popular*, was still unknown to the world. The Philippines thus appeared not merely as a region containing a mass of exotica unknown to Europeans, but also as the site for a significant future contribution to mankind, springing from what the common people knew, in their own languages, but of which Spanish had no conception. It was exactly the "unknownness" of the Philippines that gave its folklore a future-oriented character that was necessarily absent in the folklore of Peninsular Spain.

Let us dwell momentarily on the implications of this description of *saber popular.* If we have already mentioned the aboriginal mastery of wildfires as one future contribution to mankind's energy and climatic crises, here under the shadow of plant knowledge are contained vast relational possibilities concerning the cycles of birthing and dying that flummox and evade the

[78] Anderson, Benedict. *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anti-colonial Imagination,* London: Verso, 2007.

lucrative pharmaceutical industry.[79] The American continents are a hidden trove of natural wealth in Carpentier's novel, *Los pasos perdidos,* where a guide (El Adelantado) who is the bearer of this knowledge can, "[R]ead the code of broken twigs, incisions on treetrunks, the branch not fallen but placed."[80] Carpentier's late amendment that the distinct reality of Latin American in fact could also be found in places like the Philippines finally exhausts the concept of transculturalism that ran from Ortiz to Ángel Rama. According to Charles Mann, "Transculturation describes what happens when one group of people takes something– a song, a food, an ideal – from another. Almost inevitably, the new thing is transformed; people make it their own by adapting, stripping, and twisting it *to fit their needs and situation"* [emphasis mine]. The close affinity of Martí and Rizal and their interlinked struggles against Spanish colonialism demonstrate a material basis for the transculturalization of local knowledge that is closely tied to its application in insurgency, guerrilla warfare, and the sort of communalism practiced by the maroons. *El folk-lore filipino* resembled the rejection of Eurocentric racism by Cuban negrismo by demonstrating the inherent value and scientific merits of the people prior to, beyond, and underneath the colony. Isabelo's work also traces the variety of different languages, customs, and religious affiliations in the region that "comparison had proved derived… from a common [indigenous] origin," refuting Spanish historiography's assertion that the archipelago's historical reality could be "framed by coloniality."

Likewise, Carpentier found that despite the Caribbean archipelago's indigenous heritage, Black music in particular with the "same migrations of rhythms and oral traditions" created zones cutting across national or ethnic boundaries. His method compares sounds across these zones, breaking with the convention of national categories adhered to by Area Studies, and echoing

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[79] The sovereign use of herbal medicine by women to manipulate a wide array of factors related to menstruation, ovulation, hormonal cycles, fertility, and childbirthing is the basis of many works, from *The Red Tent* to *Caliban and the Witch.* On the relationship between death, plant knowledge, and *folklórico,* see the section 'Go Down, Moses' in Part 2.
[80] Carpentier. *The Lost Steps,* trans. De Onís, Harriet. Noonday Press: New York, 1989.

Isabelo's claim that comparison is essential for separating *folklorismo* from "the sentimental collection of vanishing customs."[81] Shortly we will launch a demonstration of this method on the terrain of the U.S. and Chile, but first a final word on how *lo popular-nacional* diverges from boilerplate patriotic conceptions of the nation. The national-popular is a term used by Gramsci in *The Prison Notebooks* that refers to the inter-class alliance of urban and peasant forces formed under a hegemonic, Jacobinian coercion.[82] While Brennan praises the national-popular character of Carpentier's analysis, he censures the Cuban specifically over his uncritical treatment of the minstrel-like *Bufo* theater, a cheap and witless music reflected in the ugliest parodies. However, a reading of the work in light of Brennan's reprimand demonstrates a revealing motif regarding comedy as the housing venue in which popular energies are ransacked for the fancies of bourgeois diversions.

In tracking the "distinction between popular and cultured music… between the temple and the people" in the musical tradition of Santiago de Cuba's chapel, Carpentier makes plain that our "timid" readings of Psalms and received religious ceremonies are wanting for "the accent and musical vitality added by blacks that perked things up." If the Santiago cathedral preserved under its cloak a refuge for musical expression and development, even more so in the Havana Theater comedy was central to musical proliferation. There, performances of *burlados, chascos, fingidos, lances*, farces, and *buffa* imitations of animals that would inspire the later *Bufo* theater saw an "extraordinary scenic diffusion" of national, regional, and class styles and types, recalling the celebration of difference in *El siglo de las luces'* orgiastic boar feast and historical drag-parade by the French prostitutes. In the midst of a slavocracy, the aspiring bourgeoisie

[81] Anderson. *Under Three Flags, Op. cit.*
[82] Thus, for Gramsci, the national-popular could only be expressed at historic conjunctions where conditions prevailed for the seizure of power such as in Rome and especially the Jacobin period of the French Revolution. "The positive conditions are to be sought in the existence of urban social groups which have attained an adequate development in the field of industrial production and a certain level of historico-political culture. Any formation of a national-popular collective will is impossible unless the great mass of peasant farmers bursts simultaneously into political life." *The Prison Notebooks,* p. 242.

seek out musical diversion that render their human possessions as dancing fancies, and thus suppress the recognition of their matching or greater cultural quality. All of this circles around the particular popular character of comedy. Carpentier celebrates how the typical Cubanness of a composer like Samuell has a mimetic ear for Europe's classicism, appropriating its crême and discarding the subpar. He concludes that "Nationalism results from idiosyncrasy," and we might recall here the old adage of humor that is so of-the-people as to be impenetrable to foreigners (Russian jokes being notorious for this quality). *Saber popular* could also be translated as popular wit, a good example of which would be the Mexican double-entendre known as *el albur.*

All of this invites some demonstration of where comedy meets the national-popular today. Although Aristotle's *Comedy* was lost, we know that as a classic form it represented the most earthly of culture, closely tied to the fates, people's justice and the injustice they suffered. In the *Phenomenology,* Hegel notes that classical antiquity ended in comedy, with satire acting as a balm to the defunct and decadent culture once "the laws of the city and the gods become laughable."[83] Likewise for the scribes of China's historical records, comedic barbs could be injected to subvert dynastic power.[84] And from medieval poetry to Nicanor Parra's anti-elitist jibes, comedy sits prominently in the armory of peasant comeuppance against the nobles. For Freud, jokes allow us to see social material that is otherwise repressed. That repression arguably becomes palpable in the censorship waves that struck Lenny Bruce in the 1970's, or the contemporary canceling of comedians like Nick Mullen or Dave Chapelle. Chapelle's method bears resemblance to the production of realism, assembling controlled collisions between our prevailing ideologies. A 2017 joke begins by recalling being the victim of a hate crime in the midwest. He and his sister who wears a hijab are attacked with snowballs by white teenagers yelling out racial slurs. When the getaway car stalls, Chapelle gets his revenge under the law.

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[83] Marks, Gregory. "The Last Laugh: Hegel's Catastrophic Comedy", The Wasted World: History, Totality, and Time*, www.thewastedworld.com*
[84] Connery, Christopher Leigh. *Empire of the Text,* Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1999.

One of the boy's mothers comes to him at the police station and begs for piety. "Mr. Chapelle, I'm so sorry, I don't know what to say. We've always liked your work and raised him to support your people!" Chapelle responds lugubriously, "Aw, geez, I don't want him to get hurt in jail. Look, I've got an idea…" Earnest but seriously, he continues, "Maybe you could just, I don't know if it would be too much to ask…" Perhaps a blowjob would be fair compensation to all injured parties? "Only for a minute - just so I can tell him you did it."[85] The joke posits an incongruence between anti-racism and feminism, short-circuiting their facile reconciliation in an eruption of awareness at the ideological instability of revanchist social justice.

Dark humor at the expense of victim politics also exudes from Alan Moore's *Watchmen,* the 'perfect' graphic novel, a la Benjamin, in that it inaugurates and abolishes its genre of a Menippean satire of superpowered fascists. (Later in this chapter, I explore the longevity of the superhero genre as a symptom of decadence.) Against the social-purist vision of Ozymandius for an arcadian corporate future stands the cynical figure of The Comedian, whose crass jokes and ill-politicked timing, for this very reason, sniff out the bullshit beneath a utopia based on the theocratic monarchy of Ramses II. Guided not so much by any precious insight as by the quantum factor that problematizes any too-perfect ideological system, Moore's Comedian is a right-wing chaos agent who finds use in the role of the political villain as played by the likes of Jesse Ventura or Donald Trump. Like Todd Phillips' *The Joker (2019),* he gleefully dons the clownish depiction of deplorables by the ruling class, holding up a topsy-turvy mirror to the status quo in a semblance of pent-up resentment for the official spectacle. Arguably, this approach reveals an element of national-popular vitality that cannot be faked or engineered because its comedy stands close to a socially unconscious content. Similarly, the trickster in Bob Dylan's "Jokerman" is a spirit that moves through the times shapeshifting like Hegel's *Geist*, here as a Christian preacher, there as an anarchist disrupter. Dylan's "Lenny Bruce" from the

[85] *Deep in the Heart of Texas: Dave Chappelle Live at Austin City Limits,* Netflix, 2017.

same period is bad, but also a truth-teller who never "cut off any babies' heads, he just took the folks in high places and shined a light in their beds."[86] There is a nervous black humor to the lines that transgresses the taboo on naming the perverse criminality of our mandarins. Today, that taboo is fortified by the stigma of right-wing populism (like the related term 'conspiracy theorist'), used as a cudgel by liberalism to repress the cultural reconstitution of any popular front. Lenin sought to pierce a related mystique when he applauded the national-popular dynamic of the reactionary Black Hundreds peasants for their "deeply democratic urge for equality," while warning that their desire for revenge on the elites overwhelmed the political acumen needed to defeat their oppression.[87]

Thus, the approach to musical analysis drawn from Carpentier ducks any moral or political censoring as it hews to the tracks of national-popular vitality. At the origins of the fandango and tango partner dances that delighted Casanova and incensed the Holy Inquisition, he espies the primordial pursuit of the female by the male and an elemental flirtation that attracts across boundaries, be they ethnic, cultural, or national. As such, he mocks the moral panic over Rock music's supposed licentiousness. Recoiling at the racial and sexual commercialization of musical culture exported from the metropole, Carpentier at the same time celebrated the quality of the U.S.'s popular musical innovations. Furthermore, music in the U.S. was replete with latin influences, but this creole history was repressed in its most notorious exports that generically borrowed from styles like Ragtime and Country. In "El *rock and roll,*" one of his many undated journalistic fragments from Caracas, Carpentier shrewdly discerns youthfulness as the true particularity of the new "gymnastic dance moves that exclude elderly participation," at a time when the post-war boom had suddenly expanded the spending capacity of teenagers. While surely written in the 1950s, he anticipates in this way that Rock and Roll would become the

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[86] Dylan, Bob. "Lenny Bruce." *Shot of Love,* Columbia Records, 1981.
[87] Lenin, V.I. *Lenin Collected Works,* Vols. 9, 17, 19, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1905, 1912, 1913.

score of the 1960s youth rebellions. Sidelining sensationalist analyses such as the propagation of ubiquitous Western Values, Carpentier's method points the way towards a genealogy of the national-popular in music across the Americas.

Part 2: The North Country Fair

Thus far we have identified that the study of *folklórico* was a key moment in the creation of Carpentier's mature concept of Latin American reality. *Folklórico* is furthermore understood, in the light of its translation as the national-popular, as a standpoint for considering an avant-garde cultural production in the Americas that retains its popular character. Finally, the musical analysis of the Caribbean is embryonic of his later realism in its interconnecting set of relationships between the region's *mestizaje,* its natural landscape, and its revolutionary movements. This combination of the cultural, political, scientific and historical is a fertile investigative method that undoes the restrictive parameters of Area Studies and retrieves a political-scholastic horizon that is internationalist and universal. In what follows, I sketch out such a direction by undertaking a study of *folklórico* first in the United States and then Chile, uniting in this sense North, South, Meso and the Antillean Americas. As such, I argue that the removal of the United States from the Latin American reality described by Carpentier cedes its endogenous radical traditions. In the Chilean context, an immanent critique of a Latin American folk emblem finds this aesthetic highpoint inextricably bound up in the popular struggle for socialism.

For Carpentier, the U.S. is an exporter of the commercialization that reifies a music's viscerality into styles like folk, while at the same time sharing many of the roots that give a national-popular character to Caribbean music. My first concern in the following is to attempt a genealogy of that

popular culture where, if not explicitly communist, it nonetheless champions the lower classes against novel forms of exploitation. As such, I track the genesis of the anti-capitalist ‘Protest Song’, as distinct from the anti-colonial focus of Afro-Cuban music. A second, related concern is how the framework of *mestizaje* operates north of the border that we would typically say delimits it. What emerges are the U.S.’s unique dynamics of creolization and the unique results these produce, including important apertures for cross-racial solidarity and some surprising formal similarities to the Caribbean. Finally, attention is given to those folk iterations found in *Music of Cuba* that are indistinguishably bound up with local idiosyncrasy, be it the prevailing trades, relationship to the land, custom tastes and a distinct avant-garde expression. There is necessarily some eclecticism in light of the attempt to transpose the categories of *folklórico,* which better fits the spirit of the material than an overly dry, and cautious, academic treatise.

The dynamic of *mestizaje* in the U.S. confronts the immediate distinction from the latino world in its near total genocide of the aboriginals and replacement by settler colonialism: even as its economic foundation in African slavery links it to Brazil and the Caribbean in a ‘zone’ excluding swaths of the Spanish Americas.[88] The surviving native americans of the continental U.S. make up a minority population excluded from cultural representation. The identity of ‘Mexicans’ and latinos houses a native american or mestizo identity, and I have noted that character in how these groups have also been suppressed. Immigration has also played a role in the demographic replacement, where Chinese, Philipino, other Asian and Pacific peoples have on the one hand been disfigured by cultural images, and on the other hand denied the visibility of latinos and blacks. The central role of African-Americans in my story attests to the importance of transculturation for understanding this history. For in fact, our racist artifacts also attest to

[88] African music and dance is a highly visible record of continuity in spite of the slave traffic for groups like the Garífuna, mentioned here, as Carpentier made use of. Afro-latino populations preserve these cultural markers and demonstrate the vicissitudes of the slave trade that concentrated in specific localities like Ecuador’s Esmeraldas province, distinctly black as much in music, cuisine and dance, as in skin color.

peculiar dynamics between ostensibly opposed cultures. Buffalo Bill's wild west variety show was a national sensation in the late 19th and early 20th century, simultaneously demeaning its Native American participants while purportedly sharing their culture to wider audiences. The influence this decades-long tour cast on national identity, concepts of the landscape and indigenous history, storytelling, public entertainment, and many of the venues that folk music emerged from, is formidable. It would be difficult to parse where and how the show's indigenous participants subverted its paradigm to transmit something of their cultural identity to outsiders, but the imprints are undeniable.

The yodel that drew audiences' attention as a kind of primal music has been shown by ethnomusicologist Hugh Tracey to resemble native and ancient vocal practices from Africa, Asia, and Australia. When Jimmie Rodgers popularized the country-yodel in the 1920s, he was improvising a sound made earlier by the African-American Charles Anderson, whose own feats included imitations of the violin and impersonations of women. The yodel may be one of the rare examples where a mainstream style resembles and perhaps draws from Native American song (the sioux hunting prayers, for example), which otherwise stand remarkably apart. Recalling the disdain Carpentier shows in *Los Pasos perdidos* for academic musicologists in search of the primitive origins of music, he emphasizes in *Music in Cuba* that the colonists failed to study or record indigenous music in most of the Americas, but invented crude facsimiles of them nonetheless. Aside from the traces left in the creole tradition, the indigenous are "first effaced, later modified, and finally substituted for" by the blacks from the first days.[89] So at odds with the other instances of transculturation noted here, this example perhaps reminds us that in Cuba, despite its suppression and vilification, it was black music that Carpentier highlighted as the engine behind the *son.* The jazz historian Gary Giddins captures how this phenomenon operates in the U.S.: "African American innovations metamorphose into American popular

[89] Carpentier, *Music in Cuba, Op. cit.*, p. 75.

culture when white performers learn to mimic black ones."[90] Giddins uses the terminology of 'pop culture' that we here have distinguished from the national-popular, and that distinction testifies to the utility of the latter term. But in Chile, we will see a very different incorporation of the indigenous sounds in its *folklórico*. On one hand, the African slave trade along the Southern Pacific coast was minimal in relation to the Caribbean (the closest exception being the northernmost port of Arica), and many defeated Mapuche were placed in bondage. Even the cueca is itself a relative of black dance despite figuring centrally among Chilean nationalism's decidedly anti-black symbols.

Some of the roots for what would become folk music descend from Irish, Scottish and English traditional music in the Appalachians, whose overseas origins are apparent in songs like "Red River Valley." In the 19th Century, the dominant instrument in these circles was the banjo, which traces its origins directly to Africa via the passage of enslaved peoples. At the turn of the 20th Century its place began to be taken by the guitar, an instrument used for centuries in Europe and Spain in particular. Many of the instrument's early popularizers in the U.S. were blind black men who worked as street performers, including Rev. Gary Davis, Willie Johnson, Lemon Jefferson, Willie McTell, and Blind Boy Fuller.[91] Other popularizers include Charlie Patton (Black and native) and Jimmie Rodgers (a white railroad worker turned recording hit). Their styles conveyed the energy of the street and rural locomotive, contrasting with the club attractions of the day like Bessie Smith and Louis Armstrong. The prominence of black music emerged out of the impolitic but racially diverse vaudeville stand-up and variety shows that favored outlandish impressions, oddities, and doggerals, foreshadowing the increasing consumption of black art across various mediums. Already decades before, popular performances by Mark Twain and

[90] Giddins, Gary. *Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams,* Back Bay Books, 2001.
[91] Sources consulted in this section include Gray, Michael. *Hand Me My Travelin' Shoes,* Chicago Review Press, 2009. And Bastin, Bruce. *Red River Blues: The Blues Tradition in the Southeast,* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

Will Rogers attested to a ‘passion for the real’ that complemented an appetite for ‘authentic’ American culture. When the Grand Ole Opry launched in Nashville in 1925, its first billing was for an ‘old timey’ music, and an early act called The Possum Hunters meant to conjure up not only the mean unfiltered country life but certainly its proximity to black culture as well.

The story of Libba Cotten (1893-1987) is exemplary of this period, especially given her anonymity until she was over 60. As a black child in segregated North Carolina, she heard the songs of men passing through her town on the railroad, and was able to remember the tunes and words to teach herself based on what she had learned by ear. Naturally left-handed, she first began playing the banjo upside down before doing the same with a guitar, the dexterous thumb hitting the melody notes rather than the steady bass string, giving her playing a distinctly original sound. Her most famous song, “Freight Train,” was written as a teenager, influenced by the songs of travelers and the onomatopoetic symbol of the Hobo’s Taxi. Another of her early songs had as its chorus a phrase so arcane that by the time it was heard again, no ears recognized its meaning. “Oh lordy me, didn’t I shake sugaree?” was covered in the 1960s by the 9 and ⅓ fingered Jerry Garcia of Menlo Park, who admitted that his version only played with the term’s possible meanings; a reminder of Walter Benjamin’s perspective that the material of collections are those forgotten and defeated by history.

The free passing of songs, stories, lyrics, and rhythms makes the folklorist’s role collective and diffuse, but we see individuals for whom it was a creed. Such was the case with Bascom Lamar Lunsford, born in 1882 in Appalachian North Carolina. From a young age he took the compilation of music and family stories seriously, traveling extensively and incorporating songs that often came straight from the mid-19th Century. In his acapela recitation of “Old Grey Mare,” he attests to its history by citing the location of the family he learned it from and the date, as was his custom. The tune captures the country verse common among storytellers and entertainers of

the region, filled with a vernacular bound to the land and the pervasive hunger of the poor. While the emotional attachment to the animal gives the tune its pathos ("I took her home and put her in the ooze/ the dog-gone mare warn't no use,") there is no winning moral or melancholy beyond the utility needed for survival in the mountains.[92]

For Carpentier, all 'regional' music is not equal; he singles out the Andes, Cuba and Haiti as proficient due to their human and geographical qualities. The Southern U.S. during the Jim Crow era is the source of tremendous musical output, often stemming directly from cross-racial practices. An important example is found in the collaboration and friendship of the early country-folk group The Carter Family with the peg-legged black guitarist [L]esley Riddle. A.P. Carter and Riddle traveled together extensively through the segregated South-east, visiting both white and black communities to pick up songs, stories, and vernaculars that form an analogue to Cuba's *mestizaje* sounds; simultaneously colorblind and highly racialized.

The Psaltre Sermon

These experiences are not only prodigious of musical quality but political sensibilities in particular. A remarkable recording exists from the 1920s by a group called the Bentley Boys, of whom little is known. They were referred to in an instance at the time as a colored group, but others believe they may have been a white group that performed in blackface. Their only recording was overseen by Columbia's Frank Walker in Johnson City, Tennessee, on October 23, 1929, five days before the great Stock Market Crash. These were Columbia's second Tennessee sessions, making the first inroads into recording Appalachian music, then known as hill-billy, after The Carter Family and Jimmie Rodgers were discovered by competitor Victor/RCA

[92] Lunsford, Bascom Lamar. "Old Gray Mare." *Robert Winslow Gordon Cylinder Collection,* Library of Congress, 1978.

in their first sessions at Bristol in 1927. Several of the guitarists recorded at Johnson City had first learned the blues from Lemon Jefferson on his passage through town. When Mike Seeger asked Walker in the 1960s what he remembered about the Bentley Boys, his response was, “Not very much. I’m going to pass up on that.” The A-side, “Penny’s Farm,” is an almost unrivaled working class broadside against the prevailing capitalist exploitation of farm-hands at the time. Deftly humorous, biting, and tragic, it composes a timelessly modern variation on the mountain ballad with its inimitable vocal clarity. Even on the most prestigious compilation of songs from the era, Harry Smith’s *Anthology of American Folk Music*, the recorded sound quality of the vocal leaps out from the rest.

The lyrics decry the greed of the landowner George Penny, positioning the narrator in a David versus Goliath struggle against a voracious wealth that fears no challenge of authority. The stones he slings therefore are the wit and popular sentiment that exude from lines like, “You got no windows but the cracks in the walls, he’ll work you all summer and he’ll rob you in the fall.”[93] Tony Russell suggests that the song is a variation of a much earlier song called “Hard Times” that goes back at least to the mid-19th Century, and lamenting the impoverished conditions of a period, such as by soldiers on the front during the Civil War. In the Bentley Boys’ unassuming entrance, the aggrieved sharecropper addresses the audience with the humble intention of telling it to you straight:

> Come yuh ladies and yuh gentlemen
> And listen to muh song,
> I'll sing it to you right, but you might think it's wrong,
> May make you mad, but I mean no harm,
> It's jus’ about the renters on Penny's farm.
>
> (Chorus) It's a-hard times in the country,
> Out on Penny's farm.

[93] The Bentley Boys. “Down On Penny's Farm/ Henhouse Blues.” Shellac 10”, 78 RPM, Columbia, 15565 - D, 1930.

The stanzas that follow rib on the one-sided exchange in which the banker mirthfully enriches himself through the misery of his denizens. Equally remarkable is that historical evidence shows George Penny as a North Carolina State Senator and banker who sold livestock insurance. Newspaper evidence around Greensboro places the Bentley Boys in the wider North Carolina circuit of musicians who traveled to fairs and live performances and only rarely made radio and recording appearances. Musical gatherings were especially common by workers in the textile mills that were the region's economic engine. "It's hard to find a musician recorded in North or South Carolina [at the sessions' time] that was not a textile operative."[94] Textiles were long a power industry in the Appalachian corridor. Cotton mills in the Southeast and woolgrowers in the Northeast produced material that employed local hands up and down the production line. Musical affinity appears incidental here, as opposed to say weaving, suggesting that music's capacity for storytelling spans the transformations of modes of production and social formation, as the shadows of industries and social contracts rise and fall across regions and populations. In the context of Carpentier's *folklórico,* those are precisely the vicissitudes of history that musical analysis can detect, where sounds announce not so much an indigenous primacy as much as a contingent relation between various subjects in given struggles and states of exploitation. The mills and recording opportunities were for better or worse a magnet that often brought together musicians living in highly remote and isolated areas.

Columbia's EMI began extending access through electrical recording methods in the 1920s to 10'' 78's that would typically record a group's A- and B-side hits, as with the Bentley Boys. Of the many groups recorded at Johnson City, "Penny's Farm" later caught the attention of the archivist collector Harry Smith, and on his 1952 anthology many would first hear The Bentley Boys. Their arrangements have a skillful character, with guitar, banjo and fiddle leads. Vocal

[94] Russell, Tony. *Rural Rhythm: The Story of Old-Time Country Music in 78 Records,* New York City: Oxford University Press, 2021.

recording was still coming into its own, and given the group's anonymity it is presumed that Columbia never knew what they had here; the Carter Family's Sara Carter, Leadbelly, and Jimmie Rodgers were early vocal discoveries seen as translating exceptionally well to recording sound.[95] Rural musicians often joined in with instruments that, like the washboard (percussion) and washtub (bass), are crude adaptations from domestic life. Alongside these, guitars and banjos were accompanied by an assortment of hybrid and modified strings, as well as harmonicas and less often accordions, pianos, winds and brass; but especially common were the mandolin, shortly to be popularized by Bill Monroe's bluegrass style, and the violin known as a fiddle, perhaps due to its squeaky affinity with rural worktools. Country vernacular and commoner vocabulary were part of the music's selling points, an area in which "Penny's Farm" is rich:

> You move out on Penny's farm,
> Plant a little crop of 'bacca and a little crop of corn,
> He'll come around to see you're gonna flip and flop,
> Till you get yourself a mortgage on everything you got.
>
> Hasn't George Penny got a flattering mouth?
> Move you to the country in a little log house;
> Got no windows but the cracks in the wall;
> He'll work you all summer and he'll rob you in the fall.
>
> You go in the field and you work all day,
> Way after night, but you get no pay,
> Promised you meat or a little bucket lard,
> It's hard to be a renter on Penny's farm.
>
> Now here's George Penny come into town,
> With his wagon-load of peaches, not one of 'em sound,
> He's got to have his money or somebody's check,
> You pay him for a bushel, and you don't get a peck.
>
> Then George Penny's renters, they come into town,
> With their hands in their pockets, and their heads hangin' down,
> Go in the store and the merchant will say:
> "Your mortgage is due and I'm looking for my pay."
>
> Goes down in his pocket with a trembling hand –
> "Can't pay you all but I'll pay you what I can."

[95] Buchanan, Bruce. "Mapping the Birth of Country Music." *Greensboro News & Record*, May 10, 2012.

Then to the telephone the merchant makes a call,
"They'll put you on the chain gang if you don't pay it all…"

These final lines leave a haunting ellipsis of the futureless situation then prevailing in the countryside, a few years before the Dust Bowl when thousands of small farmers were being thrown from the land. At the same time, reference to the chain gang suggests that the unfreedom of the slave and penitentiary gangs remained a familiar stick reinforcing novel forms of labor exploitation. References to the workers' store and mortgages describe the morbid cycle of sharecropping, in which a landowner like Penny would loan the workers their necessary food stuffs, a debt that would frequently increase when the worker's spoils from the harvest share were insufficient. In systems where the worker received a wage instead of or in addition to shares, the local pantry was often owned by the same big farmer, and prices could fluctuate so as to keep the mortgage unpaid. The song bears a powerful resemblance to "El barzón," written by a campesino of Aguascalientes, Miguel Muñiz, in 1920.[96] The 'rico patrón' that oppresses the peasant narrator here goes unnamed, yet the extortion through indebtedness frightfully accords with the Appalachian system. Furthermore, the half-spoken, half-rapped list in rhyme of the dear miseries gives the song a magnetically progressive musical form.

Esas tierras del rincón
Las sembré con un buey pando
Se me reventó el barzón y sigue la yunta andando
Cuando llegué a medias tierras, el arado iba enterrado

Se enterró hasta la telera, el timón se deshojó
El yugo se iba pandeando, el barzón iba trozando
El sembrador me iba hablando, yo le dije al sembrador:
No me hable cuando ande arando
Se me reventó el barzón y sigue la yunta andando

Cuando acabé de piscar, vino el rico y lo partió
Todo mi maíz se llevó, ni pa' comer me dejó
Me presentó aquí la cuenta:
Aquí debes veinte pesos, de la renta de unos bueyes

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[96] The first verified recording is by the Sinaloan boxer and troubadour, Luis Pérez Meza, in 1935. "El Barzón." *Historia ilustrada de la música popular mexicana,* Promex, 1979.

Cinco pesos de magueyes,
(Tres pesos de una coyundas
Cinco pesos de una azcuna)
[here Ochoa adds a longer list: una nega, tres cuartillos
De frijol que te prestamos, una nega tres cuartillos
De maíz que te habilitamos, cinco pesos de unas fundas
Siete pesos de cigarros]
Tres pesos, pues no sé de qué
Pero todo está en la cuenta
A más los veinte reales, que sacaste de la tienda
Con todo el maíz que te toca, no le pagas a la hacienda
Pero cuentas con mis tierras, para seguirlas sembrando

Y ahora vete a trabajar, pa' que sigas abonando
Nomás me quedé pensando, (sacudiendo mi cobija)
Haciendo un cigarro de hoja
Ay, que patrón tan sinvergüenza
Todo mi maíz se llevó
Para su maldita troje
Se me reventó el barzón
Y sigue la yunta andando

Cuando llegué a mi casita
Me decía mi prenda amada:
¿'Onta el maíz que te tocó?
Le respondí yo muy triste:
El patrón se lo llevó, por lo que debía en la hacienda
Pero me dijo el patrón que contara con la tienda
Y ahora voy a trabajar
Para seguirle abonando
Veinte pesos diez centavos
Son los que salgo restando
Me decía mi prenda amada:
Ya no trabajes con ese hombre,
Nomás nos está robando
(Déjate ya de prejuicios)
Anda al salón de sesiones
Que te lleve mi compadre
Ya no le hagas caso al padre, él y sus excomuniones
Que no ves a tu familia que ya no tiene calzones
Ni yo tengo ya faldilla, ni tu tienes pantalones
(Mejor metete a agradista
Anda con el comité
Que te apunten en la lista
Que no ves a mi compadre
A su hermano y a su yerno
Tan' sembrando muy agusto
Tierras que les dió el gobierno)
[In Ochoa's version, the final lines read]: Nomás me quedé pensando
¿Ay, por qué dejé a mi patrón?
Me decía mi prenda amada:

> Que vaya el patrón al cuerno, como estuviéramos de hambre
> Si te has seguido creyendo de lo que te decía el cura
> De las penas del infierno
> ¡Viva la revolución!, ¡muera el supremo gobierno!
> Se me reventó el barzón y siempre seguí sembrando

The barzón is the yoke ring leather that connects the steer to a field plow. Its bursting in the punchline plays on the cartoonish folly of the peasant in a pregnant metaphor for being left behind, and in debt, by the system. The song's influence on protest culture would see the name taken up by a social movement of middle-class farmers in the 1990s. The lyrics refer to pre-revolutionary conditions under Porfirio, but it is hard to escape a resonance with the impatience felt for the long demanded land reforms finally begun under Lazaro Cárdenas. Furthermore, it correctly anticipates the PRI's later preservation of frozen 19th Century conditions for many Mexican peasants, as documented in Gleyzer's *La revolución congelada (1971).* Here in the 1930s, we still see common conditions on both sides of the border in how the land is worked and the musically ingenious forms emerging to contest them.

The cardinal claim of "Penny's Farm" on protest music in the U.S. is to have caught the ear of Bob Dylan from among the songs on Smith's Anthology, around the formative time that he was absorbing Woody Guthrie. "Penny's Farm" was adapted in Dylan's first album, now as "It's hard times in the country, livin' in a New York Town," tracking a real population shift from mining and agriculture in Appalachia at the turn of the century to the industrial rust belt and Detroit auto plants after WWII.[97] Another even earlier song about hunger on the land, "Poor Boy who Wouldn't Hoe Corn," would be updated by Dylan in one of his earliest original recordings, a few years before he would make the Protest Song an icon of folk art.[98] There is an interesting slide

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[97] Despite its obscure beginnings, the song's significance has had a long afterlife. Dylan's adaptation, "Maggie's Farm," with its electric distortion is widely interpreted as the bard's disavowal of folk and Seeger's protest tradition for carrying its own regime of authoritarian strictures.
[98] Dylan, Bob. "Man on the Street." *The Witmark Demos: 1962-64 (Bootleg Series Vol. 9),* Columbia, 2010.

of the setting in Dylan's lyrical changes, where the displaced rural worker now rematerializes as the "Man on the Street" (in the town, where Penny's renters were last seen "with their heads hangin' down"):

> Well I'll sing you my song it ain't very long
> About an old boy that never done wrong
> How he died nobody can say
> They found him dead in the street one day.
>
> Well the crowd they gathered one fine mornin'
> At the man whose clothes and shoes were torn
> There on the sidewalk he did lay
> They stopped and stared then they went their way.
>
> Well the policeman come, he looked around
> 'Get up old man or I'm a-taking you down'
> Jabbed him once with his bully-club
> The old man then fell off the curb.
>
> Well he jabbed him again and loudly he said
> 'Call the wagon this man is dead!'
> The wagon come they loaded him in
> I never saw the man again.
>
> Well I sang you my song it warn't very long
> About a poor boy who never done wrong.
> How he died nobody could say
> They found him dead in the street one day.

The allure of the man's death comes from the mock ingenuousness over urban poverty taking on the appearance of a random and rootless past, where the direct connections and lived experience of the countryside phase into an anonymity that prevents recognition. In this new context, the bygone rural scene becomes an anachronistic oddity. Today, we cannot as otherwise see that world as it is envisioned on the B-side to "Penny's Farm," a more fanciful tune called "Henhouse Blues," which traces directly back to the 19th Century minstrel song "Coonie was a Dreamin." It begins with an archaic dream sequence of earthly abundance filched from a pregnant land, filled with the anthropomorphism that is so frequent in pre-modern tales. In the Bentley Boys' version, the dream of a negro running for president is interceded by an astonishing turn, "Wake up coonie for you am beaten and a woman am president." What

follows is a cartoonish spin through women's liberation leaving the childrearing and domestic work to blacks. The 'coons' at its subject is certainly out of step with 21st Century sensibilities, to say nothing of its casual usage of the n-word. This is the minefield U.S. folklorists must navigate, encountering along the way strangely ambiguous objects like The Possum Hunt's popular variations where anti-elite guffaws against President Taft rub against surreal images of southern pastoral nostalgia. At the same time, "Henhouse Blues" mocks the stereotype of idleness ("I don't care if I never wake up"), and in fact unveils a sharply acerbic political sensibility that transcends its period in undressing the feminization of labor as a tactic for impeding black liberation.

The transformation of songs via borrowing, stealing, imitating, and faking lies at heart of a paradox: that what comes to be socially-conscious protest music, with its largely anti-capitalist and anti-racist positions, emerges indistinguishable from sources perpetrating many of the day's appalling racial stereotypes and prejudices. One possibility for understanding this conjunction would be to look at the modern example of the prison system. It is widely considered to lie at the core of 'institutional racism' (alongside the police, military, and borders), and is the unique instrument by which 'racialized' communities are segregated. Yet, it is the prisoners themselves that by the mainstream standard of anti-racism are now the worst violators: the carceral system is not only organized according to racial gangs, but even the most quotidian interactions and alliances are laden with the impolitic language of racial, homophobic and sexist slurs and stereotypes. A contemporary folklorist would find rich material in these spaces, and a future society would undoubtedly look on these oppressed camps as spaces teeming with rebelliousness, not as the perpetrators of racist power. One could also contrast the necessarily physical and in-person setting of interviews that prisoner anthropology demands against the virtual and online folklore through which scholarship is increasingly conducted, where verification becomes even less reliable.

This can all be factored together with the strange fate of folk culture within the present. With the proliferation of self-published zines and cover art, the aesthetic rejection of state authority has become one of the signature features of online, DIY capitalism. And yet, a nearly indistinguishable strain of folklore is deeply bound up in any really existing resistance movement. The anti-capitalist anarchism of the ‘90s and 2000s influenced by Fredy Perlman was steeped in old-timey aesthetics and underground zine publishing. There, the hobo tradition of the freight train has persisted, and along with it the communal campfire and many of the same songs, with lyrics as ever being updated and rearranged to the changing times. In those years, I remember using an underground manual for the train yards and direction times that was compiled semi-annually by postmail and would be passed around through friendly hands in order to navigate the Byzantine U.S. rail system. The quirky asides and purposeful vagueness (“Walk a little that way, keep going that way, and then go even further that way,” and “You’ll know it when you see it”) are evocative of the subterranean method of signification mastered by Thomas Pynchon. A recurring pattern in Pynchon’s fiction of kinky romantic liaisons between a criminal and law enforcement, such as between Frenesi and Brock in *Vineland* or Maxine and Roscoe in *Bleeding Edge*, is evocative of the penchant in folk music for the charming delivery of subversion and illegality, and speech directed at the censor that couples aggression with desire.

The misattribution and misappropriation that proliferate in folklore recall Carpentier’s transculturalism and aversion towards affording primacy to nativism. In Dylan’s 2017 acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize in literature, he emphasizes this element in storytelling before misattributing a stanza of anti-war lyrics to the early North Carolina folk singer Charlie Poole. Poole played a distinct three finger banjo style due to a hand injury and was an irascible vocalist with a sense of justice and anti-authoritarianism,

yet he wrote few of his own lyrics and certainly not those attributed by Dylan to his song “You Ain’t Talkin to Me”:

> I saw a sign in a window
> While walking up town one day
> "Join the Army, see the world,"
> Is what it had to say.
> "You'll see exciting places
> With a jolly crew
> You'll meet interesting people
> And learn to kill them, too."[99]

It is unclear whether Dylan intentionally pulls the gaff; the words in fact come from a 21st Century version of Poole’s song by Jim Krause. A few years later, now 79, Dylan begins his “Key West (Philosopher’s Pirate)” with the lines, “McKinley holler’d, McKinley squalled// doctor said McKinley, ‘Death is on the wall’,” unmistakably recalling Poole’s recording of the song “White House Blues” included on Smith’s *Anthology* (“McKinley holler’d, McKinley he moaned// Doc said ‘Mac, I cain’t find that ball’// in Washington.”)[100] The song’s origins go far back with a related tune called “Cannonball Blues” recorded by Lunsford, the Carter Family, and other pioneers, many versions making light of the assassination of President McKinley, “Well Roosevelt’s in the White House, he’s doin’ his best// McKinley’s in the graveyard, he’s takin’ his rest// in Washington.” But it is also a reminder of Dylan’s most significant precursor, having recently reentered public consciousness via the rendition by Woody Guthrie that raised the art of the political troubadour to its heights. Titled “Lindbergh” and written sometime after the U.S. had entered WWII, Guthrie’s lyrics maintain the original’s popular humor, but interject an alarm at the American fascist movement and pull no punches in naming the perpetrators directly.[101] Guthrie narrates the rhyming tale of the America First organization and its leader Charlie Lindbergh

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[99] Here and in this section I am indebted to the musicologist Eyolf Østrem of the Danish National Research Foundation, whose masterful project DylanChords has been a moveable feast of Dylanology on the web since the 1990s.
[100] Dylan, Bob. “Key West (Philosopher’s Pirate).” *Rough and Rowdy Ways,* Columbia Records, 2020.
[101] All Guthrie lyrics in the following come from Guthrie, Woody. *The Woody Guthrie Centennial Collection,* Smithsonian Folkways, Catalogue # SFW40200, 2012.

acting as the emissaries and public front for business interests, labor bureaucracy, and senators who sought an alliance with Hitler to crush the Soviet Union,

> Hitler wrote to Lindy, said ‘Do your very worst’// So Lindy started an outfit that he called America First// In Washington, Washington//
> All around the country, Lindbergh, he did fly// Gasoline was paid for by Hoover, Clark, and Nye// In Washington, Washington.

It is one of many examples where Guthrie outflanks the New Deal to the left, however much he embraced some of its aspects. Many historians have faulted Guthrie for parroting the Communist Party USA’s criticism of Roosevelt in 1939, but his target was prescient: the U.S.’s pro-British maneuvers hoped for German destruction of the U.S.S.R. before intervening. Thus, Guthrie represents a decidedly anti-fascist bloc advocating for the New Deal to embrace socialism explicitly, ending, “I’m gonna tell you people if Hitler’s gonna be beat, the common working people will have to take the seats// in Washington.”

The song has been sought as an artifact of denunciations against Lindbergh following Philip Roth’s successful 2003 novel *The Plot Against America,* and the re-use of the America First slogan by then-candidate Donald Trump in 2016. Roth’s novel is a counter-history, offering his auto-biography of growing up in Jewish New Jersey during the ‘30s, only to extend the narrative into the hypothetical presidential victory by Lindbergh in 1940, sparking a wave of antisemitic pogroms, a U.S. alliance to the Axis, and more extensive anti-fascist actions by some social elements than in reality (Philip’s idol, an older cousin, slips into Canada in order to link up with communist partisans in Europe). That Guthrie wrote lyrics against the racist housing policies of his NYC landlord Fred Trump has fed his reimagining as a prototype for the #Resistance brand of anti-fascism. Yet beyond the whimsy of anti-Trump book clubs, a study of Guthrie’s works leads to a singular encounter with the fate of the national-popular in the U.S..

Guthrie Radio Hour

Political folk music was hardly unknown by the time Guthrie met Leadbelly and made a name for himself as a tramping sign-painter with an arresting physical presence and a sterling radio voice. Song was a vital instrument for the abolitionist movement to celebrate collectivity and cross-racial solidarity, as in the integrationist practice of Elizabeth Taylor Greenfield, the movement's links to popular and humanist currents like naturalist poetry, and the invention or alteration of radical lyrics employed by the likes of William Lloyd Garrison.[102] Two generations later, the Swedish-American songster Joe Hill became a leading figure in the anarchist IWW with music directed towards rabble-rousing, then widely performed to unite and instruct in revolutionary principles.[103] By the 1930s, the link between folk music and the workers movement was so strong that it was a staple of the folk art policy ensconced under the F.D.R. administrations. The New Deal boosted the nascent incorporation of folk music in public arts programming like the 1928 Archive of American Folk Songs reception at the Library of Congress, which was curated by John Lomax and employed his wife and son, Bess and Alan Lomax. John Lomax was a Texan literature student and musicologist born in 1862 who became close friends with Chicago's socialist poet, Carl Sandburg. In 1933, John and Bess received a grant to tour the Texas penitentiary system and gather negro songs, a practice underway for some time. The Lomaxes first met Leadbelly on this tour at the "Angola" Louisiana State Prison in July 1933. The New Deal was also a boon to other folklorists like Lunsford and Seeger's father Charles, who were both employed by the rural Federal Emergency Relief Agency's Skyline Farms in Alabama, a back-to-the-land commune for folkloric experiments in economic and cultural production.

[102] The most direct evidence of this link is *The Anti-Slavery Melodies* songbook compiled by Jairus Lincoln (1794-1882) and published by Elijah B. Gill (1808-1874) in Hingham, MA, in 1843.
[103] On Hill and his music see Wallace Stegner's *The Preacher and the Slave (*later renamed *Joe Hill)* which takes fictional liberties as a novel, but makes clear the factual foundations of its research.

Woodrow Wilson Guthrie was born in 1912 in Oklahoma, then recently renamed from 'Indian Territory' where Native American survivors of forced relocations were brought and marched. His father's step-mother was part-Creek, and his stage hero Will Rogers was Cherokee. His father may have participated in the KKK's regional revival, and his childhood was without doubt submerged in intense Jim Crow racism.[104] The pre-WWI Socialist Party had a strong foothold in the anti-materialist churches of small towns like the Guthries' Okemah. Guthrie was a young boy when the notorious 1921 Tulsa Race War saw the town's thriving 'Black Wall Street' destroyed by white mobs, leaving hundreds dead and city blocks burned down. A few years before, violence against Tulsa's blacks had already spread to their allies. "In 1917, 17 white members of the International Workers of the World were flogged, tarred, feathered, and turned loose on the prairie by Knights of Liberty dressed in black robes and masks."[105] These racial elements make up primary raw materials in Guthrie's work, but, to his credit, he came to craft them on an elevated national register where they were subjected to a radical level of reflection.

As we will see, the paradigm of *mestizaje* that Carpentier intended for the Americas was elemental in the Nueva Canción movement sparked by Chile's Violeta Parra. Violeta's "Gracias a la vida" is one of the rare emissions that might constitute an anthem across Latin America; however, it is a case where her often explicit communism is sublated into themes of humanism and naturalism. She bears out some striking comparisons with Guthrie, although not to the extent as with an obvious latin folklorist like Atahualpa or the Cuban compositional savant Silvio Rodriguez. Guthrie's most famous ballads rival the popularity of patriotic jingles like "God Bless America" as national anthems with explicitly anti-capitalist sentiments. Pete Seeger went to

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[104] Cray, Ed. *Ramblin' Man: The Life and Times of Woody Guthrie,* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004.
[105] Crowe, Kweku Larry and Lewis, Thabiti. "The 1921 Tulsa Massacre." *Humanities (The Magazine of the National Endowment for the Humanities)*, Vol. 42, No. 1, Winter, 2021.

lengths to preserve the suppressed stanzas of “This Land is Your Land,” teaching school children to always sing the lines:

> A big ol’ sign there, It tried to stop me
> And on that sign it said, ‘Private Property’
> But on the other side, It didn’t say nothin’
> That side was made for you and me.

“This Land is Your Land” makes explicit the unity between a left-wing anti-capitalism and an internationalism that rejects the imposition of national boundaries. For Violeta, Mapuche culture was continuous with an autonomous history, an experience also common to peoples like the Aymara or Maya, but largely extinguished inside the U.S.. While Guthrie is well-known for anti-racist activism, it is often forgotten that the poor white landworkers known as Okies, whose plight he drew great attention to in songs like “Dust Bowl Refugee,” were in fact highly racialized upon arriving in California, wherein they were entreated to hazing, slurs, segregation, vigilantes and systemic violence. In praising Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath,* Guthrie alludes to this character of discrimination against groups of “Okies, Arkies, Kansies and Texies” subjugated by California’s racial regime.[106] Furthermore, Guthrie was active in the interstices of racial and economic justice during the 1930s, when a tight conflation of racist and anti-communist tropes were propagated, such as the ‘foreign subversive’, ‘Italian anarchist’ or ‘Jewish Bolshevik’.[107]

While not the musicologist that Violeta or Lunsford were, Guthrie did tour rural regions and poor communities (often with a bindlestiff and few possessions), which nurtured his political consciousness. A striking example was his disavowal of his performances of possum hunt caricatures inherited from Unc’ Dave Macon that uncritically employed blackface stereotypes.

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[106] At the time, the long westward journey along Route 66 ended in Bakersfield, imprinted upon its legacy as a ‘sundown town’ with an inglorious role in terrorizing the nearby Hoovervilles and migrant camps that sprang up nearby such as Oildale. The Bakersfield Sound’s white-coded identity often effaces its history of agricultural labor organizing from Cesar Chavez’s UFW to its replanting of the communal heirloom heritage after the South Central Farm’s expulsion in 2006.

[107] On this conflation and especially the ramifications of the latter, see Rose, Sven-Erik. “Marx’s ‘Real Jews’ between Volk and Proletariat: Productivizing Social Abjection and Grounding Radical Social Critique.” *Jewish Hydra, German Heimat, and ‘the Jewish Question,’* Ch. 4, pp. 146-199, University of Pennsylvania, Ph.D. dissertation, 2003.

On October 30, 1937, Guthrie received a written letter from an African-American listener of his new Los Angeles radio program that decisively changed his political ideas and practice. “Mr. Guthrie, you were getting on pretty good for yourself until you started in on your ‘nigger blues’. I would like to inform you that no person of education and good sense in this country any longer denigrates himself by pronouncing that word in public.”[108] These numbers immediately disappeared from his repertoire and he apologized on air the very next day for his “frothings,” going on to pen powerfully anti-racist lyrics in songs like “Plane Crash at Los Gatos Canyon (Deportee)” and “Old Man Trump.” As his health faltered in the 1950s, Guthrie adhered to the Communist Party’s damning of racial inequality as one of the cardinal sins of the post-war status quo during the Truman and Eisenhower-era. From the early ‘40s onward, Guthrie had been monitored as a subversive by the FBI, in part for links to the CPUSA, which continued even after his death.[109] By that time, as had occurred with Algren, government surveillance exacerbated but could not be entirely distinguished from a spiral of alcoholism, genetic illness and the personal grief of deaths like his daughter’s that pushed on his debilitation.

Employing the medium so favored by Carpentier, Woody had a vibrant collaboration from 1937 (when he was 25 years old) to 1939 with his cousin Jack Guthrie and Maxine “Lefty Lou” Crissman on the progressive KFVD California radio station that moved for a time to Tijuana’s XELO studio and was heard as far away as Texas and Nevada. Correspondence to the programmers from the labor and refugee populations show the role radio served as a public sphere for political and cultural commentary, finding in the host a sympathetic voice to relay their requests to the listening community. The archive of letters sent by listeners reveals a dramatic

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[108] Kaufman, Will. *Woody Guthrie, American Radical,* University of Illinois Press, 2011. I paraphrase the letter here based on Kaufman’s by-heart recitation on *Democracy Now!,* November 23, 2012, but it is available in the *Maxine Crissman “Woody and Lefty Lou Radio Show” Collection* at the Woody Guthrie Center, Series II: Radio Show Fan Correspondence, Box 02, Folder 01.
[109] Briley, Ronald. “‘Woody Sez’: Woody Guthrie, the ‘People’s Daily World,’ and Indigenous Radicalism.” *California History*, Vol. 84, No. 1, University of California Press, 2006.

diversity of interest from all walks of life, levels of literacy, and regions of the country. The signal's wavering at times picked up in Colorado, Montana or Wyoming but failed to reach would-be listeners in Oklahoma and Missouri, linking up haphazard and far-flung listeners through the sort of wondrous synchronicities that animate Pynchon's gonzo realism. Woody's show was broadcast at night, when AM radio waves interact differently with the earth's ionosphere. One signal at the time from Cincinnati that was part of a New Deal experiment reached most of the continental U.S..[110] Known as a high powered clear channel, it caused lights to flicker, interfered with the frequency of smaller stations, and crossed over into Toronto's sovereignty, anticipating debates to come over public access to television and the internet.

Among the many contacts he made through radio were Communist Party militants in a period that saw Guthrie embrace industrial unionism. He participated in some of the San Joaquin Valley cotton strikes that lasted into the late '30s alongside the communist-affiliated United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America.[111] The union-busting fruit crop bosses and the fascist Associated Farmers employed hired guns and, in Guthrie's words, "clubs, gas bombs, billys, blackjacks, saps, knucks, machine guns, and log chains" rained down on the landless fruit pickers who organized.[112] His radio program was finally ended by the Roosevelt-supporting KFVD chief Frank Burke for Guthrie's pro-Soviet stance on the invasion of Poland, suggesting that the Soviets would give land to Polish farmers. With the U.S. still out of the war, the official line was that the invasion was an example of Russian aggression, which exaggerated the threat posed by Germany. Even his defenders like Kaufman see Guthrie's flip-flopping on the war effort with the Soviet line to be clunky and awkward. However, his

[110] Some farmers even claimed to hear WLW's broadcast coming from their barbed wire fences. June-Frisen, Katy. "For a Brief Time in the 1930s, Radio Station WLW in Ohio Became America's One and Only Super Station." *Humanities*, Vol. 36, No. 3, May/June.
[111] Kaufman, Will. "Woody Guthrie's Union War." *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies,* Vol. 16, No. ½, Spring-Fall 2010.
[112] On this organization and the prominence gained by 'farm fascism' before 1940, see Kulik, Brian W. and Almanzar, Nelson Pichardo. *American Fascism and the New Deal: The Associated Farmers of California and the Pro-industrial Movement,* Lexington Books, 2013.

eloquent clamors against the capitalist class were elsewhere complemented by a punchy clarity on their geopolitical maneuvers: he impolitely named the capitalists' fraternity with Nazi Germany and loathing for the Bolshevik example. Hindsight suggests that he saw through the U.S.'s fulminating over illusions of any serious red-brown alliance.

Writing a column called "Woody Sez" for the communist paper *People's Daily World* from May 1939 to January 1940, Guthrie employed a down-home journalist's voice to give searing first-hand accounts of the refugees' living conditions. In one migrant camp, he described "4,000 people hungry and dirty and bogged down… There are flies crawling over babies faces. There are little pot bellies by the hundreds swelled up with the gas that is caused by malnutrition."[113] Ronald Briley places Guthrie in the tradition of Walt Whitman and Daniel Shays as a champion of the United States' indebted and working commoners.[114] That should not distract from the fact that the 'American people' he defended were those from groups like the UCAPAWA: a largely Asian, black, chicano, and women-led organization. The diversity of these agricultural workers is so pronounced that it reminds us that cultivation and the free movement of seeds is a nigh-primordial element of cultural exchange, and quintessentially non-discriminatory. His sustained concern for the latino farmworkers and 'deportees' and his polemics against the red-baiting, pro-gentrification vision promoted by William Randolph Hearst show Guthrie still resisting the post-1848 Juan Crow period of de-Mexicanization. He spoke with appall about the indignity suffered in California, separate from it but not unfeeling:

> If people had set and telled me that there was hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands of families and people living around under railroad bridges, down along the river bottoms in their old cardboard houses, and old rusty beat up houses that they'd made out of tow sacks and old, dirty rags and corrugated iron that they'd got out of the dumps, and old tin cans flattened

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[113] Kaufman. *Woody Guthire, American Radical, Op. cit.*

[114] On Guthrie and Whitman, Garman argues that their 'common worker' was a racially exclusionary category, despite their good intentions. Garman, Bryan K.. *A Race of Singers: Whitman's Working-Class Hero from Guthrie to Springsteen,* University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

> out, and old orange crates that they'd been able to tear up and get boards out of, I wouldn't believe it.[115]

The systemic violence that he raged against also dealt him a life-long series of personal tragedies, from his family's oil busts and loss of land, to his mother's incarceration, and several house fires that killed his sister and then his daughter. The ills suffered personally and those more generally afflicting his 'common people' were brought together in the simple delivery that was his trademark, "I was a-workin on my shares, and always I was poor// My goods I laid down into the Banker's store// And my wife took down and died upon the cabin floor// And I ain't got a home in this world anymore." In this way, Guthrie gave a voice and subjectivity to the toiling masses being churned and spat out by novel systems of economic and racial exploitation.

When Guthrie's radio program came to an end, a new chapter opened that offers insight into the then-existing embryos of an avant-garde with a national-popular character. Recorded sound brought his songs to a new audience that was in some ways more cosmopolitan, and that element was augmented by his move to NYC. These are the war years, the budding friendship with Leadbelly, and the political engagement of boosting the US war effort. But it also included the meeting with his future second wife Marjorie Mazia, who was active at the forefront of modern dance. According to Marjorie, in the '30s and '40s, "Dancers were the poorest people on the cultural ladder." Guthrie was invited to participate in the sort of cross-disciplinary experiments that would later become famous in John Cage's esoteric partnership with Marjorie's student, Merce Cunningham. His new radio show on CBS, *Back Where I Come From*, which lasted for four months, was a collaboration with Alan Lomax, Seeger, Burl Ives, the black Golden Gate Quartet, and Nicholas Ray (later to direct *Rebel without a Cause)* who battled against Leadbelly's inclusion. The show was racially integrated, featuring an entire program on

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[115] Jackson, Mark Allan. *Prophet Singer: The Voice and Vision of Woody Guthrie*, Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2007.

the 13th Amendment's abolition of slavery, and drew extensively from Southern Baptist sources. It was also experimental (a clear progenitor of the *Hootenanny* variety show), setting Woody's dust bowl tunes to dramatic improvisation, and evinces a clear limitation: his demand for free expression of opinion foreclosed the brief glimmer of commercial sponsorship. During this time, Guthrie also delved further into a lifelong love of Chaplin, explored Yiddish poetry while fretting over the rise of anti-Semitism, and expanded his interests into classical music like Prokofiev. What can be deduced is that the popular energies Carpentier believed were necessary to subtend such formal radicalism by the 1950s were exhausted by political repression and the submissions of working class organizations.

For Marjorie, teaching dance to children encouraged an acceptance of themselves and a kind of openness to intimacy that bears formal similarity to political pedagogy. Beyond facilitating Guthrie's relationship with his children and students after their marriage officially ended, she cared for him for two decades and went on to propel awareness and research into Huntington's. Guthrie seemed attuned to this potential for subverting the onset of McCarthyism by turning to the new generation and fomenting, through them, a return of the repressed, recording brilliant children's music and, like Seeger, using songs to provoke audience response. *Folksay,* Sophie Maslow's opera of Woody's music, demonstrates his trajectory prior to his debilitation. Its collaborators included Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Carl Sandburg, and Duke Ellington, while Maslow (Marjorie's friend and collaborator in the Graham studio who first introduced her to Guthrie) also produced *Dust Bowl Ballads* about the Southwest amidst drought. Their circle included Anna Sokolow and Martha Graham, took inspiration from Isadora Duncan and the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War, linked with vanguards in Mexico and Russia, and were mostly Judaic and Communist Party members.[116] Maslow's productions show a startling

[116] Labbato, Maria. 2021, "The Nomad Selves: The American Women of The Spanish Civil War and Exile." Doctoral Dissertation, Florida International University.

arrangement of internationalist themes in the years before Guthrie's arrival: "May Day March" in 1936, and "Themes from a Slavic People" with music by Béla Bartók and "Two Songs About Lenin" in 1934. In a similar, contemporaneous production, Paul Robeson and Earl Robinson composed and staged the *Ballad for Americans* cantata that was produced by the WPA Federal Theater Project, celebrating the multi-ethnic, working class history of the nation in a Communist register. Robinson was the Musical Director of Camp Unity, a proletarian summer camp launched by the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the Communist Party who were organizing for housing justice in NYC. This was a milieu where culture and production were explicitly linked, blending radio, film, music, dance, theater, and literature, with reconceptions of leisure, tourism, medicine, science, education, sex, sports, and family structure. Its participants included various artistic luminaries such as Lorraine Hannsbury in addition to Guthrie and Leadbelly.

Gus Stadler has written an intriguing book about Guthrie's partnership with Marjorie and their use of dance as a therapeutic method in his battle against the onset of Huntington's Disease.[117] Stadler writes that this work spawned Guthrie's belief in "intimacy as a weapon against fascism," creating an intriguing comparison with Wilhelm Reich's theory that sexual perversion underlies the mass psychology of fascism. For Reich, the core question to confront is why the working class does not act in 1 to 1 direct immediacies for its own interest; ie. why class consciousness is not given and unbending. The masses can be attracted to fascism, they can do violence on each other, they do not always organize as a coherent unit and mobilize to expropriate the products of their labor, except in given historical conditions. Reich finds the answer to this 'perversion' in Freud's theory of desire. The relationship between desire and consciousness is complicated but integral. At an early stage of development, the human subject comes to

[117] Stadler, Gustavus. *Woody Guthrie: An Intimate Life.* Penguin Random House, 2020. Thanks to Joshua Clover for drawing my attention to this work.

encounter obstacles to the desired object (such as the incest taboo), and this thwarting produces the conditions for consciousness formation: the re-positioning and strategizing for confronting the new reality in which desire does not lead to automatic satisfaction.

This insight allows us to leapfrog into Stadler's framing of Guthrie's politics of intimacy. Within his partnership with Marjorie, Guthrie took on a little known venture: writing erotica. In the intimate relationship, framed in the setting of therapeutic dance, the movements between the bodies engage in a constant dynamic of recognition and reaction, processing again and again the rejection and denial of union. That process could be construed as a global conception of social formation, but it holds out on the question of why and under what conditions this consciousness is enlisted as a class weapon (a question that returns in our comparison between Guthrie and Violeta Parra in the next section). Guthrie claimed that the cooperative structure of *Folksay* led him to embrace socialist unionism and reject his received conception of "every man for his self."[118] Faced with revolutionary defeat, many in the folk movement placed a didactic emphasis on engendering next generations with values and a culture of resistance. Intimacy with children, surrounded with its own halo of taboos, is as such charged with pathways for the production of cultural meaning, such as in the children's theater ventures undertaken by Brecht and Victor Jara.[119] That scenario could be imagined as an elaborately detailed stage design of proto-animated puppets bursting with still-life, each a boundary line of radical intimacy, here in the surprising encounters between two players, there in the solace the audience finds with a character's suffering, but also the many directions that prohibit or divert

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[118] "I learned a good lesson here in team work, cooperation, and also in union organization. I saw why socialism is the only hope for any of us, because I was singing under the old rules of 'every man for his self' and the dancers was working according to a plan and a hope." Guthrie, Woody. "Singing, Dancing and Teamwork," reprinted in Guthrie. *Pastures of Plenty,* HarperPerennial, 1992.

[119] Two of Brecht's *Lehrstücke* (Learning Plays), *Der Jasager* and *Der Neinsager*, were produced explicitly for children. See Hughes, Erika. "Brecht's *Lehrstücke* and Drama Education." *Key Concepts in Theatre/Drama Education,* Brill, 2011. A related emphasis on youth pedagogy also appears in the guerrilla movement, where groups like Baader/Meinhof recruited heavily from carceral and reformatory housing and offered participation in an alternative worldview and family structure.

energy towards an end, such as the swerves a military strategy takes to avoid endangering victory. Guthrie and Violeta would both die in 1967 under very different circumstances, but each, in confronting this inevitable finality, would sublimate the desire for intimacy into a self-image that uniquely represented their national *folklórico*.

Go Down, Moses

Guthrie translated his own tragedies and pain into his reinvention, starring in a role that he offered a familiar face and radical image to. Leadbelly's black face struck the public at that time entirely differently. The grandchild of a black couple murdered by the KKK in Mississippi, Huddie Ledbetter (1888-1949) was a popular fascination with striking charisma and one of the most potent singing voices of the era. As a child, Leadbelly had seen Jelly Roll Morton play, and was taken with the rich sounds and nightlife of nearby Shreveport, Louissiana. He lit out as a young man to the Deep Ellum section of Dallas, a key breeding ground for blues styles (often called the Deep Ellum Blues), where he met and collaborated with Lemon Jefferson, whose commercial aspirations he eschewed, only hearing Lemon's recordings later upon release from prison. His rough life later transformed him into a legendary figure that challenges our notions of the authentic, seeming to stretch truths as if only to extract from them the more than real. His songs display a mode of self-reinvention that is both biblical and modern. Togetherness, political ballads, and empathic tragedies are all possible under this rubric, demonstrating that Leadbelly's wide experiences did not impede him from ventriloquizing and impersonating others. From "Take this Hammer" and "Pick-a-Bale-of-Cotton" to "Rock Island Line," onomatopoeia mixes with the life of the road, labor, and indenture in stories that fascinated both black and white audiences. The rhythm of the railroad or chain-gang infiltrates the song and offers a genuine Southern voice likening its modern experiences to classical tragedies. For example, in a larger-than-life tale from 1925, Ledbetter wrote "Oh Mary" to Texas Governor Pat Neff who

visited the plantation where he was serving a murder sentence. Leadbelly performed lyrics pleading for a pardon from Neff by name: “If I had you Guv'ner Neff like a-yew got me/ I'd wake up in the mornin' I'd setchu free.” Knowing of his patron's Christian attachments, Ledbetter changes his wife's name in the song to Mary, who is characterized as piously awaiting his return from prison: “I left my wife wringin her hands and cryin/ sayin 'Lord have mercy on that man of mine!'”, repeating each line twice for emphasis as in the psalms. Of the tale, Roi Boyd writes, “Leadbelly’s performance is so strong that it does win him a pardon, yet he has to degrade himself in order to achieve it. What sustains [him] is his human spirit.”[120] A shrewdly intelligent man can be discerned behind the act that manipulates his fiercely white supremacist environment for the sake of survival and freedom. The pardon adds another twist in the creation of Leadbelly’s popular legend.

A strong man who came out on top of several fatal brawls, he was a prodigious cotton-picker as a child and later a convict. Capable on piano, mandolin, harmonica, violin and accordion, his most favored instrument was the voluminous 12-string guitar, which according to one rumor his father bought him in exchange for the family farm. In 1933, now in Angola on a 6-year assault charge, Ledbetter was sought out by John Lomax, who helped polish the convict’s rough edges for public consumption, while Leadbelly in turn became invaluable in sourcing out new songs from other inmates. Film reels of the two’s interactions show Leadbelly playing up the part of a penitent, illiterate negro that is unrecognizable from the deft wit and suave manners on display elsewhere, such as when reminiscing about Shreveport for his audience. The ploy suggests that Lomax is only the latest in a long stream of rubs from a life that found resurrection in fabrication.

[120] Boyd, L. Roi III. “*Leadbelly* Thirty Years Later: Exploring Gordon Parks as Auteur through the Leadbelly Lens.” *Black Camera*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2006, pp. 18–21.

Quickly parting ways with Lomax, he befriended Guthrie and the two lived their later years in shared flop houses around New York, where they first met a young Seeger. Like certain of Guthrie's hits, Leadbelly's "Goodnight, Irene" was a national sensation. He played it for Lomax on their very first encounter, and its popularity would skyrocket in 1950 after being covered by the Weavers. Its lyrics combine a nursery rhyme lullaby with reckless indolence and a morbid death-wish. That combination recurs frequently in folk, suggesting some libidinal connection to the sinners and rebels that are frequently the songs' protagonists. Leadbelly's narrator in the song is a loverboy who sometimes takes "a great notion, of jumpin' in the river and drownin'." He sings, "I love's Irene Lord knows I do, I'll love 'er til the river runs dry// And if Irene turns her back on me, I'll take morphine and die."[121] The morphine that Irene's lover considers swallowing has long been used to assist death by suppressing consciousness and causing a sleep-like transition. Morphine comes from the opium poppy, *amapola,* which Violeta also ponders as the fatal consolation for lost love. In the comparison between the U.S. and Latin America, the use of plants and the relationship to death reveal distinctions and continuity.

It is often said that in the U.S., we are furthest away from the rites and acknowledgement of mortality. From Christopher Lasch to Jonathan Crary, social scientists across the spectrum detect a singular decadence and spiritual void. A culture's relationship with death is surely a subject for folkloric investigation, and Carpentier has several wonderful passages on the Santería religion's funerals that "make the saints descend" and "let the drums speak," depicting a culture in which the dead are possessed by the community. The *cabildos* were mutual aid societies that retained burial rights under slavery, along with which they carried out public dances and processions through the streets of Havana thinly veiled with Christian iconography, that Ortiz likened to voodoo snake cults in Haiti with afro-Dahomey roots. Of one *ñáñigo*

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[121] All Leadbelly lyrics Copyright the Leadbelly Estate. *Leadbelly: The Smithsonian Folkways Collection,* Smithsonian Folkways, Catalogue # SFW40201, 2015.

initiation ceremony he had witnessed, Carpentier describes how episodes of the same legend are collectively "mimed, danced, and sung with slight variations. Something of old funeral rites has stayed embedded in them. A government edict in 1792 prohibited that 'blacks could conduct or allow others to conduct, to the *cabildos* the cadavers of blacks, in order to sing or cry as is customary in their native land.'... As for the festivities with magic – a different issue altogether – their main objective continues to be a believer's possession, so thoroughly studied by Jacques Roumain."[122] Public wailing, hands on the body, festive dancing, seeing the dead, magic practices, possession by saints, animal cults, delivering the deceased to spiritual leaders, political contests over burial rights: these are the rites of death eschewed and suppressed by Western modernity.

The surviving cultural connection to death rites in various sites of Latin America has also brought about a fanciful consumption of those practices, such as around the calaveras in Mexico.[123] Michael Pollan's *How to Change Your Mind: the New Science of Psychedelics* has contributed to a public conversation in the U.S. about the assistance of psychedelics in the act of death, as something to experience rather than sedate and repress. Drugs have often been used propagandistically to portray a crazed, and 'unnatural' enemy, from Hitler's use of speed explaining his ill-fated push into Russia, to Susan Rice's claim to the UN that Gadaffi's soldiers were being dosed with Viagra. Alcohol on the other hand is publicly accepted, although it has probably been used in modern warfare to embolden atrocities more than any other drug, aside from the medical use of anesthesia. In this sense, its use signifies a desensitization towards death. However, Stephen Harrod Buhner's *Sacred and Herbal Healing Beers* details how medieval brewmasters once made meads from yarrow and other energetic, psychotropic, or aphrodisiacal herbs, but lost out to the easily grown preservative hops, a desensitizing

[122] Carpentier, *Music in Cuba, Op. cit.*
[123] Lupi, Adelai. "Carcajadas de calaveras en Jorge Ibargüengoitia y en José Guadalupe Posada." *Actas del IX Congreso de la Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, August 18-23, 1986.

depressant whose effects promoted the moral and social control favored by the Church and upper classes.

Intriguingly, serious attention to and scientific research into psychedelics in the U.S. is universally dated to the 1957 publication of an article in *Life* magazine describing R. Gordon Wasson's participation in a Mazatec healing ritual (*velada)* with the Oaxacan *curandera* María Sabina. Wasson was following leads from the father of Harvard's ethnobotany program, Richard Evan Schultes, whose practice of 'transculturation' and building trust with indigenous amazonian tribes in the 1940s involved consuming their sacred plant medicine, the potent ayahuasca. Encountering a reclusive band that had frequently conflicted with outsiders and retreated into the jungle, he explained that his goals were to learn what plants they knew about and consume any new medicines they used. The tribesman said, "It was the most sensible thing I'd ever heard from a white man."[124] This reflects the continued sourcing of cultural roots and *el saber popular* from across the border, becoming more and more repressed into sublations of the exotic and subterranean. Kerouc's landmark American novel also from 1957, *On the Road,* typifies the new site of Mexico as an underworld destination for purification and escape from the U.S.'s delineated territory. Alex Rivera's film *Sleep Dealer (2008)* captures this transformed relation, where middle-aged women from Central America remain the primary caregivers for the elderly in the U.S. and these low-wage jobs invisibilize their end-of-life care services.

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[124] Schultes' work is the basis of the profound debut Colombian film of Ciro Guerra, *El abrazo del serpiente (2016).* Of special note is the geopolitical role of the Peruvian rubber wars and Schultes' justification for the encounters to aid the U.S.'s search for rubber sources amidst the war drive. See his student Wade Davis's excellent *One River: Explorations and Discoveries in the Amazon Rain Forest,* on the deep interpenetration of the search for indigenous ancestral knowledge by corporate interests such as Intercontinental Rubber Company, Coca Cola, Parke-Davis, Royal Dutch Shell, Rubber Development Corporation, Rubber Reserve Company, Shell, Shell-Mera, and the United States Rubber Company. See also Corbin, Michelle Dawn. "Spirituality in the Laboratory: Negotiating the Politics of Knowledge in the Psychedelic Sciences." Dissertation, University of Maryland, 2010.

In these connections, I attempt to draw out a constellation of causes overlooked by the prevailing disciplinary boundaries. What to make of this reappearance of the *curandera* as underpaid domestic worker? Throughout this investigation we seem to be confronting instances of Brecht's estrangement-effect, in which the historical elements that articulate the music's class content and radical purview attract their intended audience, but precisely by appearing in disguise. If folk music furthermore thrives on all the associations with the home (such an important signifier for the extant nature of the Americas in Carpentier's *Los pasos perdidos)*, with its images of the hearth, family, loved ones, death, returning, and solitude, then the uncanny element (Freud's *Das Unheimliche)* would depend precisely on this defamiliarization of our most guarded secrets and inner knowledge. In other words, Carpentier was far from incidentally discovering that a musical analysis of Cuba would in fact lay bare its political chasms and contradictions *in their actual movement of fomenting and founding a new society.* Rather, because of music's affinity with sleep, unconscious desires, and the narration of fantasies, it is primed to offer a map of a society's fundamental contradictions and bases for rupture.

The frequent morbidity in the old-timey music and the powerful draw these songs have on their audiences suggests an unconscious desire to confront the repressed death-wish, and that this music allows for a type of communion being drained from secular modernity. Leadbelly drew extensive energy from the negro spiritual, both in the style's techniques as well as sincere covers of the standards like "Mary don't Weep." Paul Robeson, a patron of the Guthrie-Leadbelly circle, was a masterful orator and singer in the Black Spiritual tradition who was unique in his capacity for casting social justice as a crucible for Christian morality. Another unconscious attraction that draws the listeners to these songs may be the flame of resistance carried in their tunes and undying moods. For of all the speculated roots of the protest song, the *Negro Slave Songs* of the pre-Civil War may lay the strongest claim as a source. Miles Mark

Fisher argues that the dissimulation and devious authorship that populate many of the songs discussed here trace these characteristics back to the “min’ yo’self” tendency that the conservative leadership of the African cult advocated in the years following the 1831 Nat Turner revolt. The Scripture in particular provided refuge for the messages, strategizing, and organization of that rebellion, and then the still coded relishing of the South’s downfall during the war, in which abolition was equated with Judgment Day (“Fire, my Saviour, fier/ Satan’s camp a-fire;/ Fier, believer, fier/ Satan’s camp a-fire.”)[125]

Guthrie’s song “Jesus Christ,” in a different register, more closely anticipates the Christian socialism deployed by Parra. Assuming the subject from the folk-outlaw ballad “Jesse James,” Jesus is recast in Guthrie’s simple crooning as “a man who traveled the land, hard-working and brave,” who runs afoul of the ruling classes of his day and pays the ultimate price. “Jesus was a man and a carpenter by hand, his followers true and brave, but them cops and legislators called ‘em dangerous agitators and they laid Jesus Christ in his grave.” Anticipating a lyrical device mastered by Tupac Shakur in the 1990s, Guthrie often concludes the song’s moral back in the present: “Well the people held their breath when they heard about his death, And everybody wondered why; ‘til they saw it was the landlord and the soldiers that he hired, That nailed poor Jesus in the sky.// This song was written in New York City, of rich men, preachers and slaves; But if Jesus preached right here like he preached in Galilee, they would lay Jesus Christ in his grave.” The unbound lifestyle and deeply communal values shared between Guthrie and Leadbelly demonstrates the cross-racial solidarities that were practiced and celebrated in the folk and socialist milieux prior to the end of Jim Crow. Among their many social causes, Leadbelly made a passionate plea for the Scottsboro Boys of Alabama, whose false rape conviction in 1931 became a rallying cry for the Communist Party against the justifications that

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[125] Fisher, Miles Mark. *Negro Slave Songs in the United States.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953.

defended segregation. In the 1950s, despite Guthrie's ailment and Leadbelly's death, their influence on younger musicians like Seeger, Dylan, and Baez was pronounced and lasting.

The 1930s also saw socialist folk music infiltrating Hollywood. One of cinema's best known songs, "Over the Rainbow" from *The Wizard of Oz (1939),* was penned by Socialist Party member Yip Harburg, who also wrote the popular Depression ballad lyrics to "Brother Can You Spare a Dime?" Harburg was then blacklisted and faced HUAC hearings. Later in life as a songwriting instructor, he suggested the political backdrop of his famous composition, "I come from a special tribe of what used to be called troubadours. Sometimes they were called minstrels, now we're called songwriters. We work for in our songs a sort of a better world, a rainbow world. Now my generation unfortunately never succeeded in creating that rainbow world, so we can't hand it down to you. But we could hand down our songs, which still hang onto hope and laughter…" A few lines later his comments move into the lyrics of the song itself, making the didactic character of the music explicit.[126] Abel Meeropol, another Jewish Communist with similar laurels, was the author of the famous anti-lynching song "Strange Fruit" and James Baldwin's high school english teacher. Meeropol worked with Algren, Emanuel Bloch, W.E.B. and Shirley Graham Du Bois in the Rosenberg Defense Committee, later adopting the couple's children after their execution.[127] The Rosenberg's cause took up shortly after the end of the Scottsboro Boys' ordeal, but the repression faced by these supporters was widespread and ubiquitous, recalling that the HUAC was merely the point of the spear in a wave of anti-communism that seeped into the pores of the home and society alike. We can draw a

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[126] I once heard Utah Philips similarly employ this art of the troubadour, mixing labor history, rhyming idioms, and pleas for activism before and after a heartfelt melody. I hope however possible this spirit might echo here in the music that moves behind the printed lyrics, and the lives that stand behind given names and dates.

[127] Meeropol's closest overt brush with the blacklist and Hollywood is his credit as co-writer of the title song on the tinged Sinatra and Earl Robinson project, *The House I Live In (1945).*

parallel in this respect to the anti-communist drive of the 1973 coup in Chile, where the targeted murder of the Left's leadership left in its wake the cultural devastation of an entire generation.

The blacklisting of studio laborers was an era in which public storytelling moved towards a spectacular suppression of the popular classes and their interests, then substituted by a wish-fulfillment of participating in ruling class values and fantasies. That substitution was the subject of a nostalgic Hollywood retrospective in the 1970s with films like Scorscese's *Boxcar Bertha (1972),* Peter Bogdanovich's *Paper Moon (1973),* Sydney Pollack's *The Way We Were (1973),* Woody Allen's *The Front (1976),* Gordon Parks' *Leadbelly (1976),* and Hal Ashby's *Bound for Glory (1976);* while the socialist screenwriters were again reprised as the protagonists of the recent *Trumbo (2015), Hail, Caesar (2016),* and *Mank (2020).* A surprisingly artful treatment of the assault on Hollywood's popular and communal forces is found in Pynchon's underrated *Vineland,* where exploitation of the studio's work hands grows into a broad purge of unionized boom operators, grips, gaffers and set builders. Pynchon narrates the humble pride felt by this generation of tradesmen who, without appearing in flesh, managed to leave a visible trace of their technical proficiency on the screens adored by the public, before being vanished entirely by the Reagan-led SAG. In that work as well as *Gravity's Rainbow,* this labor history of cinema is coupled with fictionalized versions of avant-garde filmmaking and European auteur theories proposing a formal restoration of the medium's radicalism. If *Hail, Caesar* satirizes the influence over Hollywood of the cultural Marxist Herbert Marcuse, his Frankfurt School colleagues Benjamin and Kracauer both held that the complex assemblage of labor that produces cinema gives it a mass character capable of contributing to socialist construction in profound ways. The systematic film criticism that Benjamin advocated and Kracauer practiced provides a fascinating foundation upon which analyses of today's streamed cinema might build. In a case of art leading theory, the third season of the prominent German production, *Babylon Berlin (2016-2020),* features a fictional film critic breaking through the fourth wall and calling out

for the emergence of a proletarian public sphere to alleviate the artistic and critical malaise, which is felt by the viewer to reference our times at least as much as its early 1930s setting.

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Saddled with the arduous tasks of a domestic laborer from the time she was a child, Libba Cotten did not spend much time playing the guitar as an adult. In the mid-1950s, the musical family she worked for as a housekeeper heard her fiddling with the guitar and took note of her talent. They were the children from Charles Seeger's second marriage, and the discovery led to Cotten's recordings and appearances on the folk festival circuit when she was over 60 years old. Along with the release of Smith's *Anthology* and such 'discoveries', the 1950s saw a passionate drive to reclaim the musical traditions that the war, individualist values, and the Red Scare had cleaved and scorned.

As already noted, the U.S. folk revival of the 1950s established continuity with the progenitors of the tradition, in spite of its suppression by a newly commercialized edition of the old style. TV producers were featuring such acts prominently in their early 1960s programming while obeying the blacklisting of the Communist Party-affiliated Seeger and the Weavers, including on the folk variety showcase, *Hootenanny*. Seeger had traveled cross-country with Guthrie as a very young man, becoming a capable banjo-picker and an ardent admirer of Leadbelly and Guthrie's socialist politics. Seeger's musical gift was not a technically skilled singing voice but its notably participatory quality, which his biographer Dunaway describes as a unique self-effacing confidence capable of bringing a wide range of audiences into the act of singing along, as if overcoming the 'character armor' of the new individuality, and arguably signifying something of the national-popular character that had been stamped out.[128]

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[128] Dunaway, David. *How Can I Keep From Singing: Pete Seeger,* Da Capo Press, 1990.

One of the popular young acts that was to appear on *Hootenanny* was Joan Baez, the daughter of a Mexican-Scottish couple who were practicing Quakers. As a youth, Baez had seen Seeger perform and later contributed to SNCC anti-segregationist campaigns that had communist participation in the South. The boycott she led against the TV studio on behalf of Seeger was evidence of a bridge between the 'committed art' of the 1930s and the new youth movements. Her ballad to Sacco and Vanzetti is one of numerous examples where those links are named and strengthened. Baez's staunch commitment to left-wing causes carried over to links with the *nueva canción* movement, covering songs in spanish, establishing a friendship with Mercedes Sosa, and singing the songs of Violeta. Neither was the admiration merely one-way: Victor Jara's "Las casitas del barrio alto" was adapted from Malvina Reynolds' screed against tract-housing, "Little Boxes," which Seeger had popularized. However, in the early 1970s, when asked of similarities between the *nueva canción* and U.S. protest singers, Jara draws the distinction that South American music retained a more powerful connection to the community. In turning to Chile we see, prior to the U.S. assault, the rich development of those national-popular elements sought by Carpentier: cross-race creolization, an internationalist, endogenous vanguard, and a *saber popular* unique to the Americas.

Part 3: Viola Chilensis

This extended investigation of *folklórico* roots in the United States and its affinity with Carpentier's Latin American reality has demonstrated how political repression aborted any mature culture of socialism and severed it from its internationalist setting. In the mid-20th Century, Chile's potent artistic tradition gave birth to a determinately articulated folk expression of socialist internationalism. This section covers the strong identity forged by Violeta Parra

between the nation and the folk tradition, the radical context of the Unidad Popular within this matrix, and the formal achievements of Violeta's artwork, whose *vanguardismo* is both popular and experimental. Violeta played a unique role in harvesting folk and peasant tunes from the countryside that in her hands ultimately evolved into poetic and compositional feats of the highest order. In this way, she also demonstrates that Latin America produced an endogenous vanguard (including but not limited to Surrealism and *lo real maravilloso*) either superior or anterior to European products.

Furthermore, given the role of the 1973 coup in the restructuring of world capitalism discussed in Appendix C, we identify here that the *folklórico* is a component within the moving historical process, not an idyllic bubble of the past. In Jameson's "Periodizing the 60s," the revolutionary wave of the 1960s is dated from the Cuban Revolution in 1959 to the permanent foreclosure of those possibilities by the attack on La Moneda, the creation of the DINA, Operación Cóndor, support for the Argentine Junta and all its ramifications. The coup in 1973 is so symbolic of the scar cut into the continent's social body that its simultaneous ejection and termination of the musical-political cooperation under the Unidad Popular makes a strong defense of the present argument that the national-popular registers a space of highly visible links between the political and cultural.

As in *La música en Cuba*, Violeta's deep engagement with the *folklórico* evinces a living political entity better translated as the national-popular than the staid associations of folk-culture so dominant in the U.S.. An artist with a vast breadth of social engagement, she self-identified as a *folklorista,* a role of prominence not conveyed by the English word folklorist. Born Violeta del Carmen Parra Sandoval, she traveled on donkey and foot early in her career to many of the oldest songsters in Chile to write down or memorize their music and stories. On these journeys, Violeta and her sister Hilda staged theatrical performances, accompanied gatherings of miners

and labor strikes, and brought to the radio forgotten treasures such as the ancient Doña Flora Leyton, who she affectionately calls her *trapera*. *Trapero* translates nicely to rag-and-bone-man, evincing Carpentier's argument that a musical commons criss-cross the Americas. The context of that encounter is recounted here by the musical journalist David Ponce:

> Parra describe el imperio de las tonadas en el gusto popular chileno de mediados de siglo y ella misma canta los éxitos de Ester Soré, Los Cuatro Huasos o Chito Faró para ejemplificarlo, y es posible entender con nitidez cuán distinta es esa música a las tonadas y canciones auténticas del folklore que ella está descubriendo en sus recopilaciones en los campos. «Gigantes de la música moderna», los denomina, versus lo que ella misma llama «esta batalla por la defensa de nuestro canto auténtico». Y luego abre la puerta definitiva a la historia cuando entrevista a la cantora Flora Leyton, de la localidad de Alto Jahuel, al sur de la región metropolitana, una mujer nacida en 1869 o 1868…
>
> «La señora Flora está aquí conmigo en la emisora (…) Aquí está con su cabeza blanca, con su espalda inclinada por el peso de sus noventa años», dice, y entonces hablan del legendario poeta popular Bernardino Guajardo, que vendía liras populares, o hacen recuerdos de la Guerra del Pacífico, «la guerra de los cholos» como la llaman ambas. Y cuando Violeta Parra toca una de sus anticuecas, no es un espejismo adivinar ahí una semilla para la guitarra más introspectiva del futuro Víctor Jara.[129]

The anti-cueca Violeta performs for Doña Flora (whose grandson she married in one of several unsuccessful partnerships) inverts the form's *allegro* lightness and rhythm, creating a mournful dance with a contemplative tempo, as if the original cueca's courting lovers now step it across the threshold of death, dancing out their memories. Her curation of folksongs suggest an affinity with the *Lieder* of German beerhalls favored by Schubert; short, unpretentious ditties filled with musical wit and dark, earthy morals. In "Casamiento de los negros," classified as the genre *melodía loca*, the song's running joke is the town's poverty – "todo cubierto del negro" – this final refrain closing each stanza with a dropped octave baritone.[130] Notable are the variety of popular forms and variations: cueca, toneda, mazurka, vals, polka, boleros, corridos,

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[129] Ponce, David, Liner notes to "*Cantos Chilenos* por Violeta Parra*,"* 2010, and "Violeta entrevista a Florencia Durán," a program on Radio Chilena from 1958, re-released on *Cantos Chilenos (2010)*.
[130] All lyrics and works attributed to the Violeta Parra national collections of the Ministerio de las Culturas, las Artes, y el Patrimonio, Gobierno de Chile: © Fundación Museo Violeta Parra and Biblioteca Nacional de Chile.

habaneras, and many others converted into almost infinite innovations. Other gems scavenged from the *villas* of Latin America, like Atahualpa Yupanqui's "Duerme negrito," offer melodic solace to an impoverished existence. An example here is the French or Basque-tinted "Qué pena siente el alma" that Doña Flora traced back to Chile in the 1860s. Elsewhere, "El día de tu cumpleaños" is a birthday song with actual lyrical and musical quality, and "Parabienes al revés" exemplifies the countryside's earthy surrealism à la Bruegel, as the first four couplets of each stanza are sung back in reverse (A-B-C-D-D-C-B-A) in ironic inversions that show Violeta mastering and building upon the material of her forebears.

As it is for Atahualpa, the rural peasant, who is the subject and source of much of her music, is either indigenous or mestizo. "Arauco tiene una pena" is the most significant expression of this theme, connecting the Mapuche anti-colonial struggle to the present oppression suffered from the mestizo Chileans themselves. Some of her songs with the most powerful messaging, such as "Arriba quemando el sol" and "Ayúdame, Valentina," can be simply cried out in protest, accompanied only by the traditional *cultrún* drum. In the lyrics to "Arauco," the leathers of the Mapuche's drum are said to weep, as the names of ancient resistance leaders are invoked and called to return to the battlefield. The *Kultrun* itself is wielded somewhat like sword and shield, in one hand the staff batón, in the other the circular laurel trunk, concave, covered with a goat hide bearing sacred designs to guide the "purification and installation of the Machi's [shaman's] spirit within the drum."[131]

Violeta's last songs have gained recognition as some of the great poetic achievements of the century, bringing to summation her deep voyage through and reinvention of Chile's *folklórico*. In his acceptance of the Nobel laureate in literature, Bob Dylan discusses the status that poets and

[131] María Catrileo and Gloria Quidel (Mapuches), "Mapuche Machi's Kultrung," National Museum of the American Indian, New York, NY.

storytellers had in the 19th century. That status remained particularly powerful in Chile during the 20th century, where for a long time it was Violeta's brother Nicanor who was crowned with national prestige alongside Gabriela Mistral, Neruda, and Pablo de Rothka. But Dylan claims that songs were becoming more central for our storytelling, and in singing he reclaimed a public attention to poetics that we might borrow to consider a parallel practice for Violeta. In a simple way, the syncopation, melodies, and tonal atmospherics (like with Dylan's harmonica or hill-billy phrasing) draw attention to the song's meaning; we could say these formal aspects augment the content.

Violeta's final songs were part of an album that served as her suicide note, bringing closure to the compositions that began with her pilgrimages in the 1930s and '40s to the countryside to study the traditional music of the peasants. Parra was born outside of Chillán in 1917 to a Mapuche musician and ladino school teacher. She had 8 siblings (plus two half-sisters) and was raised extremely poor, their father often drinking and playing music in public. All of the siblings would radically defend the communist movement as they matured, and the oldest, Nicanor, became at a young age an accomplished physicist before his 1953 book of Anti-Poems (partly inspired by his contemporary, Enrique Lihn) would transform the direction of Chilean literature. Violeta's early compositions are magnificent renditions of traditional forms like the cueca, corrido, and the tonada. Her middle period included a trip to France where the Louvre featured an exhibition of her textiles. Simultaneously her expressive lyrical capacities matured, producing an original vein of interwoven personal and political arrangements.

Concepción

According to Violeta, "I made my first [folk] song in 1953 after chatting with that fount of folk wisdom, Doña Rosa Lorca, and opening the greatest book of folklore ever written, Chile itself."

Rosa was a peasant artisan and midwife whom Violeta describes as performing functions in her community similar to the *curanderas*. The Chilean musician and musicologist Patricio Manns credits Violeta with raising the profile of the formerly anonymous peasant poetry collected in a periodic journal from 1900-1940 called *La lira popular:*[132]

> Violeta es una digna heredera de los cantores anónimos de *La lira popular* y de todos los anónimos cantores que se desplazan por el vasto y sangrante tiempo de América; no niega su influencia, escoge sus temas y define su intención como todos ellos, pero con una diferencia: ha logrado saltar las barreras del anonimato y esgrimiendo una poética que se genera a sí misma como una síntesis entre lo religioso-ingenuo y lo político-social, perfila su prestancia a la cabeza de la 'nueva canción'.[133]

Her budding original compositions show the mastery over these popular forms that she was developing en route to recasting them as unique styles of her own.

The first work of this period, "La jardinera," presages later themes of heartbreak and suicide as a vessel for closure and romantic transcendence. The names of flowers and their properties are cleverly played on for double-entendres to allow the narrator to live out the depths of eros across the physical limits of death, rejection, and loss. "Here I will plant the rose with fat thorns to make a crown from, for when you die inside me." "To the poppy I'll be the best friend, putting it under my pillow to keep myself asleep." "In case I am absent by the time you repent, I leave you these flowers to inherit, come cure yourself with them." The meter and rhyme structure are clean and effective, adding to the funereal an air of comedy or what Dvorak rendered the

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[132] Carpentier's study of Cuba largely examines what would constitute a parallel to the "folkloric period" of *La lira popular'*s origins. However, he defended the 20th Century return to those roots in some circumstances. I would argue that the political context of Violeta's folk turn fully satisfies this caveat of Carpentier. "In the twentieth century, there is a reoccurrence of a folkloric stage in Cuban music, the Afro-Cuban revelation of almost pure African elements, preserved but not made manifest until then. This revelation would suddenly take on an extraordinary novelty for the cultured musician, ushering in a perfectly justified regressive process, of notebook jottings and textual citation. There was a reconfirmation of the type of evolution that led the first musicians of the nineteenth century before Samuell to take the French *contradanza* as it had come to use from Santo Domingo and bring it into their own terrain." *Music in Cuba, Op. cit.*

[133] Manns, Patricio. *Violeta Parra: La guitarra indócil,* Ediciones Literatura Americana Reunida, 1976/1986.

Humoresque. The recurring figure in the chorus of plucking daisy petals for ‘he loves me, he loves me not’ completes this synthesis of lightness with the poignant. The song was first recorded in 1954 and the significance it makes of plant medicine is relevant to our discussion of the Americas’ extant nature.

At the same time, she created songs with overt and dramatically powerful political statements. Among these are “La carta,” “Miren como sonríen,” “Al centro de la injusticia,” and “Yo canto a la diferencia.” “Al centro de la injusticia” is a geographical tour of exploitation by the state within Chilean borders, only surviving as a recording by her daughter Isabel, like many of her songs. Isabel also sings the only recording of Victor Jara’s accompaniment on his “The Only Hands I Have,” in another haunting synchronicity, as he would shortly be murdered by the coup regime and taunted to play his guitar with broken hands. Most of these political songs on Violeta’s album *Canciones reencontradas en París (1971)* were only compiled by her children and released after her death. Later editions would include “El gavilán,” her most avant-garde composition at over 12 minutes. The production was to include elaborate actuation, but is musically very compact, splicing ancient Mapuche rhythms with radically futurist innovations into a haunting ballet. The gavilán is a masculine raptor (preying on the cueca’s innocent *gallina*) in a fraught tango between his loving and destructive natures, forecasting the thematic combustion of love and death years before her

suicide.[134] The ballet had employed younger artists from Santiago in design, dance, and *titiritero,* another reminder of the national-popular context that Jara also reproduced in his theater troupe. The song “Julián Grimau,” an homage to the martyred communist combatant, was removed by a French seal in order to reach Francoist Spain. Censored in several countries was the song “Un río de sangre” that shows a melodic and poetic sensibility in the service of an unbending anti-imperialist ethic, referencing Marxists and liberation fighters including the recently assassinated Patrice Lumumba. These elements find combination in lines such as, “qué vergüenza para el planeta/ de haber matado a un poeta/ nacido de sus entrañas.”

The leap from the Chilean countryside to Europe came by way of a 1955 invitation to the Soviet Union. She performed in Warsaw at the World Festival of Youth and Students, a global convention for socialist artists. She was warmly received around the Eastern bloc in a period where the popular association of folk music with socialism was represented by groups like the *Mazowsze* State Folk Ensemble of Song and Dance. Ericka Verba situates Violeta’s 1953 turn from popular performance to folklorist musicology, at the more cosmopolitan Nicanor’s suggestion, as part of a Cold War-inflected world wave of neo-folk revival.[135] Two of Violeta’s Chilena contemporaries, Margot Loyola and Gabriela Pizarro, also turned to *folklorismo* in the 1950s, appearing in similar rural venues, radio broadcasts, and Santiago recordings. The

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[134] I associate this *cueca* with tango because of the anglicized connotation of a tryst, alongside Carpentier’s reminder of their common origins; but most of all as an opportunity to note the cueca’s seemingly rigid gender assignments. The *Anticuecas* disrupt this somewhat, with the *Gavilán* locked in conflict with his shade. Its distant Argentine relative developed near La Boca of the River Matanza among male dockers and sailors dancing together, distinguishing the tango’s forceful, unique aggression in accord with the male physique. La Boca was a busy port absorbing a wide array of influences and ethnicities due to its bustling commerce, immemorially captured in the social realism of Quinquela Martín, whose laborers in turn perform the tango contortions amidst their collective toil. (Photo: detail of "Día de sol," 1928, colección Museo Arte de Tigre, Buenos Aires). Galeano likens the tango to soccer in his work on the latter, “Like the tango, soccer blossomed in the slums.” Like tango, soccer for Galeano is a creole artifact with both indigenous and European roots, ‘rescued’ by the undesirable popular classes, whose rhythms, permutations, cultural idiosyncracies, local color and ‘nationalism for the poor’ made the game what it is. Galeano, Eduardo. *Soccer in Sun and Shadow,* Trans. Mark Fried, New York: Nation Books, 2013.

[135] Verba, Ericka Kim. “To Paris and Back: Violeta Parra’s Transnational Performance of Authenticity.” The Americas, vol. 70, No. 2, 2013, pp. 269–302.

European trip also brought her to Paris, where she would go on to live intermittently with her Swiss-born lover Gilbert Favre, a musicologist of Bolivia. Recordings from Geneva, at the house of Favre's friend Walther Grandjean around 1963 and later in 1965, demonstrate the didactic qualities of Violeta's *peñas*, social dances that convey a detailed engagement with Chilean culture and musical structure to a French-speaking audience. Although uneducated formally, the recordings demonstrate a remarkably functional facility with the French language. Musically, her training came first from her schoolteacher father, playing together in bars and later in public thoroughfares on her own. She mastered the guitar, the cuatro, the charango, and the drum, adding accompaniments with winds and accordion. She understood a myriad of compositions, drama such as in the ballet, various aspects of dance, and exhibited a didactic side of performativity, combining interviews and musical instruction in a unique reinvention of the *trouva.* Her genius is lately rediscovered in this role as an aesthetic polyglot, one more identity that must not be severed from its base in the national-popular.

In 1964, she became the first Latin American to exhibit individually at the Louvre with her textiles, upholstery, masks and *arpilleras* (hand-embroidered patchwork tableaux with a narrative dimension comparable with *muralismo.*)[136] These works directly reference the handicrafts and peasant trades of the laborers lionized in her songs, and reveal an intriguing parallel with the cultural centrality of the Appalachian textile workers. Her production from Europe demonstrated a passionate lament over events in her homeland and her absence, alongside this fierce drive to educate and convey Chilean experience to the world. One *arpillera,* "The Peasants' Rebellion," attacks the poverty of landworkers like her grandfather. Violeta's tapestries and paintings were prolific but severely overlooked, despite being released with albums and their prominent reception in Europe, including a purchase by the Baroness

[136] *Comentario por Isabel Parra sobre la exposición del Louvre*, *1964*. Violeta Parra obra visual, Ocho Libros (2 ed.), Fundación Violeta Parra, 2008.

Rothschild. The many re-editions of her albums using her oils as cover art especially by the Oveja Negra label (following her inspiration of seeing "a picture in every song ready to be painted"),[137] hint at the multi-media potential she once imagined enlisting for the *Gavilán* ballet, and recall the lo-fi genre of self-illustrated americana tapes from Jerry Garcia and 'regional' musicians like Michael Hurley and Daniel Johnston. In a similar vein, the deep interconnection between folk musicology and underground comics by the pioneering graphic artist Robert Crumb suggests many undiscovered comparisons that *folklórico* still afford across cuisine, dance, plastics and visuals, digital media, vernacular, religion, lore, and the categories of rhythm-analysis, the everyday, and the 'production of space' proposed by Henri Lefebvre. One conclusion to draw is that these elements were finding unity in Violeta's work at just the time that postmodernism was emerging in the U.S. and separating the link between the national-popular and folk, which became resigned as a genre among the marketplace of consumer identities.

This process was initiated in Chile after 1973, where at first resistance figures under the dictatorship like Antonio Kadima and Raúl Zurita maintained links to the *nueva canción* aesthetic. At the same time, Nicanor's zig-zagging and abandonment of left vs. right battlements point to the vanished territory for socialist renewal under the new paradigm. Larraín's *Tony Manero (2008)* darkly captures the replacement styles and moods, to the point that when Patricio Guzmán returned to Chile in the 1990s he found that the young generation was unaware that Allende and the Unidad Popular had ever existed. The post-dictatorship governments were in need of heterogeneous national symbols, and a bifurcation obtained in which Neruda was separated from his communist content and deified, the same occurring later with Violeta and Roberto Matta, rendering the lofty symbols of Poetry a scholastic and tired standard. The youth spirit has today fled to Reggeaton, Trap and dances enjoyed by the exploited class like *perreo* (literally 'doggy-style grinding'), indelibly bound up with Afro-latino

[137] Interview with Violeta Parra conducted by Hubert Joanneton in Geneva, 1965.

identity.[138] That popular culture is replete with the rough, impolitic slang linked above to the jails and the contagion of narco-cultura; furthermore, its relationship to the communism championed by Violeta is ambiguous: it is rebellious and celebrates those who come from nothing, but is at odds with the appeasing, polished iconography of the left politicians. We have to remember that Carpentier's musical interests were ultra-modern, seeking to resuscitate not the classical forms but their innovative spirit. The inverse of that spirit is relevantly described in Lukács' unjustly maligned theory of decadence, where the vanguard's previously radical forms, like folk art, become hollowed out once separated from their mass base. Its bourgeois proponents, in turn, parasitically turn on the masses with increasing "aggression and pathos" while assuming a cloak of revolutionary culture that embellishes "rebellious extremism" the greater to avoid real looming social crises.[139]

The *Museo Violeta Parra* in Santiago today celebrates, "Violeta's paintings and papier-mâché sculptures bring to mind some of her Latin American contemporaries such as Ecuadoran master painter Oswaldo Guayasamím."[140] Her reception progresses from initial suppression, prior to the brief Unidad Popular period as the inspiration of Jara, Mercedes Sosa, and the late-'60s *nueva canción* wave, followed by the repression under the dictatorship of all in her generation that

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[138] Bofill Calero, Jaime. "Sin perreo no hay revolución." June, 2022. Website of the American Musicological Society. http://www.musicologynow.org

[139] While there is insufficient space here to properly treat the subject, decadence is the only concept at hand to describe the wild phenomena of our current social crisis, such as the United States' increasing justification of its assaults on the working class and foreign nations in the name of anti-imperialism and progressive values. But alongside this 'external' irrationalism is an equally pernicious repetition of domestic forms that with every passing year become more obsolete in regards to their material basis, and by this logic therefore that much more necessary. The superhero film genre that had seemingly exhausted itself early in the century after its launch, has on the grounds of this vapidity been taken up as a national helm that it would now be treasonous to dispose of. In distribution and energy, the wild expansion of data farms that suck up electricity are complemented by loud clamoring for renewable energy sources. And yet this becomes further and further distended from any notion of economy in the sense of planning, of distribution or construction that could give purpose and rationale to activity. Instant delivery results in abysmal efficiency of travel, yet this constitutes the unassailable province of the private, so that public policy has become the bizarre game of calling for systemic change nominally, while in practice sowing the impossibility of the merest alteration of the fundamental.
Citations from Lukács, Georg. *Destruction of Reason,* trans. Palmer, Peter R., Merlin Press, 1980.

[140] Museo Violeta Parra, Vicuña Mackenna 37, Santiago, Región Metropolitana, Chile.

recalled anything of Miguel Enríquez, and then as a neutral martyr rehabilitated by the center-left Concertación of Bachelet. The full recognition of her genius as a poet, painter, potter, sculptor, *folclorista,* and curator with the Clan Parra (the multi-generational predominance the family has gained over the national arts) and their *peñas* (tents or gatherings for dance and cultural exhibition) are today one of the living elements of Chilean identity in contest alongside Mapuche autonomy and a virile anarchist tradition, all of which find incorporation in the state's tourist-savvy funding for heritage projects.

O Brother Where art Thou?

Her older brother Nicanor is an important figure for understanding Violeta's work, and especially their place among a vanguardism unique to the Americas. In 1953, the same year that Violeta's production was radicalized, Nicanor published his landmark arrival *Poemas y anti-poemas* (although he had already traveled abroad as a physics scholar who 'also wrote poems'.) Nicanor's work is in its own way radically Communist, but in his exceptionally long life he changed his orientation many times, and refused association with any staid or ossified union of political art. Two aspects of his relationship with Violeta deserve commentary in this context: their collaboration, and the formal similarities of their work. Like his contemporary anti-poet, Enrique Lihn, Nicanor wanted to rip poetry from the lofty romanticism of Neruda and Mistral back to the streets and the colloquial. Anti-poetry, also a central element in the alchemy of Bolaño's gripping prose, has remained largely illegible to English readers. Nicanor anticipated the misprision that Chilean vanguardism would suffer in English contexts, telling Liz Werner in 2000 that conveying his work out of its context would have to be done by "anti-translation."[141]

[141] See Parra, Nicanor. *Antipoems,* Trans. Werner, Liz, New Directions, 2004. And Cabell, Patrick Mackessy. *Translations and Anti-translations of Nicanor Parra,* Max's Garage Press, Berkeley, 2019. Suspecting that a term like 'anti-translation' was demanded by Nicanor's work, my title preceded finding the mention in Werner, a nice bit of synchronous vindication.

Nicanor's early poems were first seen in the West as comparable to the free-verse and radicalism of Rexroth and the Beats. *Poemas y anti-poemas* is a form of auto-biography that might claim to be unrepeated in any other language. On one hand, it is poly-vocal, deploying the phraseology of commoners and affecting caricatures such as the stooped, balding school teacher of "Autorretrato." Caustic and formidable, the self-deprecation of that anti-hero is irresistible – a flawless prose entreating the reader with detailed precision: "Considerad, muchachos,/ Este gabán de fraile mendicante:/ Soy profesor en un liceo obscuro,/ He perdido la voz haciendo clases."

Elsewhere, the memory of his first sight of the ocean is recounted with such straight-forward description and narrative detail that the moment's drama and unadorned lyricism is captured in his father's own words:

> Descendimos del tren entre banderas
> Y una solemne fiesta de campanas
> Cuando mi padre me cogió de un brazo
> Y volviendo los ojos a la blanca,
> Libre y eterna espuma que a lo lejos
> Hacia un país sin nombre navegaba,
> Como quien reza una oración me dijo
> Con voz que tengo en el oído intacta:
> "Este es, muchacho, el mar". El mar sereno,
> El mar que baña de cristal la patria.

Like in Violeta's works, the geographical singularity of Chile is celebrated in its non-descript rendering of local color: The Atacama desert, the long coastline, and the natural boundary of the Andean *cordillera*, breaking into the volcanic archipelago south of Puerto Montt and the grand isle of Chiloé. Both siblings describe the earthquakes of this region, the maritime cuisine, and the rowers' celestial navigational routes. In various places, Nicanor is self-effacing, humble and vulnerable. "Epitafio" renders his life and death for the audience in the Chilean style of the national-popular, rescuing dignity from poverty. The voice that emerges from each is armed with

cunning, an intense conviction and rage against injustice. For all its surrealist invention, deflection, and purposeful fabrication, Nicanor's anti-poetry is compellingly personal, producing that symmetry of its elements that alerted Adorno to Truth Content. This technique of honesty is mirrored in the auto-biographical compositions of Violeta, which as we will see attest to a ramification of justice down through the smallest actions and aesthetic judgements, making her suicide an act of consequence and, in this sense, political in its deliberateness.

The first and third of 8 siblings, Nicanor and Violeta grew up poor with extended gaps in parental attention, moving several times in the central countryside. As a child Violeta played music with a can for coins and as a teen joined Nicanor in Santiago. Their creative overlapping and notoriety was played with in an experimental fashion. Notable examples are Nicanor's 1961 "Defense of Violeta Parra" and her setting of his poems to music. Poems and references to the other trio of Chilean poets (Mistral, Neruda, de Rothka) also appear in her music, for example in "Cueca de los poetas" (co-written with Nicanor). Violeta's talent is recognized in hindsight as a sure equal to that poetic pantheon, but during her life she was excluded, folk music having nowhere near the exaltation of poetry as the national pastime. In accompanying poems to music, we see an example of Violeta's notion of the national-popular as something living that is accessible to all, and a rejection of the bad opposites: either the pastoral folklore of a rustic, idealized past prior to modern social conflicts; or, poetry as province of the literate elite, associated with the nation's identity according to its rulers, and not the masses excluded from politics. Perhaps unknowingly, she was also violating the surrealist authority Andre Bretón's stricture to "prohibit all those poems set to music." In the 1944 essay "Silence is Golden," Bretón explicitly opposes the popularization of music delivered by radio in its dilution of the pure inner word of poetry.[142] "Inner music," however, would be favored both by Violeta, who is popularly associated as 'a bird that

[142] Breton, André. "Silence is Golden," *Music is Dangerous,* ed. Paul Nougé, New York: Peter Garland, 1973. Referenced in Brennan's introduction to Carpentier.

warbles', and elsewhere by Langston Hughes, who likewise took up the accompaniment of poetry as a sphere of experimental play. Carpentier would stand as an ambiguous middle figure here, clearly for the popular dissemination of radio music but also critical of the purist image of "inner music." In *Los pasos perdidos,* he mocks his protagonist's obsession with just this figure, a stodgy academic seeking the origin-point of human song: "He explained to me that the warbling was not that of a bird but of an instrument of fired clay with which the most primitive Indians of the hemisphere imitate the song of a bird before they set out to hunt it–this is a possessory rite to make the hunt propitious." Even Violeta's songs that most evoke the surrealist aesthetic such as "El diablo en el paraíso," appear on closer inspection as straddling the intersection of Hughes' joyful lyrical play on one hand, and the apocalyptic images of the country church's quotidian slips or ruptures of social leveling. In this sense, her gesture appears closer to Nicanor's ownership of vernacular language than the sensory disorientation favored by Bretón and Artaud.

Nicanor's inimitable voice, above all, finds its way into Violeta's form of self-presentation and auto-biography. Like Dostoevsky's underground man, Holden Caulfield, and Silvia Plath's narrators of *The Bell Jar* and *Ariel*, the voice in "El peregrino" that demands, then asks, then supplicates for our attention helps the ear of the reader find its calling in repaying this plea with close reading. Bolaño claimed he could never surpass this riveting effect of Don Nicanor's plain speech, which I like to say touches the ear (*o está cerca de la oreja),* and remains there like his father's voice above in "El Mar" ("voz que tengo en el oído intacta*").* As in "El peregrino," Violeta's entrances often begin with a formal introduction to the audience like "Señores y señoritas," as in "Yo canto a la diferencia," which Rodrigo Torres Alvarado calls "a public declaration of her artistic manifesto." Written in 1960 for the 150th commemoration of Chilean Independence, the song exhibits a lyrical breakthrough in the voice and message the song conveys. She introduces herself plainly with the intention of singing truths directly to the people:

Yo canto a la chillaneja	(I sing to those of Chillán)
Si tengo que decir algo	(When I have something to say)
Y no tomo la guitarra	(And I don't pick up the guitar)
Por conseguir un aplauso	(To receive applause)
Yo canto a la diferencia	(I sing to the difference)
Que hay de lo cierto a lo falso	(Of the true from the false)
De lo contrario no canto	(I sing for nothing else)

For Alvarado, this form of speech mirrors the effect of her aesthetics in the new climate of recorded sound, taken with constructing intensely manicured "beauty." Especially after WWII, a new music industry followed developments in reproduction and transmission, and Violeta's core gesture was the "negation of this typically stylized music." Silva recounts that Los Huasos Quincheros were emblematic of this "more commercial *música típica.*" Violeta's organic compositions represented an antithesis: organic, roots, locality, authentic. In "Yo canto a la differencia," these characteristics are shaped explicitly into an alternate vision of the nation, and it is a case where the seed planted bore fruit: Violeta become an indelible patriotic figure, and this nationalism for the lower classes was carried on and developed by her student Victor Jara. As with songs like "Según el favor del viento," the lyrics satirize Chile's most emblematic symbols, savaging their current pall of militarism, attacks on democracy, and the suffering of the poor. The final two stanzas end respectively with the couplet "cueca triste nacional" and "cueca larga militar," inverting patriotic pride into the shame of militarist nationalism and anticipating the approaching *macchina bellica* tragedy of the coup.

The Cueca is an important tradition of music and dance in Chile, performed in the frequent *carrete* (casual or formal social gatherings). Its origins lie in formal Spanish costumes and pair dancing common to the *Tango,* undergoing creolization in the Americas and the Andes in particular, spreading around Bolivia and the Southern Cone but nowhere with the degree of national bonding that occurs in Chile. The song and dance contain a complex, 4-part structure,

narrating the stages of courtship between the rooster and hen. In her folklorist presentation of the cueca, *La cueca presentada por Violeta Parra (1959),* Violeta names 4 distinct versions of the cueca's structure between popular and formal terms that are '*volontario'* or '*obligatorio'*, referring to aspects of the couple's courtship and whether they dance voluntarily or are obliged and arranged by the singer. The deep class divisions that have historically marked Chilean society – stark separation between the rich and poor masses, near absence of any middle class – are integral to the cueca's history. On the day of national tragedy of Sept. 11, 1973, the rich classes opposing the Unidad Popular danced cuecas in celebration. Under the dictatorship that followed, the popular cuecas were outlawed. In the 21st Century, young people have reclaimed the popular cueca, dancing in the public parks of Santiago at night in a mix of the intricate song structures with the inclusion of wayward passersby and alcohol sold from backpacks. Here, music again acts as a bridge for struggles across the historical rift of political repression, as following the Red Scare in the U.S.. For the generation of 2019 that wished to break with the conservatism passed down by Pinochet, the cueca may indeed symbolize that rejection. But in an example of the political implications of Carpentier's categories, Violeta's presentation by the governing Concertación severed her ultra-modern ambitions from a backwards-gazing preserve of folklore that is decidedly passé.

Violeta was not content to merely archive the older material and, already by 1958 at the behest of Nicanor, she composed an autobiography in the innovative format of *Décimas y centésimas* that shows her restlessly breaking with convention in a variety of manners.[143] The guitar can strum musical breaks between the poetic material, which has not lost its connection to its raw

[143] This is an important moment in the transposition of Carpentier's categories to Violeta. Speaking specifically of the *décimas,* Carpentier notes their lyric innovation is contrasted by the utter static of their musical diversity. Thus, without the musical élan Violeta brings to the *décimas,* they constitute a prime example for Carpentier of a staid folklore. Nonetheless, one might detect a fatalism in her efforts to resuscitate a dying popular culture in the years in which objective conditions ultimately conspired to snuff it out.

elements, although in the 1964 recording her voice and tone are more melancholic. There is a free play with rhyme and the flexibility of the Spanish language, and the mere joy of freedom found in counting. In Spanish the verb *contar* is both to count, and to narrate or give account of. Counting here becomes a lurid act, accounting for shapes and figures of mathematical precision, the numerology of the church, the many Chilenismos, lost melodies, the simplicity of dances (one, two, three), structured and formal, all to allow for a further exploration of the artist's life, which is not complete without introspection, heartbreak, suffering, and ecstasy. Out of the long line of *decimistas* and *decimeros*, Violeta carved out her own role as a *centesimista*. The centésimas were introduced live on Radio Universidad de Concepción in 1958, a reminder of radio's importance for linking Chile's rural communities as it continued to in much of Latin America, and in Haiti even into the 21st Century.

> "Mario Céspedes: Las centésimas no tienen este carácter autobiográfico que ustedes han podido apreciar en las décimas. La centésima, repetimos, forma nueva de poesía popular, creo que por primera vez es explotada dentro de nuestras formas literarias populares.
> Violeta: En el folklore yo he encontrado unas décimas que hablaban del uno al diez. De ahí la idea que me dio a mi de hacer del uno al cien o al mil, porque después voy a seguir con las milésimas. Entonces, hasta el diez teníamos que existe en el folklore. Pero esto de las centésimas es totalmente mía, con la insinuación de Nicanor que no se le va ninguna a este matemático."[144]

We see here again that the folklore of the peasantry is unitary with her vanguardism (as opposed to the connotation of an artistic elite with pedantic or condescending relationship to the masses), and that it draws in her rivalry with Nicanor as well. Their experimentalism is affectionate, competitive, and like the *paya*, based in the language games that can one-up the opponent. *Paya* were songs or décimas recited improvisationally against an opponent with boasts, insults, or caricatures with similarities to the Cuban *bufo*. There were also Cuban *décimas* used as public narration in the streets by the commoners to mock the Spanish royalty and celebrate the black and creole guerrillas against the British invasion of 1762. The décimas

[144] Entrevista a Violeta realizada en 1958 por Mario Céspedes en Radio Universidad de Concepción.

also recall the Appalachian “toasts,” an oral tradition common in the 19th and early 20th Centuries closely linked by Robin D.G. Kelley to popular folklore’s enamoration with the ‘Bad man’, rebel, and outlaw – unbreakable people’s heroes from Leadbelly’s “Staggerlee” up to the ‘90s gangster rapper, which in turn resemble the champions of the toiling classes in Brecht’s Engelbrecht and Peter Weiss’s Hercules.[145]

In her analysis of Violeta’s *Décimas*, Paula Miranda compares their act of composition to the sewing and needlework of crochet. “Texto y tejido guardan la misma etimología y no es casual que Violeta recurra a la imagen de la costura para explicar la forma en que se construye su arte…La narración es dispersa y los relatos se van entretejiendo a la manera de un gran collage, de un tapiz.”[146] Thus, Miranda again links this form of avant-garde production to the common trades and producers, emphasizing the narrative capacity of these mediums, like *muralismo,* to be employed in strategies of national liberation. Violeta was also familiar with the *paya* of the *huasos,* who are rangers often known as the Chilean gauchos. Her word-play in the *décimas* is reminiscent of Dylan’s contemporaneous acapella “Last Thoughts on Woody Guthrie,” and, if less rustic than Atahualpa’s milonga, is more forward-looking.[147]

Atahualpa is an important precedent for Violeta in several ways. First, in his tilt towards and proximity with the peasantry and the indigenous, he anticipates some of her interests, such as these formal similarities in *payada*. While Atahualpa is a mestizo with Quechua and Basque roots, Violeta is half-Mapuche, and that culture constitutes a central autonomous indigenous ‘other’ in both countries. Violeta had no formal education: “Yo no soy oradora, no fui a la escuela. Es tan poco lo que sé como para estar integrando este grupo tan valioso de las claves

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[145] Kelley, Robin D.G.. *Race Rebels,* New York: Free Press, 1994.
[146] Miranda, Paula. "Décimas autobiografiadas de Violeta Parra: Tejiendo diferencias." *Revista de la Facultad de Filosofía y Humanidades,* Universidad de Chile, Indice Nº13, Verano, 2000.
[147] The *payada* form of gaucho literature from which the milonga descends is also written in *décimas*.

para el conocimiento del hombre de Chile… soy de un barrio popular.”[148] Atahualpa’s father worked with horses and the railroad, giving him an education especially in musical training. Second, as an active member of the Communist Party of Argentina who at times sought exile, they share a political commitment. Atahualpa took part in the uprising of the *hermanos Kennedy* in 1932 and was jailed many times, surpassing Violeta in this manner of engagement. Under the first Perón government, the authorities left his right hand permanently damaged. “Buscaban deshacerme la mano pero no se percataron de un detalle: me dañaron la mano derecha y yo, para tocar la guitarra, soy zurdo.”[149] This caused him to alter his playing technique. Like Guayasamín and Violeta, he brought the material of the impoverished *villas* to residencies in Paris. He greatly influenced Argentine culture, in part through his mark on the younger Mercedes Sosa, who took Violeta and Atahualpa as signal inspirations.

If Violeta’s presence was felt in Argentina where she exhibited paintings and appeared in interviews on radio and television, it was not the only country to participate in the *nueva canción* movement she had started in Chile. When used broadly, the term typically refers to the neo-folk wave of the late ‘60s/early ‘70s that strongly defended the continent’s Communist movement, guerrillas, liberation fighters, natural splendor and the right to dignity and peace, while opposing U.S. imperialism, local inequality, militarism, and fascism. Some of the Chilean musicians that studied with Violeta and Margot Loyola and then promoted the movement include Rolando Alarcón, Silvia Urbina, Inti Illmani, Quilapayún, and Victor Jara. Figures from other countries that were strongly influenced by her include Los Jairas of Bolivia, Daniel Viglietti of Uruguay, Soledad Bravo of Venezuela, and Sosa.

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[148] Conversation with Mario Cespedes, Radio Universidad de Concepción, 1958. *Op. cit.*
[149] “Charla #1 *Infancia y Juventud*,” introducida por su hijo Roberto Chavero. Biografía de la Fundación Yupanqui, Cerro Colorado, Córdoba, Argentina.

In Carpentier's discomfort with the primacy Cuba had gained as representative of Latin Music at the expense of others, he emphasized that much of what was genuine about music from the U.S. had roots in the Afro-Caribbean. If Violeta's productions made explicit their Chilean character, this did not come across as a simple rejection of the values and beliefs associated with the West. That can be seen most clearly in her subversion and recasting of Christian symbolism. Rarely the facile desecration of sacred imagery sometimes found in Western atheism, Violeta's handling strips the church of authority but also invites it to participate in a humble divinity that she locates among those lacking bread. Again we are reminded of Carpentier's insistence that there is a Latin American surrealism anterior to and by many metrics superior to the European variant. In many ways, the inversion of religious symbols follows her treatment of Chilean patriotism, celebrating the lower and popular classes as the institution's real foundation. This has some parallels with Guthrie, Baez, and Dylan, exploiting Christianity's millenarianism and rescuing its promises of social leveling and moral edification. In many of the rural songs, the church and its representatives resemble humorous aspects of village life, contained within its laws and thus denied unearthly powers. This is the meaning of Manns' phrase "the religious-ingenuous"; it has its innocence restored, and is thus better complemented with "the socio-political." In "Julián Grimau," she insults the Pope for complicity in the crimes of fascism, "¿Qué dirá el Santo Padre, que vive en Roma, mientras están degollando a su paloma?"

Here again is the inescapable transmission of *chilenismos*, symbols and metaphors uniquely bound to the national experience. As a curator of folklore, Violeta became even more a source of Chilean identity for other artists.[150] The avarice of the Vatican and its rapacious predation on

[150] Image: Unknown mural typical of the Brigada Ramona Parra, the artistic arm of the Chilean Communist Party youth wing. *El primer gol del pueblo Chileno*, more famous, massive, and emblematic of

the innocent dove is the subject of one of Bolaño's fabulously hyper-real renditions in *Nocturno de Chile* – emblematic of the fallen dove's deeply symbolic imbrication with the transition from the Unidad Popular to the military junta.

At the same time, many of her songs maintain reverence for the powers conveyed by Christian scripture, which are often brought down both to the peasants on earth, such as in her recitation of "Old Testament verses," "los del más antiguo acento/ que del concilio al detento/ San Mateo da razón/ Del penitente el perdón/ con San Paulo predicaron," and to the natural wonders of Chilean geography, such as in "Cueca diabla" (credited to her brother Roberto), "En el canal Bío-Bío/ mataron al chute Alberto,/ lo dejaron bocabajo/ para que no cuente el cuento…/ Le ha reza'o un rosario/ el cabro Uladio." Borrowing from Nicanor, she termed these songs *Cantos a lo divino y a lo humano*, an expression of personal devotion as well as a firm rod of conduction to transmit Chilean musical traditions. Christian scripture similarly served Nicanor as poetic material to subvert and reformulate for many years, for example *Sermones y prédicas del Cristo de Elqui* in 1977.

Suicide

The religious also becomes a fantasy space for her own spiritual labors. In some of her final lines, Christianity is a symbolic order assisting in her beatific phasing between realms, "Así es la vida entonces, espinas de Israel, amor crucificado, corona del desdén, los clavos del martirio, el vinagre y la hiel." In her suicide trilogy ("Run run se fue pa'l norte," "Volver a los 17" and "Gracias a la vida"), the formal elements achieve a symmetry that recall her conjoining of the human and the divine. Those compositions complete her appropriation of Chilean folklore begun

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the culture war, was painted in 1971 by the BRP and Roberto Matta, destroyed shortly after the coup and restored in 2005.

in 1953, and her own act of divinization. The formal accomplishments of the final compositions are seen above all in “Volver a los 17.” The verse follows an elegant rhyme structure A-B-B-A-A-C-C-D-D-C, seen here in the first verse:

> Volver a los diecisiete
> después de vivir un siglo
> es como descifrar signos
> sin ser sabio competente.
> Volver a ser de repente
> tan frágil como un segundo,
> volver a sentir profundo
> como un niño frente a Dios,
> eso es lo que siento yo
> en este instante fecundo.

Sub-labeled a *sirilla* after a traditional song form collected in Chiloé,[151] the décima order follows the espinela rhyme originating in Spain’s Golden Age. However, cut across the rhyme structure is a melodic alteration that adds another layer of emphasis. Chord changes and inversions after the 4th, 8th, and 9th lines render several of the lyrical images more surprising. The lyrics describe in frigid detail Violeta’s ascension following death to a returned state of innocence at the age of 17. The love that is the source of her pain and despair is here transformed into a saving grace, “Love is a whirlwind of purifying originality. Even the most ferocious animal coos its sweet trill. It halts wanderers and frees prisoners.” A vocal range at once fragile and overpowering creates a still echo that draws one into close listening. There, the careful witness picks up on the line “the arc of alliances has penetrated my nest” as a link to the betrayal of her heart that is causing her swan-like evaporation.

[151] Most accounts of Violeta’s trip to Chiloé with Loyola in 1958 credit her with rescuing and restoring the *sirilla* and *rin,* the first sung and the second instrumental. See *Mapping Violeta Parra’s Cultural Landscapes,* ed. Vilches, Patricia. The traditional dance is done with handkerchiefs and zapateo. As usual, Nicanor goes further and shows the *sirilla* to be a cross between Spanish and Araucanian styles: “Look how they move from one to the other, how naturally that happened! How they become deeper as they pass from the slightly picturesque Spanish feel to the earthy Araucanian feel.” *Violeta Parra Life and Work*, ed. Dillon, Lorna. Boydell & Brewer, 2017.

“Gracias a la vida” is her best-known song, and formally many of the comments on “Volver a los 17” would also apply. Worth mentioning is the subtlety with which this ode to lived experience grazes the act of suicide. Taken in the context of the lovers’ quarrel with Favre narrated most explicitly in “Run Run se fue pa’l norte,” the otherwise painless encounter with the ‘Tú’ being addressed transforms into a moment of soul destruction, essentially causing the termination of beloved life that must now be bid adieu. “Gracias a la vida/ que me ha dado tanto/ me ha dado la marcha/ de mis pies cansados/ con ellos anduve/ ciudades y charcos/ playas, montañas, desiertos y llanos/ y la casa tuya, tu calle y tu patio.” Was the lover here surprised in an act of betrayal or some such glimpse of broken faith? The most crucial and personal moment of the narrative is artfully made into the most banal and understated. These three undisputed masterpieces each touch in different ways on the catalyst of her rupture and the irreversibility of her course towards suicide months later in 1967, just as the Unidad Popular she had helped mobilize at last began its successful push into power.

Is Violeta’s suicide best understood as a revolutionary act, a personal tragedy, or a precise determination on its Chilean conjuncture? Comparisons to Debord, Elliott Smith, and Jara according to these three valences bear out its unexamined significance. In determination of purpose, her execution resembles the French revolutionary Guy Debord, whose prodigious works have not resulted in appropriate attention to his own act of suicide in 1994. This aligns with the spectacular reception of his revolutionary theory that emphasized the Situationists’ scandal and outrage against the art world and academicism, but downplayed his self-conception as a committed revolutionary and especially his mature work as a filmmaker. The decisiveness that would accompany the instructions left behind after his final act was present as one of the defining features of his early revolutionary practice. It is a diamond-hard resolve that resembles the suicide note of Violeta published after 50 years by the journalist Sabine Drysdale. Debord’s swagger and self-assuredness rejected the limits of common sense guarding individual ambition

as well as the power of collective transformation. The social meaning of his theoretical production has been well discussed in works like Anselm Jappe's *Debord: Revolutionary*. On the individual side however, he notes that the concept of the spectacle rendered capital as a totalizing force, but also one vulnerable to being overthrown by, among other things, "revolutionary theory." And to this he maintained an iron-clad commitment to producing, defending and advancing it in late works like *Comments…* and *Panegyric,* but also in drafting a film language that could counteract and *detourne* the tremendous ideological potential of cinema.

In that sense, Debord is a key figure in our broader discussion of the reification and astroturfing of everything 'revolutionary,' because he anticipated this destruction of his own work and sought therefore a form through which to cheat the death of his spirit. *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* took on this advanced form of the spectacle that would declare victory after the Cold War, where the state's blithe self-projection as an apolitical arbitrator without special interests in fact masked its increasing collusion with mafias and overt corruption, which in turn rely on manipulating and posing as a radical opposition. Written off as increasingly paranoid and conspiratorial, Debord had evidence that the murder of his friend and film producer Gerard Lebovici in 1984 was an act of repression by the French section of NATO's Operation Gladio, carrying out covert, extrajudicial operations against effective subversives like Pierre Goldman, Henri Curiel, Jacques Messrine, and his own interrelated circle. Intervening directly in revolts and major scandals for the states of Portugal, Italy, and Spain, his later writings demonstrate a sophisticated campaign of counter-espionage on behalf of the revolutionary party. In 1994, suffering from pain and illness, he chose the exact time and reception of his death, ensuring that an auto-biographical film piece articulating his political intentions would be screened on French

television just afterwards.[152] Rather than rendering the spectacle invulnerable, these gestures do the opposite, making it a form of transmission for revolutionary consciousness that preserves Debord's position as outside of and a danger to the capitalist mode of production. His sincerity in this self-identity is evocative of Violeta's, a quality that proves capable of undermining the process of reification.

Sincerity and vulnerability also link Violeta to one of the many musical suicides of the U.S.'s late 20th century alternative rock genre. One of a handful of commercial and critical indie successes during the '90s, Elliott Smith saw a retrospective decade vaunting his songwriting as the signal achievement of a generation begin following his suicide in 2003. By that time, digital distribution had again altered the form of production and listening habits. Songs that entreat of devastating emotional abuse subtly cloaked in narco-narratives of drug addiction have found new audiences through the self-selecting streaming form, such as YouTube, that allows for unfiltered close listening, repetition, and chat-room confessional responses.

There is a particular melancholic response to suicide where survivors revisit the now preserved-in-time declarations of death's inevitability. When the victim is an artist, audiences can vicariously access this often-repressed but fundamental truth of finite existence. These preoccupations, in the frame of digital media, inform Mark Fisher's ruminations on the concept of hauntology. Building on Jameson's definition of postmodernism as the drying up of formally radical modernism, Fisher identifies the unresolved questions latent in the old forms being recycled (anachronisms like the Ghost Story being typical) as haunting consumers, who are in turn increasingly private and isolated – further compounding the effect of being trapped with the

[152] An in-depth discussion of Debord's late work, Lebovici, and the Gladio connection can be found in my interview with the translator of Debord's letters, Bill Brown. Cabell, Pat (Host). "ATEOH Interviews: A Discussion on the Situationist International with Bill Brown." *After the End of History,* Season 4, Ep. 3, May, 2024.

feelings produced.[153] In this sense, the *peña* de las Parras and the growing climate of *poder popular* made Violeta's tent in La Reina a site of living music, recalling Smith's Promethean pursuit of cathexis with the ideal listener. That ideal is elaborately drawn in Kafka's story, "Josefine, die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse," where the process of group formation as an audience or people is fused with individual suffering. A skilled guitarist capable of performing highly complex compositions without accompaniment, Smith's albums varied from primarily pared down acoustics to at times more elaborate and symphonic productions. At the core of his aesthetic is a pain to be displayed before quiet reverence, incongruent with the festive, chaotic disposition of a rock venue.

Music is arguably always live at the time of its recording, and part of Smith's digital legend are the discoveries of concert moments where the artist's kinetic performance finds a pure convergence with those listening, as in friendship where affectual services are exchanged in both directions. The unreleased songs capture the artist narrating his abuse and offering a map for rebuilding trust, where listening constitutes a melancholic act of recovering what was lost. With less sound production or metaphors disguising the pain, the act of rediscovering a lost one constitutes here a retrieval of the beloved from being discarded. In Violeta's case, her first children Isabel and Ángel, excoriated in her last letter, continued the musical collaborations and projects in process at the time of her death. Ángel was detained for several months upon the military coup, and the two participated in the musical activism of the vast Chilean exile community afterwards. Isabel's powerful vocal provides the closest version available of several posthumous songs such as "La lavandera," "Solitario, solo," and "Lo que más quiero," this last recounting a desire for death in perfect literary meter. Here, the beloved is lost not only as a friend and family, but a compatriot amidst social rupture, as we will see momentarily.

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[153] Fisher, Mark. "What is Hauntology?" *Film Quarterly*, University of California Press, Vol. 66, No. 1, Fall 2012. And Fisher, Mark. *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures.* Zero Books, 2014. On Jameson, see "Postmodernism; or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism."

In each case, there is a circularity and inevitability to the movement by the artist towards self-harm that, through the digital replay can be more and more compulsively repeated. This is the flip-side of the repair that is available for the injured who can sublimate through words or art and find externalization in others. But, the grief of violation is so great that the high artistic achievements nonetheless leave a significant remainder of the repressed that cannot find redemption in the present through life. Solitude, loneliness, betrayal, slipped memories, damaged self-worth: all these states that have been deployed against revolutionary solidarity nonetheless have an autonomous character that can resist reification in the manner of other sincere declarations. Considerations of the national-popular through music must reckon with the prominent challenge to collectivization demonstrated by this audience-artist bond over a content that seeks the destruction of self, and a digital form that, as Chitty showed, is only anti-social in appearance.

Violeta's death is situated, however disparately, between these two suicides, one archly political and the other personal. Neither Debord nor Smith, however, contend with her centrality in defining a national identity. That element necessitates that we dwell briefly on the national tragedy that her student Victor Jara's death has become an inextricable symbol of. Above all it is the Chilean social context that links their deaths, especially when considering Huey Newton's concept of revolutionary suicide, which he develops out of Durkheim's conclusion that "the primary cause of suicide is not individual temperament but forces in the social environment. In other words, suicide is caused primarily by external factors." In this paradigm, the Third World (to which he links the Black population within the U.S.) engages in a homicidal defense against the imperialist United States. The defeatist resignation to that irrational fate (of the minority ruling class) is a renunciation of the revolutionary principle and instead signifies a reactionary suicide. For the fighters of Vietnam, Chile, or the Black Panthers, "It is better to oppose the

forces that would drive me to self-murder than to endure them… Revolutionary suicide does not mean that I and my comrades have a death wish; it means just the opposite. We have such a strong desire to live with hope and human dignity that existence without them is impossible."[154]

Violeta's death comes midway in the long '60s decade between the Cuban Revolution and the U.S. coup in Chile.[155] Her links to Cuba and the Third World struggle were taken up by her children, Jara, and the Unidad Popular, as seen in the 1971 Homenaje en la Casa de las Américas en La Habana. Her tapestries would be preserved in Cuba for the duration of the dictatorship, avoiding the fate of Roberto Matta's murals; just as Cuba housed the production of that invaluable document of realist cinema, Guzmán's *La batalla de Chile.* She left behind impactful cultural spaces like La Peña de los Parra and La Carpa in La Reina, Santiago that she planned to raise into a National University of Folklore, movements which only continued to flourish after her death, but which the dictatorship rapidly stomped out. Those attacks must be taken in the context primarily of the physical repression of the MIR and FPMR, as well as the elimination of political opponents like Alberto Bachelet and Eduardo Frei, but also the popular culture front that Victor Jara fought on.

Within the Chilean national identity, Jara cut a figure uniquely bonded with the popular element of human dignity. Darker-skinned than the half-Mapuche Violeta, Jara resembles the majority of Chile, which is starkly divided between two distinct skin tones and classes. Combining pride with humility, Jara inverted this hierarchy in the classic sense of a people's hero, such as Hercules in Weiss's *Aesthetics of Resistance,* a symbol of "having little and being much" as a socialist horizon for the multitudes. The Unidad Popular saw at last an entrance to the political process for the mining proletariat, artisan *pescaderos,* the landless peasants, and the residents of the

[154] Newton, Huey P.. *Revolutionary Suicide*, Writers & Readers, 1995.
[155] See Appendix B.

poor barrios who above all espied the intervention of the military and sought weapons in advance to defend their gains. Jara's heartbreaking paean to the penniless children "que comen tierra y gusanos," "Luchín," clinches the formation of a proletarian class-consciousness that was rapidly and powerfully finding its means of expression, signals of solidarity, and confidence in its self-organization. Pinochet's success is often underestimated in its targeting and elimination of a highly mobilized population with state power and flanks of militant organizations. Communist celebrities like Jara and Pablo Neruda were quickly dispatched, as were party leaders like Allende and Miguel Enríquez of the MIR, and potential rivals with military and diplomatic profiles like Orlando Letelier and Carlos Prats were exiled and assassinated. This foreclosed the communist horizon narrated in this chapter, which we find sundered in the living art of the national-popular. Their deaths were not forfeited to the enemy, adhering to Newton's definition of revolutionary suicide, and leave us valuable instructions on how it can be reawakened.

Chapter 3.

Karl Marx and the Creole Republics

Abstract: This chapter analyzes the independence of New Spain from the critical vantage opened in Chapter 1's discussion of *El siglo de las luces.* What did independence accomplish, and what tasks did it leave unfinished? This question and its implications are traced through a reconstruction of a vital debate within Latin American Marxism. Sparked by an overlooked attack by Marx on the icon of Simón Bolívar, the diverging stances taken by José Aricó and Álvaro García Linera, two of the southern continent's leading theorists, offer complementary determinations of Latin American reality. At the core of this debate is the class position of the indigenous peasantry and their failed assimilation under the nation-building project. A framework emerges from these thinkers that mirrors the dualistic causality of events in Carpentier's novel: an interpenetrating cycle of Great Power contests for economic dominance and the self-determination of civil society. This conflict is manifested in a development towards the United States' assumption of the colonial system and its reorganization along new guidelines, situating the world of Carpentier's early formation. The literary realism defined in Chapter 1 is met here with the shrewd political realism of the Marxist tradition, which grasps the historical determination of Latin American reality by the failure of realizing the universalist ambitions of independence.

Introduction

The first part of this dissertation offers a Marxist reading strategy to revitalize our understanding of Carpentier as a replacement for the post-structuralist approach of Echevarría. Chapter 1

situates Latin American reality as the central concept of his work, in place of the better known *real maravilloso* and *barroco americano,* conducting a materialist reading of independence as a centrally ambiguous event in the American theater of world history. In Chapter 2, I explore Carpentier's concept of Latin American reality through its cultural and musical expressions. To the extent that this reality is defined by its endogenous vanguard, extant nature, and national-popular character, it is also structured by its subjugation in the world-system to U.S. hegemony. In this chapter, I bring these strands together with insight from a key debate in Latin American Marxism to argue that the ambiguities of the independence struggle are the origin of Latin American reality. I demonstrate the congruence of this thesis with Marx's own analysis of Latin America, which deserves wider reception. In doing so, I show how a) Latin America expands what was previously believed about Marx's global thinking, b) Marxism holds a useful theorization of the place of American independence in world history, c) this reading of Latin American reality reveals the continent's contributions to a 21st century socialist alternative to capitalism.

Marx's writings about Latin America are relatively minimal and are not widely known. José María Aricó, responsible for the wide reception of Gramsci in Argentina and the rest of Latin America, published a book in 1982 called *Marx y América latina,* which offered a summation of Latin America's place in Marx's thought and a program for improving its theorization. It is a signal work in the canon of Latin American Marxism. Below, I reconstruct Aricó's critique of Marx and point out its contributions and shortcomings. My criticism relies in part on an incisive rejoinder to Aricó by Álvaro García Linera (AGL) that has not been translated in English. I introduce other writings by Marx that were not the subject of either thinker's intervention. Finally, I argue that this debate improves our understanding of Marx's thought and what Latin America can contribute to socialist construction in the 21st Century.

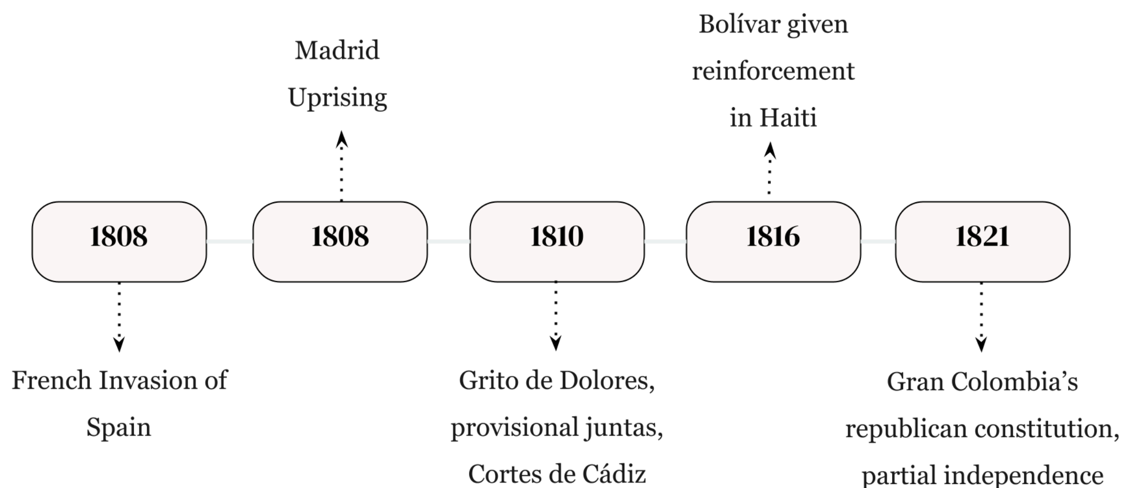
Chapter 1's reading of Carpentier demonstrated the link connecting the truncated movements for independence and abolition with the character of social reality in Latin America that prevails over the ensuing centuries. The vicissitudes of independence are entangled in the dynamic that Neil Davidson poses as, 'How Revolutionary were the Bourgeois Revolutions?'[156] Furthermore, the contradictions of the outcome are often condensed into the image of the passage's symbolic hero, Simón Bolívar. Just as with Victor Hugues in *El siglo de las luces* who rises to this level of a 'world-historical individual' for several years during the Caribbean campaigns, but whose fallibility is ultimately exposed against the monumentality of the events in motion, Bolívar assumes a current of identity with the continent's liberation in his ambitions for a united nation capable of exercising influence on the world stage.

The ambiguities of national independence receive an exceptionally nuanced examination in the Aricó–García Linera debate. The distinct experiences of Argentina and Bolivia in the 20th Century inflect each native thinker in different directions over Marx's article and the question of independence more broadly. AGL's and Aricó's respective relationships to Bolivian and Argentine national liberation struggles, including their domestic guerrilla armies, are instructive in their articulation of key components of Latin American reality, from the character of national development, the creole bourgeoisie, the peasantry and former slaves to the indigenous composition of civil society. Those categories are later weighed with respect to the Cuban Revolution and Carpentier's milieu in the conclusion.

Little known at first, the Bolívar article owes its notoriety to Aricó's seminal 1982 account of Marxism on the continent, *Marx y América latina*. In the first section below, I discuss some of the general controversies surrounding the text, and the positions that Aricó and AGL take on its

[156] Davidson sees in the Peninsular War "the ambivalence of the bourgeoisie to the revolutions that bear their name."

portrayal of independence and Latin American reality. I begin by reconstructing Marx's essays on the Spanish Revolution, which to Aricó's chagrin were published in compendium with the Bolívar article. I then look at Marx's "forgotten work," *Herr Vogt*, investigating its references to Bolívar and arguing that its struggle against Bonapartism reveals a missing context of the debate. This leads to a section that glosses Marx's *Kovalevsky Notebooks* and their presentation by AGL, which sheds light on the possible continuity between ancient and future communist forms in the Americas. In conclusion, I consider how AGL and Aricó's distinct experiences shape their approach to these questions, and offer a novel assessment of their positions.



The Agent of Independence

In 1858, Marx wrote his commentaries on the life and military campaign of Bolívar alongside the multiple entries he and Engels made to the *New American Cyclopaedia.*[157] García Linera (AGL) notes that Marx's biography was marked by uncharacteristic errors and biases, crafting a vision of Bolívar as something of a "Napoleon of defeat."

> One thing that inescapably catches the attention is Marx's deep aversion towards Bolívar after 1811: it seems as if Marx's intention is to destroy the heroic myth of his greatness. From one episode to the next, Marx underscores Bolívar's constant displays of cowardice, abandoning his troops, hiding from combat before his enemies, prolonging the war with his indecisions, on and on.

AGL comes to this position via an engagement with Aricó's seminal text, *Marx and Latin America,* which concludes that Marx's initial materialism in approaching Latin American history is outstripped by the influence of Hegel in regarding history as abstract syntheses. Aricó notes that one concrete influence on the writing, over and above Marx's limited access to detailed histories of the Americas, is his hostility to the militaristic and despotic role of Bonapartism in the French Second Empire, which he had criticized fiercely during the 1850s. García Linera instead sees Marx engaged in "an immanent critique" of the prevailing European ideology.[158] Indeed, if Marx determined that the creole elite represented by Bolívar had little interest in the emancipation of the majority population, his late studies came to see that same social base experimenting with a proto-socialist path of development that was derailed by European adventurism. The 1850s saw both reactionary states like Russia and the pseudo-progressive France championing national independence, as a means to their own ends, leading Marx to

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[157] Marx, Karl. "Bolívar y Ponte," from the folio Marx & Engles, *Materiales para la historia de América latina* in *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente*, No. 30. Córdoba, 1972.

[158] "That the critical stance Marx takes against Bolívar coincides formally with those assumed by European expansionist ideals and the republican liberals who saw in Bolívar an authoritarian, a crypto-monarchist and an obstacle to European expansion, should not make us forget that Marx's position is founded on rejecting the state's autonomization and a conception of society's vitality, which goes beyond the narrowly framed assessments of the bourgeois intellect and, in fact, carries out an immanent critique of that mentality's foundations." García Linera, Álvaro. "América," *De demonios escondidos y momentos de revolución. Marx y la revolución social en las extremidades del cuerpo capitalista,* La Paz: Ofensiva Roja, 1991. [All translations, mine.]

judge these developments by their content – the vitality of the popular forces participating – rather than by the form of independence as such.

AGL and Aricó both agree with Marx that post-independence Latin American reality is constituted by, "an inexplicable multiplication of extremely weak states managed by restricted oligarchies lacking in national spirit or by caudillos, usually military leaders [...]"[159] Thus, as argued in Chapter 1, the dynamic of underdevelopment that the US-led world order would perpetuate and encourage is first apparent in the truncated results of the independence struggle.[160] More precisely, the forms of class capture and recuperation that restricted the outbreak of a social explosion between 1781 and 1821 continue to be employed in limiting independent national development. For Aricó, that the authoritarian nature of Latin American societies can be explained by their character of state-formation leads to the conclusion that, "Hegel, not Marx, was right regarding the State as producer of the nation and civil society." AGL counters that, in insisting on the vitality of civil society as the force capable of nation-building, Marx grasped the peculiarity of Latin American reality following independence: that the states largely left for the future the project of national construction, and managed merely a formal extension of the local elites' existing powers and needs.[161] Indeed, for AGL the process of nation-building is, "only completed late in the 20th Century, or in some places is still ongoing,"

[159] Aricó, *Marx y América latina, op. cit.,* pp. 106-7 [my translation.]

[160] While I explore this claim further in the Vogt section, it is noteworthy that one of the signal analyses of astroturfing, Vincent Bevins' *If We Burn: The Mass Protest Decade and the Missing Revolution,* traces the tactic from the U.S.'s Arab Spring counter-revolution back to Marx's *18th Brumaire*: "Those who cannot represent themselves will be represented."

[161] "Is it not rather that the image of the arbitrary nature of state constructions and leaving for the future the emergence of conditions for real nation-building has nothing to do with Hegelian "peoples without history" and is rather the real understanding of the role of civil society in the nation-state formation? In other words, Marx's notion of the Latin American states as formations more obviously and formally sustained by a centralized authoritarian will than by the condensation of general social initiative and, therefore, the unfinished, or better, unrealized nature of nation-state construction as a future endeavor, is not a momentary Hegelian slip (which does not negate the inclusion of Hegel's rationality) so much as an addition of organic assessments to Marxist theory that account for national reality." García Linera. "América," *Op. cit.*

especially where states formally enclosed the extensive pre-Columbian Andean societies without integrating them.

How does this debate situate the genesis of Latin American reality as arising from the vicissitudes of independence? Grasping the nuance of that connection requires a reconstruction of Marx's original writings, as well as where both AGL and Aricó intervene, and some additional context that neither mention. Aricó's charges against the Bolívar article can be answered by a close reading of three of Marx's other works that touch on its theme. The first charge is of Eurocentrism and bears on the article's pairing with Marx's essays on the Spanish Revolution. The second is Marx's obsession with Bonapartism, for which I turn to the work *Herr Vogt* in which Bolívar is compared to the Bonapartists. The third is his purported Hegelian determinism, famously described in the historical stages of *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy.* In fact, the Bolívar article's plain biographical style is far afield from any philosophical jargon, and it is merely Aricó's explanation of its errors that "refers us to that never finished dialogue Marx had with Hegel;"[162] which in turn prompted AGL to redress Hegel's influence.[163] Aricó is very likely influenced here by the work of Roman Rosdolsky that he had just published, where Engels' epithet against Slavs as 'reactionary peoples' is argued to stem from Hegel's 'non-historic

[162] *Marx y América latina,* p. 149: "A partir de la significativa 'ausencia' en la reflexión marxiana de una región de decisiva importancia en la conformación del cosmos burgués, hemos tratado de reconstruir una lectura *aparentemente* no explicitada que hizo Marx de la realidad latinoamericana, lectura que, sorpresivamente, nos remite a ese diálogo, a veces explícito y por lo general implícito, pero nunca acabado, que Marx sostuvo con Hegel. Es interesante destacar cómo detrás de la subrepticia recuperación de la noción de 'pueblos sin historia', o del rechazo del papel del Estado como instancia productora de la sociedad civil, presentes en la lectura *in absentia* de Marx, es el Hegel supuestamente 'superado' quien emerge como un sustrato cultural insuperado, como un componente inseparable de aquellos prejuicios originados en la formación ideológica y cultural del pensamiento marxiano."
[163] Furthermore, Aricó's assertions of Eurocentrism, abstract Hegelianism, etc, have been accepted by readers like Martín Cortés in place of investigating Marx's actual statements, conforming all too easily with the 1980s anti-Marxist turn to the deconstructive theories that were promoted by the coups in Argentina and Chile. Cortés, glossing Aricó uncritically, gives the impression that the Bolívar article contains Hegelian language: "The philosophical legacy of Hegel…present in Marx ever since his earliest texts, surfaced most clearly in his 1858 writings on Bolivar." That assumption conforms with impulsive defenses of Bolívar as a native son against Marx the foreign interloper. Cortés, Martín. *José Aricó and the New Latin American Marxism*, trans. Allen, Nicolas. HM Book Series, Vol. 198, Brill, 2019.

peoples' (in which case the elision from Engels to Marx is still suspect).[164] Although this charge then is really directed against the *Contribution* or the *1844 Manuscripts,* its refutation is to be found in the Late Marx, and above all in Marx's *Kovalevsky Notebooks* on ancient Perú published by AGL. Beyond resolving some controversies in the arcanum of Marxology, this debate outlines a critical genealogy of the Latin American states.

WRITINGS BY MARX

1854	1858	1860	1867	1871	1879-1882
Essays on the Spanish Revolution	Simón Bolívar encyclopedia entry	*Herr Vogt*	Das Kapital Vol 1	Paris Commune	Kovalevsky Notebooks

The Spanish Revolution

- This section examines Marx's writings on the Spanish Revolution. His account of the class struggle in Iberia and the Americas links the two revolutions in a cycle of mutual cause and effect. This exposition refutes Aricó's later argument that the essays on Spain

[164] Rosdolsky, Roman. "Friedrich Engels y el problema de los pueblos 'sin historia': La cuestión de las nacionalidades en la revolución de 1848-49 a la luz de la 'Neue Rheinische Zeitung'," *Cuadernos de Pyp,* No. 88, México, 1980.

> and Bolívar should not be read as companions. Finally, in adumbrating the radical path decidedly not taken by the conservative leaning *independentistas* in the Americas, Marx broaches an important insight for describing the prevailing class composition in Latin America at the time of independence. Therefore, this section affirms the pairing of the Spain and Bolívar articles, narrates crucial aspects of the independence period, and shows that Marx correctly arrayed the movement's class character.

Written as a biographical entry for the *New American Cyclopaedia,* Marx's Bolívar article was published in Spanish by Aníbal Ponce in 1936 alongside Marx's essays on the Spanish Revolution, and then in the 1937 English-language pamphlet *Revolution in Spain*, associating the pieces together for a generation of readers.[165] *Marx y américa latina* pointedly takes fault with this inclusion. For Aricó, the Bolívar essay has no historical value other than being instructive in its errors and for launching a legacy of misreadings that betray the inherent Eurocentrism of traditional Marxism. Just as he rejects pairing the Bolívar and Spanish Revolution essays together, Aricó contrasts Marx's authority in Spanish history with his alleged ignorance of Latin America. Marx's knowledge of the Americas will be addressed in the Kovalevsky section, but the Spain essays are a useful map in their own right of how events on the peninsula interpenetrate with independence in New Spain.

The Spain essays were published in the *New York Daily Tribune* at the end of 1854, four years before the Bolívar article. The *Tribune* articles of the 1850s, overlooked for a time, have emerged as a key artifact of Marx's political thinking.[166] His attention to Spain aligns with his most pressing concerns at the time. For one, the climate of the Bonapartist Second Empire

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[165] Marx, Karl. *Revolution in Spain*, Lawrence and Wishart, Ltd., 1939. See Draper, Hal. "Karl Marx and Simon Bolivar," *New Politics* (1st series), Vol. 7 No. 1, Winter 1968.

[166] Sergio Bologna's "Marx as Correspondent of the New York Daily Tribune, 1856-57" is typical of several Marxist turns to the *Tribune* writings over the years to restore Marx's political theory.

brought renewed interest to France's recent conquest of neighboring states, as we will see with regards to *Herr Vogt*. Secondly, alongside studies of Ireland, India, Poland, and Crimea, the essays show Marx's quickly broadening attention to a 'colonial periphery'. Finally, reprising the Spanish Empire's role in the rise of world capitalism is of a piece with his study of economics.

Marx begins by noting that the many insurrections prior to the 19th Century had never threatened the Spanish Monarchy's colonial possessions. The triangular class relations defining medieval Spain are reflected by the rich historical method launched in the first part of *The German Ideology*, now nurtured by the global knowledge gained through journalism, correspondence, and the resources in the British Museum. Decrying the rise of absolutism under Carlos I, the "ancient liberties" of the Middle Ages are seen to be defended by the public Cortes system, this made up by the leading faction of the towns, the nobility, and then the clergy. This first, followed by the second, were broken and dismissed by Carlos, while the third by way of the Inquisition had long aligned itself with the divine monarch. Marx captures the Spanish Crown's adventures to plant its flags from Perú to México as a bitter epic: "Then Spanish liberty disappeared under the clash of arms, showers of gold, and the terrible illuminations of the auto-da-fé."

Scholars of the colonial Americas have paid insufficient attention to the persisting link between the Inquisition and the persecution of the indigenous. In California for example, the Black Lives Matter movement that targeted statues of racist figures protested a statue of Junipero Serra in San Mateo. Yet few are aware that Serra and De Anza, 'founding fathers' of Spanish California, were awarded the vast territory for their brutal implementation of Inquisition purges during earlier occupations such as in Baja California, which involved torture, execution of heretics, and fervent vigilance against fraternization between racial groups. When Engels celebrated some salutary effects of the Mexican-American war, the most defensible among them would be breaking the power that these political forces still had in the newly independent Mexico.

Furthermore, AGL and Aricó concur that by the time of the American Civil War, Marx's mature position in defense of Mexican sovereignty had firmly taken hold.

Spain's modern weakness and particularity is for Marx, conversely to the rest of Europe, that the aristocracy maintained itself under absolutism while the towns continued to decline. The great roads lost their use, and the individual kingdoms that had broken from the Islamic Empire one by one were intentionally kept apart by the monarchy, which feared only their combination towards its overthrow. This, however, preserved the many local customs and distinctions associated with medieval peasant life. Like the Turkish and Asiatic modes (generalized categories enlisted by Marx in this period to demarcate social forms), the Spanish despots, "attack municipal self-government only when opposed to its direct interests, but are very glad to allow those institutions to continue so long as they take off its shoulders the duty of doing something and spare it the trouble of regular administration. Thus it happened that Napoleon, who, like all his contemporaries, considered Spain as an inanimate corpse, was fatally surprised at the discovery that when the Spanish State was dead, Spanish society was full of life, and every part of it overflowing with powers of resistance." This is the crux of *El siglo de las luces'* denouement where the former adherents of the French revolution participate in the Spanish resistance to France, explained by Marx to have its roots in the centuries-old antipathy of the countryside to a monarchy that had never dared to modernize it.

Bonaparte's invasion of Spain was triggered by the treaty of Tilsit, when Prussia was truncated and bereft of Westphalia, Warsaw and free cities like Danzig. Central Europe thus secured, he launched the Peninsular War en route to the clash with Britain. The Madrid rising began in 1808. It appeared largely in resistance *to* revolution, appealing for the conservation of the monarchy and the patrimonial church against French atheism and technological progress. We can date *El siglo*'s Esteban to have been in Spain agitating in 1794 and 1795, whence the threat of

revolutionary contagion was thoroughly contained. A minority since then had sought to provoke the zeal of defense against the foreigner towards the purpose of a modernizing regeneration. This casts light on the first appearance of *guerrillas* as tightly bound to the conservative orientation of the peasantry – basically the standing army of each distinct town and province, shunning any national federation and organization of techniques.

Before turning to the Americas, it is helpful to glance at a sweep of Spain's history made in the first volume of *The Aesthetics of Resistance,* which echoes Hebel's lines on the Lisbon earthquake. Beginning from the colonies in Spain of the ancient Pergamum empire, Peter Weiss narrates the struggles for power running through the Peninsular War and into the narrator's present in the Spanish Civil War.

> The peasants rebelled against the Romans, in the vast migrations Vandals, Suebi, and Alani inundated the country, the Visigoths founded a kingdom here, the Berber Moors thronged in from the south, Arabian caliphs instituted their rule and were superseded by Christian kings in Castille, Asturia, León, the rural populace fought for its rights, achieved self-administration, independence for a while, was again subjugated in Aragón, constant insurrections, constant battles, knives, sickles, pickaxes tore into flesh, blood soaked the earth, Castille conquered Córdoba, Aragón conquered Sicily, then, Ferdinand and Isabella, a powerful unified Spanish kingdom, establishment of the Inquisition, extermination of the Moors and Muslims, expulsion of the Jews, the discovery of the West Indies, Spain as a world power, Spain under the Hapsburgs, major portions of the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy owned by Spain, after England's rise the annihilation of the Spanish Armada, the loss of European vassal states, riots in Catalonia, Napoleon's invasion, guerrilla victory over the enemy troops, the revolts and secessions of the Latin American colonies, the disbanding of the Inquisition after more than three centuries, national popular war for a democratic constitution beaten down with French military assistance in eighteen twenty-three, three decades later the first organization of Spanish workers, the failed bourgeois revolution, the proclamation of the Republic, restoration of the monarchy. Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines were lost to the new imperium in the Spanish-American War. The final possessions in the Pacific, the Mariana, Caroline, and Marshall Islands, were sold to the German Empire. However, nearby Morocco could be conquered and then held as a protectorate until now [the text's present is the late 1930s]. Nineteen seventeen general strike, armed rebellions in several places. Military dictatorship, but a Republican victory in the elections of nineteen thirty-one, dethroning of the king, division of the feudal latifundia, separation of church and state, autonomous administration in Catalonia, in the Basque Country, renewed consolidation of the reactionary forces, nineteen thirty-four, first collective attack by a proletarian front. What

> efforts, what incalculable sacrifices and victims, and what silence over the gardens that we would soon be leaving.

As the Republic forces are vanquished, Weiss turns back to the defeat of Napoleon and Géricault's *Raft of the Medúsa* as the first salvo undermining the perverse cult of restoration under Louis XVIII, who helps defeat Spain's Liberal Revolution in 1823. Contrasting the mendicant Géricault with Delacroix and Goya, Weiss charts in their aesthetics the rise of consciousness among the toiling classes being bamboozled by King Louis, Louis-Philippe, and Louis Napoleon.[167]

Somewhat differently, the signature of Marx's analysis is the democratic-popular standard by which he judges the Spanish rebels' achievements. In 1808, he sees a tension between the central authority of Spanish resistance to Napoleon (which descends from the monarchy) and the regional *juntas* (which descend from the popular autonomy of the provinces that had not been subsumed by the monarchy) – the most revolutionary measures of the insurrection being taken in the remote Asturias and Galicia. Marx laments the mistake of granting the status for forming the central Junta to the *Grandees,* who sought to preserve an older order, rather than revolutionary upstarts who wanted to inaugurate a new one. *El siglo'*s Esteban and Sofía, Cuban-born creoles who expressly align with the latter sector, add global color to the competing currents of reaction and reform that typified the participants. For example, Dionisio Inca Yupanqui, born in Perú to the *cacique* line, had fought in Florida in 1781 against the British (and their Creek and Choctaw allies), before fighting against the Napoleonic invasion and participating in the constitution that shortly followed from the council in Cádiz.

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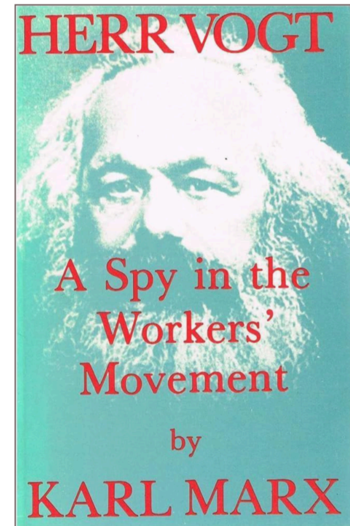
[167] Weiss, Peter. *Aesthetics of Resistance, Vol. 1.* Trans. Joachim Nuegroschel. Duke University Press, [1975]/2005.

Such contradictions bring us to the peculiarity of the Cortes of Cádiz, which were convened by the Junta's regents in 1810 to redress their disastrous military losses. Marx writes that the Cádiz Constitution comprised an unprecedented capitulation to self-control over territories from Asia to America, distinguished from any British councils, which had never accepted a single local representative. Marx asks, "How are we to account for the curious phenomenon of the Constitution of 1812, afterward branded by the crowned heads of Europe, assembled at Verona, as the most incendiary invention of Jacobinism, having sprung up from the head of old monastic and absolutist Spain at the very epoch when she seemed totally absorbed in waging a holy war against the Revolution?" The Constitution of 1812 provided a progressive standard that would be raised by Spanish radicals over ensuing decades without implementation, becoming the bad conscience of the backwards elite who clamored for Generalísimo Franco's coup in 1936. Of the Constitution's colonial policy, Marx writes, "It being one of their principal aims to hold possession of the American colonies, which had already begun to revolt, they acknowledged the full political equality of the American and European Spaniards, proclaimed a general amnesty without any exception, issued decrees against the oppression weighing upon the original natives of America and Asia, canceled the *mitas*, the *repartimientos*, etc., abolished the monopoly of quicksilver, and took the lead of Europe in suppressing the slave-trade." Marx finds the modern, progressive precedent of the Constitution's spirit not in the 1791 Jacobins but in the commoner controls on the regency of the 14th century *Fueros.* Furthermore, he notes the propitious effects of the French revolutionary army as the bar that popular governments were measured by:

> It must not be forgotten that simultaneously with the Cortes, there sat a French Government at Madrid, which, in all the provinces overrun by the armies of Napoleon, had swept away from the soil all monastic and feudal institutions, and introduced the modern system of administration. The Bonapartist papers denounced the insurrection as entirely produced by the artifices and bribes of England, assisted by the monks and the Inquisition. How far the rivalry with the intruding government must have exercised a salutary influence upon the decisions of the Cortes, may be inferred from the fact that the Central Junta addressed the Spaniards that "we are not fighting to defend old abuses and the inveterate vices of our corrupted government. Your struggle is for the happiness as well as the independence of your country."

Echoing his critique of Bonapartism, Marx notes that the anti-constitutional restoration of Ferdinand VII relied on stirring up the most reactionary and vulgar sections of the country, a strategy described by Aricó as appealing to the "vicious popular sentiments." At the same time, the Cortes of Cádiz jealously punished those *afrancesados* who promoted the libertarian strains of the French Enlightenment, again fracturing the progressive bloc.

Finally, Marx describes the American *independistas* as less concerned with radicalizing the Spanish Revolution than securing their private gain of colonial power. On the other hand, Antonio Quiroga and several officers sent to retake the Americas for Spain in 1819 mutiny and proclaim the 1812 Constitution, from which follows the 1820 Iberrian insurrection led by their comrade Riego that results in the most promising interregnum of royal power in the country that century. In other words, there is a successive confluence to the revolutions in Spain and the Americas, each pushing the other on and allowing tactical openings and unforeseen victories, a dynamic resembling the intertwined movements of the Haitian and Parisian masses spelled out by C.L.R. James. Through the prism of their Spanish allies and enemies, Marx adumbrated the position of the popular classes in New Spain during independence and pierced the myth that it was a popular revolution from below. Refuting Aricó's first point, Marx's essays on the Spanish Revolution in their own right contribute a sketch of the class capture that actually drove independence forward, and plant the seed for later investigations into the forms of exploitation, class conflicts, practices of power, and prospects for socialism endemic to the Americas.



Citizen Vogt

- This section offers an original reading of *Herr Vogt* in light of the Bolívar debate, making the case that it has a general and contemporary significance.

It is of little surprise that Marx penned his critical history of the recent Spanish Revolution. The fallen empire had extracted the stores of gold and silver from which world capital made its rise.[168] Marx's political activity kept him in close touch with conditions across Europe, especially the galvanized workers' associations and nationalist parties. Furthermore, following the failed revolutions of 1848 and the opportunity this presented to populist despots like France's Napoleon III, Marx was aggressively dissecting the rising ideology and political force of

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[168] "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent, the beginnings of the conquest and plunder of India, and the conversion of Africa into a preserve for the commercial hunting of blackskins, are all things which characterize the dawn of the era of capitalist production." Marx, Karl. *Capital, A Critique of Political Economy, Vol 1.* Trans. Ben Fowkes, Penguin Classics, 1992.

Bonapartism. In a letter to Engels on February 14, 1858, Marx says: “Moreover a longish article on Bolivar elicited objections from [*Tribune* editor] Dana because, he said, it is written in a ‘partisan style’, and he asked me to cite my authorities. This I can, of course, do, although it is a singular demand. As regards the ‘partisan style’, it is true that I departed somewhat from the tone of a cyclopedia. To see the dastardly, most miserable and meanest of blackguards described as Napoleon I was altogether too much. Bolivar is a veritable Soulouque.” Hal Draper deserves credit for noting that this nominal reference to a Haitian President was simply common parlance among the many nicknames for Napoleon III.[169] For Aricó, Marx’s hostility to Bonapartist reaction in the 1850s was a key factor shrouding the judgments of his Bolívar article.

Be that as it may, the Marx family had more pressing difficulties to cope with. Three of Jenny and Karl’s children had died of illness and malnourishment in their London exile, where they struggled to find lodging and appease debt-collectors.[170] Poverty was compounded by political persecution like the Cologne Trial, with Marx frequently seeing his associates deported, imprisoned, and after the Paris Commune of 1871, executed in mass. Yet, alongside the much-needed compensation for the *Tribune* articles, and haranguing by his friends to complete *Das Kapital* for the sake of the workers’ movement, his battle against Bonapartism was also one of survival. To wide chagrin, he took the year 1859 to counter the slander of the left-liberal German parliamentarian Karl Vogt in a civil case that, impeded by the Prussian court from being processed, he published as the book *Herr Vogt.*[171] Considered Marx’s “forgotten work,” the book

[169] The German original indeed employs a vernacular slight as arcane as our ‘blackguard’: *Der Lump*, or a scoundrel in the sense of a shady double-crosser. “Den feigsten, gemeinsten, elendesten Lump als Napoleon I. verschrien zu sehn, war etwas zu toll. Bolivar ist der wahre Soulouque.” *MEW Band 29*, p. 280, Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1978.

[170] Kapp, Yvonne. “Karl Marx’s Children,” *New Left Review,* Vol. I, No. 138, March-April, 1983.

[171] Opinion of the work was actually high after publication. “Even in Marx's lifetime, students of the decade between 1849-1859 acknowledged that there was no other work that had such an insight into the parties of this epoch as did this work of Marx…[Ferdinand] Lassalle himself had to admit that Marx wrote a masterpiece, that all fears had been idle, that Vogt was forever compromised as a political leader.” Engels recommended the endeavor from the start, and supported the outcome. Riazanov, David. *Marx and*

twice compares Simón Bolívar to the Bonapartists, making it uniquely pertinent to the AGL-Aricó debate, although neither mention it. Addressed once in a Marxological study by Draper, the other work to catch the *Vogt* citations was none other than Aricó's 1972 journal, *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente No. 30*, "Materiales para la historia de América latina," a remarkable compendium of references to Latin America throughout Marx and Engels' careers (excluding the Kovalevsky material however, making AGL's endeavor something of an addendum to *Cpyp No. 30*).[172] A frantic, humorous, and uncanny chapter of Marx's life, *Herr Vogt* erases any doubts as to the motivations of the Bolívar article.

Appearing at workers' conferences and sowing discord regarding their strategic orientation to the competing European powers, which ranged from regimes of moderate to egregious levels of reaction, Vogt had already caught Marx's attention by the time he published the 1959 book, *Mein Prozess gegen die Allgemeine Zeitung,* in which he alleged Marx to be the high chief of a fictitious international conspiracy of subversives calling itself the Brimstone Gang.[173] Not settling for a mere refutation, Marx produces evidence in turn against Vogt (the German translation of this homonym being the title of a feudal bailiff or 'protector,' giving grist to his penchant for merciless puns and literary allusions). Given that Vogt accused the malnourished Marx of living grandly as a parasite upon the workers, his double-entendres on Vogt's Falstaffian penchants land on the mark. Demonstrating the near word-for-word repetition in Vogt's texts of official Tuileries Palace propaganda (think of the State Dept. verbiage that resounds on Twitter like 'unprovoked Russian invasion' or 'Israel has a right to defend itself'), Marx concludes that

Engels: An Introduction to their Life and Work. Trans. Kunitz, Joshua, International Publishers, 1937. Thus, the cause of *Vogt'*s vanishing cannot be the same as other forgotten works like *Heroes of the Exile,* with similar themes, that were never published.

[172] "Materiales para la historia de América latina," sometimes erroneously attributed to Aricó, was translated and edited by the Uruguayan editor Pedro Scaron who moved to Buenos Aires in 1970 and collaborated with Aricó while conducting his major translation of *Das Kapital.*

[173] Arguably, more dangerous still were Vogt's allegations against the Communist League, with Lassalle warning, "Something must be done [as it] will do great harm to yourself and to the whole party, for it relies in a deceptive way upon half-truths." Rubel, Maximillian. *Marx, Life and Works.* New York: Macmillan, 1980.

Citizen Vogt is rather a paid agent of the French Emperor Louis Napoleon. Furthermore, he distills from Vogt's actions the secret agenda of a superficially progressive French foreign policy that had in fact allied itself with Russia's despotic Alexander II.[174]

While Marx was not entirely alone in his suspicions of Vogt, he had already entered into a public spat with a much more formidable opponent, Lord Palmerston, the leading figure of Britain's foreign dealings for much of the 19th Century. Against Palmerston, who he suspected of being a Russian agent, he had many allies, including the diplomat and member of the U.K. Parliament David Urquhart whose suspicions were deepened following a Russian poisoning attempt while an envoy at the Constantinople embassy. In a telling distinction from his own position, Marx writes that, "Russia's agents are, therefore, according to Urquhart, the secret commanders of the revolutions."[175] Although he avoided Urquhart's public libels against Palmerston, lacking evidence but not conviction, his conclusion stemmed from applying his materialist method to the

[174] *Herr Vogt* wastes few words on Marx's famous hostility to Tsarism, but he makes clear enough the laughable publicity attempts to brand the new Tsar a democratic reformer. Marx lampoons the campaign much as incredulous readers scoffed at Thomas Freidman's promotion for Mohammed Bin Salman's Western marketing tour the year before the Khashoggi murder.

[175] "Urquhart systematically rides a fixed idea. For 20 years he has been *unsuccessfully* denouncing Palmerston and the Russian tricks and dodges, and was, therefore, naturally bound to go half-crazy, as would anybody who had a *particular* idea that was right, but of which he could not convince the world. The fact that Palmerston has been able to hold on until today with his diplomacy, he puts down to the quarrel between the Whigs and Tories, which is partly, but of course only partly, correct. For the English Parliament of today, which judges every issue not on its own merits but solely according to whether a party is "*in office*" or "*out of office*", he, who is basically conservative, sees no other salvation but strengthening the royal prerogative, on the one hand, and *local, municipal self-government*, on the other. To put up a front against Russia he wants the West to form as compact and uniform a mass as the Russian. He, therefore, *will not hear of parties* and is a bitter enemy of all efforts to bring about centralisation. As all the revolutions since 1848 have temporarily been favourable to Russia's progress, he foolishly attributes this outcome to Russian diplomacy, seeing it as Russia's *original motive*. Russia's agents are, therefore, according to Urquhart, the secret commanders of the revolutions. As *Austria* is the direct counter-force to Russia within the old conservative system, he shows a preference for Austria and a dislike of anything that could imperil its international power. In contrast to the Russian way of levelling things out, on the one hand, and to the revolutionary way of doing so, on the other, he clings to the individuality and particular characteristics of peoples. In his eyes, therefore, the Jews, the Gypsies, the Spaniards and the Mohammedans, including the Circassians, are the four finest peoples, as they have not been tainted by the vulgarism of Paris and London. From all this it is clear that his conception of history had necessarily to assume a very subjective character. History to him is more or less exclusively the work of diplomacy." Published in the New York paper *Die Reform* in 1853 from a letter to Adolph Cluss, but confirmed by Marx. *MECW,* Volume 12, p. 477.

behavior of states. Kevin Anderson draws from this the kernel of the unspoken alliance between Palmerston and Russia: ultimate hostility to proletarian revolution.

> In "Lord Palmerston," Marx recounts Palmerston's many duplicitous actions, including his public denunciation of Russian atrocities in Poland during the suppression of the 1830 uprising while simultaneously making sure that no concrete aid ever reached the Poles, and his similar behavior during the 1846 Polish uprising. Rather than an actual paid agent of the Russians, Palmerston was a conservative British aristocrat who, although he occasionally received gifts and favors from Russia, was motivated more by the view that Britain and Russia had common interests as the two most important conservative powers in Europe.[176]

Thus Marx was grasping a common feature of Bonapartism, where secret alliances between competing states reflected their mutual hatred for the intended beneficiaries of universal suffrage.

In 1871, defeat in the Franco-Prussian war led to the opening of files in Tuileries that proved the payment made to Vogt for services rendered. So much for Karl Vogt. The damage had been done, or, perhaps, it had been averted by Marx's foresight. Unlike Vogt, we do not have 'the receipts' on Palmerston; but then again, the files on one of Britain's most famous prime ministers have not fallen into a foreign power's hands. Marx, meanwhile, as with Vogt was less concerned with punishing Palmerston than anticipating him: he espied the designs of Britain, and of Louis Napoleon, on making a beachhead in Mexico, partially to aid the southern U.S. and weaken its hand, in addition to the allure of Latin America's resources. The French crown, like Russia, had earlier looked upon putting down the revolt in Spain's American colonies as a means towards absorbing their imperial holdings.[177] Vogt's possession of such state secrets makes him useful for decoding the real intentions of the Bonaparte he was a mouthpiece for.

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[176] Anderson, Kevin. *Marx at the Margins,* University of Chicago Press, 2010.

[177] Temperley, Harold. "French Designs on Spanish America, 1820-5." *English Historical Review,* Vol. 40 No. 157, Jan, 1925.; Robertson, William Spence. "Russia and the Emancipation of Spanish America." *Hispanic American Historical Review,* Vol. 1, No. 2, May, 1941.

The map he draws of world politics and what Marx finds there, above all, makes the Vogt affair a vital lesson today.

The decades and movements of Marxist thinking can in some ways be differentiated by the question, Which Marx? *The Communist Manifesto* was the central text of the early Italian Communist Party; discovering *The Gründrisse* sparked the Italian and German new readings; *The German Ideology* was canonical for the ideology critique of the 1990s academy; and *Capital* was indispensable in the Occupy years following the 2008 financial crash.[178] *Herr Vogt* speaks to the 2020s with its paranoid ambush against fake news, red-faced rage against a shameless troll, and the ubiquitous state agents masquerading as legitimate leftists. As Marx found with Vogt, these agents' 'influence' is owed to a private reserve of surveillance and legal immunity, used in Orwellian fashion to accuse targets of impossible conspiracies, of spreading disinformation, and of being plagiaristic, poor scholars. Furthermore, Marx demonstrates a perspicacity about geopolitical maneuvers in the vein practiced today by realists of the International Relations school like John Mearsheimer. Not even the deep reading of historical events through the prism of class struggle seen in the essays on Ireland or "The 18th Brumaire," *Herr Vogt* is above all a shrewd discernment of the avaricious, belligerent interests of states behind their progressive, humanistic propaganda.

One of Aricó's complaints about labeling Bolívar a Bonapartist is that it reflects an obsessive hobby-horse stemming from inter-European struggles that Marx projected onto a Venezuelan whose context escaped him. In fact, Bonapartism for Marx was a political form that occurred in contingencies where a representative or would-be strong-man was needed to overcome

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[178] Musto, Marcello. "Dissemination and Reception of *The Communist Manifesto* in Italy: From the Origins to 1945." *Critique*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2008.

divisions within the ruling class that were opaque to themselves.[179] In the struggle for independence, these divisions were most acutely those between the creole elites and the peninsular crown, whose antagonism had developed over the many years of spatial distance and the contemptuous loss of favor. However, these groups had repeatedly, and very recently, assuaged their resentments in the face of mutual interest to repress a popular movement which would have concocted independence under an entirely distinct crest and creed.

In *Herr Vogt*, Marx uses Bolívar to describe that instance of the Bonapartist strategy, one neither native to nor out of place in France, but entirely of a piece with the violent plots of creole elites to rise in their station vis-à-vis the peninsula monarchy:

> I saw in a Paris newspaper that a certain Mehemed Bei, a Colonel in the Turkish service, previously known as a Christian under the name of John Bangya, had sailed with a number of Polish refugees to Circassia, where he figured as the chief of staff to SeferPasha and to a certain extent as the 'Simon Bolivar' of the Circassian. I referred to the Liberator's past in the London Free Press, many copies of which go to Constantinople.[180]

This obscure episode concerns the Circassian war of independence from Russia, to which the Polish activist Lapinsky led a detachment infiltrated by Bangya, a spy Marx had once before exposed. To be the Simon Bolivar of the Circassians in this context is to be at once a pretender and liberator, for personal gain and of the wider Bonapartist movement; i.e., a class of unscrupulous upstarts who divert the energy of the revolt against the ancién regime into the coffers of their own police ring, and merely maintain a lack of universal rights by novel means.

[179] According to The Fourth Internationalist, "Bonapartism refers to a regime resting on the state apparatus (military and police) that seeks to raise itself above the different classes to act as an arbiter, sweeping away 'democratic' norms in order to defend the 'higher' interests of the whole of the ruling class in periods of acute danger." Many recent authors have also seen it as a contemporary phenomenon; Dylan Riley, for example, likening Bonapartism to the program of the current Macron government: neutralization of urban and rural populists by opposing their interests, allowing for a 'radical center' that claims to be an arbiter protecting the universal integrity of the nation, consolidating and enriching itself. *NLR Sidecar,* Mar. 15, 2024 https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/bonapartist-solutions
[180] *Herr Vogt, Op. cit.*

This passage also recalls Marx's quote from the *18th Brumaire* on the Bonapartist secret network of "vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, swindlers, mountebanks, lazzaroni, pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, maquereaux [pimps], brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ grinders, ragpickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars," in other words, lumpenproletariat organized for carrying out the regime's dirty work. Manipulating underworld elements was a core aspect of the C.I.A.'s Gladio and Condor Operations that descended on the revolutionary movement during its highmark in the 1970s, thwarting independence in a violent repetition of the events Galeano's *Venas abiertas* had chronicled. Clearly, aspects of Bonapartism remain a key part of anti-democratic strategy today.[181]

Furthermore, Bonapartism is not an endogenous tendency, but comes from a place 'outside of' the people, wherein the head of state is "a casual adventurer from abroad, raised on the shoulders of a drunken soldiery."[182] Given that a signature of this analysis is its suppression of democratic forces and the interests of the indigenous population, charges of Eurocentrism entirely miss the mark. For example, comparisons of George Washington to Napoleon III by scholars, or to Bonaparte by himself, are taken as natural to the French mode of the Declaration of Independence, just as Marx too, writing on the U.S. Civil War, devotes keen attention to the role of Bonaparte and "the Orleans Princes in the U.S.," ultimately understanding the civil

[181] As Losurdo points out, the key target of this unity between the 'lowest' and 'highest' of knaves are the 'intermediary' political organizations like parties and the press which could raise democratic consciousness towards realizing suffrage's universal potential. Here is Marx, "This Bonaparte, who constitutes himself chief of the lumpenproletariat, who here alone rediscovers in mass form the interests which he personally pursues, who recognizes in this scum, offal, refuse of all classes the only class upon which he can base himself unconditionally, is the real Bonaparte, the Bonaparte sans phrase. An old, crafty roué, he conceives the historical life of the nations and their performances of state as comedy in the most vulgar sense, as a masquerade in which the grand costumes, words, and postures merely serve to mask the pettiest knavery." While recent scholarship has begun to note the immense significance of Gladio, it retains the stigma used to dismiss concern as a murky conspiracy theory. Paul Williams makes clear that Gladio and Condor were two theaters of the same counter-revolution, using the same funds, assassins, Nazi ratlines and organizations. See Cabell, Pat (Host). "Roberto Bolaño's Malevolent Powers: A Discussion on Literary Realism and Geopolitics." *After the End of History Podcast.* January, 2024.

[182] Marx, Karl. "The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." *Surveys from Exile: Political Writings Vol. 2,* Trans. Ben Fowkes, Penguin Books with New Left Review, 1973.

conflict as an international one linking the U.S., Mexico, France, and England.[183] For Domenico Losurdo, such comparisons reveal Bonapartism's function as a check on radical and plebeian tendencies: The French and American Revolutions (especially the condition of indebted peasants like those of Shay's Rebellion) were followed by coup d'etats that rolled back many of their democratic gains. If the comparison extends to the independence of New Spain, Gran Colombia's 1828 Constitution would represent the finalized plutocratic victory over its popular antecedents, which I have traced from the Spanish Revolution itself, to the peasants of Guanajuato and Guerrero, the Haitian Revolution, and the Tupac Amaru uprising. Therefore, although Marx's study of the Kovalevsky notebooks remained in his future, his studies already grasped the political exclusion of the Latin American masses in a movement that was manicured to preserve a class order: not riding the back of popular revolutionary energy in the vein of the French Revolution, but merely to settle a dispute between the *realistas* and *independistas* in the least economically disruptive manner.

Aricó is right then that the scourge of Bonapartism influenced Marx's hostility towards the personage of Bolívar, but rather than a regrettable conflation it adduced some real tendencies that the creole elites in the Americas shared with the progressive bourgeoisie of Europe: two flanks of capital's advanced forms. The geopolitical mode of the comparison deepens his analysis rather than contaminates it. This accords with Carpentier's move to grasp the world-history of the Americas by decentering Europe, without the misplaced ideas that merely import the hierarchy with its polarity inverted.

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[183] See for example Nevins, Allan and Commager, Henry S.. *America: The Story of a Free People,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1947. And Bonaparte's testament from exile in St. Helena, cited by Losurdo. Marx, Karl, and Engels, Freidrich. *The Civil War in the United States.* International Publishers Co., 1937. I make several allusions in this dissertation to the class-analysis of the U.S.'s War of Independence by Hogeland and Parenti, hoping to spur the taking of works on the American Revolution such as Gerald Honre's in a wider context of shared dynamics across the (British, Dutch, Spanish, French) colonial Americas.

Marx's other allusion to Bolívar in *Herr Vogt* also necessitates an awareness of geopolitics, comparing him to the Hungarian nationalist leader Lajos Kossuth: "The ability of the popular imagination to create myths has manifested itself in every epoch in the invention of 'Great Men'. The most striking example of this kind is unquestionably *Simon Bolivar*. As far as Kossuth is concerned, he is celebrated, for example, as the man who abolished feudalism in Hungary."[184] Marx is concerned here with the fall of the *ancién regimes* and their replacement by bourgeois parties, but also the shift from a bourgeoisie that calls forth the power of the proletariat against the aristocracy (pre-1848) and the post-'48 bourgeoisie that fearsomely suppresses that force; as with Louis Napoleon, who counterfeits its power with thuggery and lumpen conspiracy. Most telling here is Kossuth's support for southern slavery in the U.S. (while opposing it in the North), betraying the opportunism behind his attribution for abolishing Hungarian serfdom, in the same key as Bolívar's dastardly wagering of abolition for cannon-fodder. Marx seems to recognize between Kossuth and Bolívar a similar cartoonish figure of dashing in and out of conflicts opportunely, but leaving those under their command to roast. These moral derelictions also parlay Vogt's condescension that the sordid Marxists had besmirched the upright left parliamentarians. Furthermore, if the 1848 revolutions were carried out under the name of liberty and national determination, the bourgeoisie was now firmly capable of holding off both the *ancién regime* and zealous democrats.[185] The post '48 scene saw numerous petty bourgeois nationalists rejecting Marx's call for an international labor association, and from these ranks the reactionist regime of Bonaparte found useful agents in its schemes to parlay the unifications of Germany and Italy.[186]

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[184] Both comparisons to Bolívar are related to Kossuth, as Bangya is his agent and operative proven to be in the employ of Russia (while the unscrupulous Kossuth seeks payments from Napoleon III et al.).
[185] Losurdo: "Denounced even in our own time by Hayek as the inauspicious prologue to 'social or even totalitarian democracy', [February 1848] was a revolution that sanctioned universal (male) suffrage. And, as we have seen, even this was immediately trampled on and suppressed by the liberal bourgeoisie, as soon as the latter felt itself secure and protected from the pressure of the popular and plebeian masses in the streets."
[186] "It is hardly surprising that Marx had a very low opinion of Kossuth. Marx placed a high value on success and was appalled by Kossuth's continual failures…Kossuth was a spokesman for the interests of the liberal nobility in Hungary and turned to the bourgeoisie for support while in exile in western Europe…

Alongside Vogt and Kossuth, the other main pawn of Bonaparte that *Herr Vogt* targets is James Fazy, who masks the class antagonisms behind the Swiss Constitution but is credited as its historical progenitor.[187] According to Marx's confidant, the Rhenish revolutionary commander Johann Philipp Becker, Fazy rides to power in the shadow of the more gifted and popular leader Albert Galeer, who through a technicality lacks the Swiss nativity needed to govern, and is shortly thereafter disposed of by Fazy unceremoniously. Fazy then allies the Swiss with the Russian and French plot to demote the Germanic 'wedge' separating them, all under the higher cause of liberating suppressed nationalities. This is the opportunism Marx associates with Bolívar, mistaken as the Liberator of South America by that new generation of progressives, but whose lost role was to have carried off the blow of independence for the creole elites under the cover of a popular cause.

A certain orthodoxy has it that a rich class analysis is the antidote to conspiratorial thinking. But if we accept that the author of the line, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles," is one of the foremost analysts of the role of class in shaping historical events, then *Herr Vogt* suggests a counter-proposition: that a critique of class society can also find meaning in the conspiring and maneuvering of states for their perceived interests, against both their competitors and domestic opponents. (Recall that the *Grundrisse* of these years also

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Kossuth was a man of the Vormärz who had faced the problems of 1848-1849 squarely, though unsuccessfully, but he could not make the transition to the realpolitische outlook necessitated by the political developments of the 1850's. The same could be said about the other romanticist revolutionaries as well. With their apotheosis of liberty, they, nevertheless, believed that liberty in the fullest sense ought to be confined to the propertied classes of their own particular nationality." Komlos, John. "Marx's Critique of Kossuth." *Austrian History Yearbook*, 1979.

[187] The trio of Vogt, Kossuth and Fazy often includes a fourth, the Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini. Yet, while their rivalry exploded around 1866 over influence in the International Working Men's Association, Marx's attitude towards him in this text at least, is cooler. Watching with severity as figures of '48 prostrated themselves before sponsors far and wide, including in North America, Marx's London was also their main base. In a further vindication of his alleged paranoia, Mazzini's secretary who had entered into the IWMA spat, Luigi "Louis" Wolff, was implicated as another of Bonaparte's paid agents in the very Tuileries documents that damaged Vogt in 1871.

proposed a much more ambitious undertaking in which Capital was one book that would be followed by other investigations into bourgeois society: “landed property, wage-labour; the State, foreign trade, world market.”)[188] So far this section has addressed the specific comparisons to Bolívar, the broader context of Vogt’s attacks, and the application of Bonapartism to the Americas; I now want to demonstrate that *Herr Vogt*’s true insight lies in piercing the mystique of geopolitics. An online meme from the period of the Syrian dirty war, circa 2016, showed a Middle East map with a dizzying array of alliances and hostilities, to convey the point that geopolitics are confusing and better left to experts. But as with so many situations, the fiat power exercised by the U.S. in the region could just as logically simplify the map down to a single axis of conflict. *Herr Vogt* aims towards the same clarity, which is made visible by the underlying logic that orders its now arcane historical events.

It must be underscored that the theory of Bonapartism links the indoctrination of domestic activists (‘at home’ in Europe) to counter-revolution and domination abroad (in the ‘non-Western’ former colonies). Losurdo’s study argues that Bonapartism’s conceit is an elite struggle to rig modern democracy against the influence of workers’ movements and their direct control over production.[189] In other words, in the Bonapartist strategy of a minority alliance between a ruling clique and its counterfeit thugs posing as populists, Losurdo sees a blueprint for the anti-democratic norms today in which electoral parties are dominated by ultra-rich mandarins who cast an appearance of checking off representational groups they can claim as a base, thereby circumventing the prevailing disdain for their policies and class goals. He frames the historical problem of universal suffrage “in terms of the fact that the conflict that characterized the 19th Century after the defeat of the revolution and the end of Bonaparte was a conflict

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[188] Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*. Martin Nicolaus, trans., London: Penguin Books, 1993.
[189] Losurdo, Domenico. *Democracy or Bonapartism: Two Centuries of War on Democracy,* David Broder, trans., Verso, 2024. (Italian subtitle: *The Triumph and Decadence of Universal Suffrage*).

between liberalism and democracy – that is, democracy as a product of the workers' movement, organising itself against a liberal vision that is restricted, elitist, based on property qualifications."[190] Losurdo sees the French Revolution as the *Ursprung* of universal suffrage, followed by 1848 and 1917. "After Thermidor," he states, "the liberal bourgeoisie faced a dilemma. While it clung to the representative system, in an anti-absolutist and anti-feudal key, it also had to stop political representation granting any overly powerful influence to the popular masses," resulting in measures to restrict political rights such as property qualifications and indirect legislative bodies.

Faced with movements demanding suffrage, Bonapartism emerged as the preferred ruse of elite rule, a "choice between two particular individuals, one of whom would think on its behalf about political questions that stood beyond its reach." Attacking any parties, press, or 'troublesome filters' between the people and their sovereign that would excite the lower orders and bind the poor as a class together, Louis Napoleon omitted the communication or analysis of general political ideas among the 'childlike' multitude.[191] Spencer Leonard posits this moment as the ultimate reckoning of liberal Enlightenment values before capitalist crises: freedom from coercion was not a universal right but a stricture against challengers to the ruling clique, who coveted a monopoly on violence. Note that Losurdo distinguishes the "Triumph and *Decadence*" of universal suffrage; decadence, explored in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, capturing the character of recuperation that I have associated with modern-day 'astroturfing.' This is the type of suffrage that the Argentine journal *Cuadernos de Negación* call '*canalizado,*' whose purpose is the extension of finite, predetermined political mobilization.

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[190] Forward to *Democracy or Bonapartism* by Luciano Canfora, *ibid.*

[191] Losurdo poses an opposition between Bonaparte's populism, conceived as the ruse of elite rule among movements demanding suffrage, and the national-popular, as the expression of universalist demands prior to their realization in Communism. See also Losurdo, Domenico. *Antonio Gramsci del liberalismo al 'comunismo crítico'*, Juan Vivanco Gefaell, trans., Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo, 2015.

Losurdo sees Bonapartism then advanced by Disraeli, as minister of the most powerful empire on earth and warming the seat for the incipient United States, whose racial theories expand political rights but then project the racialization previously cast on workers now onto colonial subjects and those beyond the West. French and Italian colonial expansion would also reach their peaks of exterminating unarmed peoples at the same time that they extended universal male suffrage. Finally, Losurdo captures the unique role of the United States in its masterful role as world hegemon based on inheriting the admixture of a domestic soft Bonapartism with war Bonapartism abroad. Irfan Habib writes that, “Nearly a hundred years before the imperialism of free trade thesis was presented, Marx and Engels already envisioned in their writings the relationship between metropolitan capitalism and the drive for political domination over other more backward countries. At the same time, even with full-blown democracy (universal suffrage) still a long way away, the political form of the bourgeois state was assuming a Bonapartist cast.” In other words, the Bonapartism of the bourgeois countries led to its extension into the former colonies, from Ireland to Crimea: Bonapartism at home, imperialism abroad.

Thus, Marx understands that by the 1860s, due to scandals and loss of domestic support, Louis Napoleon’s survival at home depends on a war with Austria. But when the Italian unification insurgents accelerate their gains in ways unflattering to Napoleon III’s ambitions, he cynically reverses course and reinstates the monarchs they had deposed, such as Leopold II of Tuscany. At the same time, a gossipy anonymous note to the *Allgemeine Zeitung* (K. Blind) reports that Jérôme Napoleon (Plon-Plon) is attempting to win over German liberals to “a plan of attack against Austria, and prospective rearrangement of the map of Europe.” The note crows on that Hungary will be given a Russian king, similar to the plots to make Plon-Plon a prince of Austria. Plon-Plon is the elder Jerome’s son, therefore nephew of Napoleon I and cousin to Louis Napoleon. With an abusive extravagance of celebrity and intrigue, the schemes of these pretenders put in jeopardy the lives of millions. Louis Napoleon exaggerated his familial line to

Napoleon I, participating in a host of failed coups and duels with Bonapart's illegitimate son, and so on assuming the throne, Marx looks on him as something of a Fail Son. On the other hand, Napoleon III succeeds at the double-crossing, cynical interest in 'independent nationalities' that we saw C.L.R. James expose in his uncle. The difference between the two, for Marx, is "between waging a war against a European coalition and waging a war with the permission of a European coalition." Today, the establishment Left that Vogt spoke for rage on behalf of a European coalition war against Russia. *Herr Vogt* is a lesson in obliterating the humanitarian propaganda that drapes such imperial missions.

What example does *Herr Vogt* give the Left for making concrete analyses of real conspiratorial moments? Paraphrasing Vogt's pamphlet "Studies on the Current Situation in Europe," Geneva, 1959, Marx writes, "Nett total: In Bonaparte's forthcoming crusade against Austria, Britain will remain neutral, Russia will act hostilely towards Austria, Prussia will keep whatever hotheads there are among the Confederation members quiet, and Europe will localise the war. Louis Bonaparte will wage the Italian War, as earlier the Russian War, with the permission of a higher authority, to a certain extent as the secret general of a European coalition." From Vogt's indiscreet propaganda, Marx reveals the secret campaign to divide German opinion and neutralize the labor leadership that would rightly anticipate France's war against German Austria and seek to repel it. While Vogt baits the left to oppose reactionary Austria in favor of the 'lesser evil' France, Marx defends the interests of Austrians and warns of the conspiracy against the Germanic states, wholly in step with his call in 1865 for German workers to follow the lead of the anti-Bonapartist labor agitation; to wit, the types of internationalist solidarity intended to forestall a Franco-Prussian war, and which were magnificently proclaimed under the Commune.[192]

Libel, smears, extortion, rape accusations, slander, sordid public trials, limited hangouts, state

[192] Marx, Letter to Schweitzer, February 13, 1865. *MECW,* Vol. 42.

secrets, disinformation and malinformation… All we are missing are two-way mirrors and the Lolita Express. One is surprised that Guy Debord's entanglement with Operation Gladio and libel cases against the French press never brought him to read *Herr Vogt.*[193] T.J. Clark comes the closest to making the association by periodizing the Second Empire as the moment of the spectacle's arrival and implementation through the Haussmannization of Paris, which transformed the city-space in the likeness of the commodity. Clark faults the defeatist strain represented by Victor Hugo that believed this spectacle to be ready-made, as opposed to impressionists like Van Gogh and Manet who took its blurry reality to be a project in construction, with vulnerabilities and incomplete parts.[194] Marx resembles Debord's revolutionary swagger in disarming the paper tigers of geopolitics, police conspiracies, and the bourgeois press who lump him in with their other critics as "Austrian apologists." These moments came amid a dangerous climate, but they represent opportunities because the state has taken to battle on the terrain of the left – lumpen but still proletariat – and on that field both thinkers delivered titanic blows against the power behind the schemes.

Evocative of Pynchon's parodic manual at Boeing, Marx bristles with Shakespearean puns, Old Testament verse and Latin quips against the Kafkaesque logic of the Prussian courts who forbade him from bringing a prosecution. Concluding that if the letter of the law has been reduced in all its weight and breadth to "pure interest," then justice is no more than a bagatelle being instrumentalized by powerful fools.[195] While not the place for a deeper reflection on the continuity of this political work with his oeuvre, clearly more attention is deserved to its entwinement with the economic writings he would shortly complete, his role with Engels in

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[193] Debord, Guy. *Considerations on the Assassination of Gerard Lebovici,* Trans. Robert Greene, TamTam Books, [1985]/2001. See also the 1979 Preface to the fourth Italian edition of *Society of the Spectacle.* Two of Debord's translators affirm that he never mentioned *Vogt* in correspondence.
[194] Clark, T.J.. *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985. Thanks to Bill Brown for this reference.
[195] On Gladio see Williams, Paul. *Operation Gladio,* Prometheus Books, 2015. On instrumentalized justice, see Abrams, A.B., *Atrocity Fabrication and its Consequences,* Clarity Press, 2023.

founding the International Workingmens' Association in 1864, and the impactful events of the Paris Commune in 1871.

In summary, *Herr Vogt* demonstrates that when Marx was writing about Bolívar, far from thinking about Hegel, he was reflecting on the global applications of Bonapartism and the recuperating trend among national liberation struggles. We can reflect this back upon the Latin American republics that had even less popular participation than the independence movements of Italy, Hungary, and Switzerland. The 19th Century saw several anti-democratic operations in Latin America of the sort described in *Herr Vogt:* geopolitical maneuvering for the disemancipation of the indigenous peasantry and their exclusion from any meaningful national project. Prior to the war on Paraguay already mentioned, a sustained and brutal collusion broke the Peruvian-Bolivian joint state. This was followed by the British orchestrated war to extend Chile across the Atacama seaboard, in turn bolstering their annexation of the Mapuche's southern Arauco nation.

Did Marx look at Bolívar as a bourgeois European looking down on a non-Westerner? Or – poor, politically persecuted, relying only on wit and his communist contacts – did he see an upper-class figurehead for the preservation of strict racial and economic hierarchy, whose memorialization as a hero served as a model for the leading reactionaries of the day? Poor and working Europeans did in fact have more commonality with the lower classes of blacks and browns in the Americas than with the European-blooded creole aristocracy. In this light, *Herr Vogt* illuminates the geopolitical matrix at play in Latin American reality. Furthermore, as AGL outlines in the following section, Marx's appraisal of Bolívar correctly adumbrated the class dynamics of independence.

Álvaro García Linera

- 1962: Nace
- 1981: Entrenamiento en México
- 1984: Regresa a Bolivia, preparación del EGTK
- 1986: Despedido del proletariado minero
- 1992: Encarcelamiento, redacción del *Cuaderno Kovalevsky*
- 2005: Elección de Evo Morales

The Guerrilla as Universal Subject

- So far I have introduced the Bolívar article and Aricó's challenges to it. In readings of the essays on the Spanish Revolution and *Herr Vogt,* several of Aricó's charges have been dismissed. In the Spanish Revolution, we see not only the use of pairing the essays with the Bolívar entry, but a historical sketch of independence as an intercontinental affair, its gains, shortcomings, and class dynamics. In *Herr Vogt,* the comparison of Bolívar with Napoleon III validates Marx's cynical appraisal of the class capture and top-down mobilization behind not only independence, but the nature of many of the states that ensued forthwith. If this is exceedingly negative, I now turn to the forces that independence excluded, shifting at times to a biographical-historical mode to convey how this base is a producer of Latin American reality. This section documents AGL's

discovery of Marx's *Kovalevsky Notebooks* and unpacks the insight the two thinkers shared into the historical dynamic of the indigenous peasantry.

The underappreciation for Marx's political writings, and *Herr Vogt*'s position among them, only partially explains Aricó's depiction of Marx in 1982. AGL's correction to that work came at the same time as he excavated the missing piece of Marx's thinking about Latin America (missing from "*Materiales para la historia de América latina*"): his late considerations about the continent's pre-capitalist social formations.[196] Those writings survey the Americas' pre-colonial class structure, therefore contributing to a key piece of what becomes (post-contact) Latin American reality, and further justify Marx's cynical appraisal of the republics that emerged from independence. The story of their publication is determined by conditions and reality in the 20th Century in Central and South America, and above all, on the fact that their nation-states leave unintegrated and suppressed several indigenous cultures upon which they are overlaid.

Among the ethnological notebooks, Marx's attention was drawn above all to Russia as a potential site of 'non-Western' revolution, with the intriguing endurance of a peasant commune (the *mir*), and he took up a serious correspondence with revolutionaries there like Vera Zasulich. After his death in 1883, his young contemporaries Kautsky and Bernstein would live to see the Soviet revolution succeed and the German revolution fail. But his curiosity had also focused on Peru and Mexico, the latter claiming its own peasant revolution and socialist experiment surprisingly in tandem with Russia. These events inspired unrest and organizing in Peru, as well

[196] On the Kovalevsky Notebook's omission from *Cuadernos de Pyp,* the Argentine dissertation of Juan Pablo Patriglia, "Aricó y García Linera, Un estudio contrastado," says, "De alguna manera, puede decirse que es una forma de continuar con la labor editorial de Aricó, quien anunciaba, en la Advertencia del Cuaderno *PyP* n° 87 *Escritos sobre Rusia I. Revelaciones sobre la historia diplomática secreta del siglo XVIII* (1980), que se publicarían luego la correspondencia con Vera Zasúlich sobre la comuna rural rusa, los apuntes sobre Kovalevksy, entre otros. No obstante, en el Cuaderno de *PyP*, el n° 90, *Escritos sobre Rusia 2. El porvenir de la comuna rural rusa*, donde se editan la correspondencia de Marx con Zasúlich y la carta de Marx al periódico ruso "Anales de la Patria", el "Cuaderno Kovalevsky" brilla por su ausencia." This would seem confirmed by AGL's footnote to *Cuaderno de Pyp No. 90* in his Kovalevsky introduction.

as the career of the young Communist José Carlos Mariátegui. Having witnessed chapters of the German and Italian revolutions first-hand, Mariátegui returned home in the 1920s to help found the Peruvian Socialist Party and carried out a brief but perdurable inquiry into the function of Marxism for Latin America.

Inheritors of Mariátegui's theoretical application of Marxism to Latin American reality, AGL and Aricó each launched revolutionary projects that shed light on their opposing directions over questions including state formation, indigenous integration and national development. Recall that C.L.R. James preferred to replace the ambiguous 'independence' with the struggle for 'self-determination', and above all 'national development' as a necessary path towards socialism and liberation. In the Appendices and other chapters, I have examined the Cuban Revolution as demonstrating the incomplete achievement of the first independence, and the U.S.'s role thwarting its advance. Thus, AGL and Aricó's trajectories feature a familiar proliferation of national resistance, including guerrilla groups amid the revolutionary wave of the 1960s, and capitalism's redirection of national development into its inverse, underdevelopment.

The events leading to the publication of the Kovalevsky Notebooks constitute a lesser known side of AGL's biography. Politicized first in 1979 by the uprising of Bolivia's indigenous campesino union (the CSUTCB) against the ensuing military dictatorships, Álvaro and his brother Raul would attend university in Mexico in the early 1980s. There, they encountered a radical diaspora from the dirty wars raging in Central America. The Mexican government at that time permitted the presence and solidarity activity of these groups on the basis that they avoid interference in domestic politics, whether hedging their bets on a Sandinista victory or for leverage in the case of defeat. The García Linera brothers were joined by two other young Bolivian radicals as well as two Mexican solidarity activists, Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar and Fiorela Calderón, forming a militant cell dedicated at first to analyzing the revolutionary wave underfoot.

Did AGL and Aricó meet while they were both in Mexico, before returning to their respective countries? John Kraniauskas suggests so, whereas Fabiola Escárzaga states only that the group read Marx with "two Argentine exiles from the ERP," a group with which Aricó had some connections. While a member of Peru's Shining Path also attended, the Bolivians were above all swayed by the example of two FLMN combatants from El Salvador. Some of the reasons for this can be deduced.

In the context of Bolivia's indigenous majority where all others were essentially white, the García Lineras came from a light-skinned, middle-class family,[197] and they were first oriented towards the mestizo-identified mining proletariat that remained the dominant political force until its dispersal in 1986.[198] René Zavaleta, a historian of Bolivia's Chaco War, is one of the few to grasp the link between the proliferation of guerrilla groups and the state's use of militarization as a means of modernizing and integrating the peasantry (*descampesinización*). The disaster of Che Guevara's guerrilla launch against the Bolivian government in the late '60s, followed by the Teoponte failure it inspired in the early '70s, had soured the reputation of *foquismo* for the same faults made painfully clear by Che in his Bolivian diaries: This being the division among the sectors of Bolivian society that prevented a unified national liberation front, a significant factor being the various linguistic and cultural differences that persisted among the indigenous groups partially or incompletely integrated by colonialism. The major ethnic groups include the Aymara

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[197] Escárzaga describes them as a fallen aristocracy, whereas J.C. Pinto, their other member also from Cochabamba, is "from a middle-class family that spoke in Quechua." She continues, "We assume the self-identification as mestizos proposed by Álvaro García, although the mestizo condition in Bolivia doesn't exist under this term: to the creole elites from which they come and to the indians with whom they allied they are whites. The three hail from Cochabamba (a city and department more mestizo and with less ethnic segregation than La Paz)."

[198] This crucial event in the history of the continent's working class was sparked by the government's closure of the mines, dismissing its long-term ally (following the MNR's 1952 revolution) and flipping the script on its prior strategy of pitting the miners against the indigenous peasants. The approximately 30,000 suddenly unemployed found themselves uprooted and largely drifted in three directions: the cocalero production in the Chapare Cochabambino rainforest valleys; the rising logging industry in the new economic center of the country's east; and the magnetic pull of neighboring Argentina's urban wages (the harsh conditions these immigrants encountered there is documented in Israel Adrián Caetano's film *Bolivia (2001)).*

(relatively unified, geographically dominant in the western highplains), the Quechua (in fact amassing many different dialects and ethnicities formerly integrated under the Incas), and the Tupiguaraní (also a generalized category for groups in dispersed pockets of the southern Charco and Amazon regions). Steven Soderbergh's *Che II: Bolivia* dramatizes one of the debates between Che and the Secretary General of the Bolivian Communist Party, Mario Monje, over this strategic obstacle. The peasants formed into the battalion are warned by Monje that Guevara is an outsider, "He is not even Bolivian." They respond, "No, but he is like Bolívar, he fights as a Latin American." These strategic differences emerged in the guerrilla wars of Central America, where *foquismo* was challenged by Maoism over the crucial question of integrating the indigenous peasants into a mass line. While Guevara remained open to Maoist applications in Latin America, the *foco* was intended to be a site for transforming politics and social relations away from the party that still held this greater role for the people's war strategy.[199]

Before AGL would encounter these debates in Mexico, they first gained traction in Guatemala, the country in which Guevara had witnessed the CIA's 1954 coup d'état of the Arbenz government after its flirtation with socialist agrarian reform. In addition to inspiring the strategic adjustments Guevara would make in the approach to the Cuban revolution in the following years, the ensuing crackdowns on the Mayan majority of Guatemala prompted theorizations of indigeneity movements, guerrilla groups, the concept of autonomy, and a bloody counter-revolutionary war (often described as a Mayan genocide).[200] These events tarnished the progressive reputation that had attached to Guatemala especially through its literary sensation Miguel Ángel Asturias.

[199] Guevara, Ernesto Che. "People's War, People's Army" and "Development of a Marxist Revolution" in *Che: Selected Works of Ernesto Guevara,* (eds.) Rolando E. Bonachea and Nelson P. Valdes. Cambridge: MIT Press. A comparison of Foquismo and People's War can be found in Egan, Daniel. *The Dialectic of Position and Maneuver: Understanding Gramsci's Military Metaphor*, Brill, 2016.
[200] The coup itself is the subject of Vargas Llosa's *Tiempos recios,* while the fall-out across ensuing decades is perhaps most famously captured in Rigoberta Menchú's *testimonio* about her father's participation in the guerrilla war, his murder inside the Spanish Embassy by US-backed Guatemalan forces in 1980, and the atrocities suffered by her family as reprisals.

Asturias bore several similarities with his friend and contemporary, Alejo Carpentier. Educated in France where they met and collaborated, they both associated with the Surrealist movement (which had deep ties to the French Communist Party), each in situations of exile following anti-dictatorial agitation in their respective countries. Attaching themselves to each one's national revolution, Carpentier with Castro and Asturias first and more closely with Arbenz (and then the moderate Montenegro of the late '60s), both would participate as ambassadors of state for those left governments – Carpentier much more extensively. Considered central progenitors of the Latin Boom, Asturias' Nobel for literature was the second in Latin America after Gabriela Mistral in 1945. But like her, his critical standing in recent years has come down a notch, due to his defensible investment in a reconstructed Mayan worldview that sought equality and legal standing against the prevailing racial prejudice under the Chiquita Banana Republic. In these efforts, Asturias translated sacred Mayan texts like the *Popul Vuh,* taking authorial liberties with the text's lacking transliterations and lost meanings. As we have seen, this orientation parallels Carpentier's first phase dominated by the *negrismo* movement (quoting Asturias's *Popul Vuh* multiple times as late as 1953 in *Los pasos perdidos)*, but a critical reckoning with the romanticism of which proved to be the pivotal realist gesture underlying *lo real maravilloso.* For Asturias, the Maya that he championed remain in disquiet subordination, but their bloody repression and militant response, which escalated sharply from the time of his death in 1974, clash with his tone of ethnography and social inclusion.[201]

In 1962, after being tortured and jailed, Asturias's eldest son Rodrigo took asylum in Mexico where he studied and taught at the UNAM, before returning to Guatemala in 1971 where he would help found and lead the Organization of People in Arms (ORPA) for several decades.[202]

[201] Brotherston, Gordon. *Book of the Fourth World,* Cambridge University Press, 1992.
[202] Rodrigo was known by the nom de guerre *Comandante Gaspar Ilom,* taken from his father's novel *Hombres de maíz,* itself derived from a historical *cacique* rebel Gaspar Hijom' (according to Gerald

The two groups from the Guatemalan Civil War that AGL would encounter and learn from in Mexico were the Guerrilla Army of the Poor (EGP) and the ORPA. Another influence on AGL and his companions were the Sandinistas, who sought to rebuild the earlier national liberation armies of Augusto César Sandino, Farabundo Martí, and José Martí. But it was El Salvador where the political tendencies conformed most closely with the impressions of struggle held by the Bolivian youths in Mexico. There, the Salvadoran Communist Party had endorsed *foquismo* in the 1960s as part of their own national liberation struggle. However, in 1969 a splinter of militants led by Salvador Cayetano Carpio, alias *Comandante Marcial,* founded the Popular Liberation Front (FPL), and sought to provoke a mass uprising inspired by the Maoist line, rejecting the launch of a guerrilla foco. Absorbing these debates and experiences in anticipation of their own guerrilla launch, the young Bolivians joined the Mexican cells providing a wide-array of support to the wars in Central America, from materiél like arms, training, and hospice, to solidarity work that sought amnesty for prisoners, raised money, and sent human rights observers.

Towards the end of 1983 the group purposely maintained distance from the above-ground militants and Bolivian communities in order to do physical training in the volcanic wilderness outside of Mexico City, and prepare to slip back into Bolivia as an armed cell. Once relocated there, they were introduced by a comrade-in-arms to Felipe Quispe Huanca, an Aymaran peasant union organizer who had also recently returned from exile in Perú, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, and finally, adding to his Bolivian Air Force training, a year of instruction from the Cuban military. Quispe was then the leader of the Tupac Katari Federation of Peasant Workers from La Paz (FDTCLP-TK), and along with others in the group like Jaime Apaza Chuquimia had

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Martin)*,* another example of the guerrilla's literary shadow, like Gustavo Petro's adoption of *Comandante Aureliano* from Márquez or Afeni Shakur naming her son Tupac. Cf. Heras, Saúl Hurtado. "Los hombres de maíz se volvieron guerrilleros...Miguel Ángel Asturias en la visión de su hijo, el comandante Gaspar Ilom." Entrevista con Rodrigo Asturias Amado, *Espéculo- Revista de estudios literarios*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2007.

concluded on the necessity of an armed uprising. That perspective met with deep commonality among the Bolivian-Mexican youths, who were valued by the indigenous for their access to printing resources and contacts with miners and urban militants. The mass dismissal of the mining proletariat in 1986 would invert the inherent hierarchies of the alliance, with both factions theorizing the indigenous peasant as the new revolutionary subject of history.[203]

The events that follow from this premise are better known: Quispe and AGL's factions form the Tupaj Katari Guerrilla Army (EGTK), a network of militant cells whose base is the indigenous peasantry and ex-mining proletariat. Although the uprising coincides with the peak years of Sendero Luminoso's exercise of dual power in Peru (1989-92), both Bolivian factions' leadership and cadre are captured by the end of 1992 before gaining mass support or any major military victories – their early acts of sabotage prematurely leading to infiltration by the authorities. The major impact of the EGTK is immediately and lastingly the inter-ethnic accord that seems to override those divisions that had plagued both vanguards and mass movements hitherto. While in jail, the two groups maintain their solidarity, continuing their research and theoretical work.

It is in the context of the armed rising and subsequent incarceration that AGL publishes the article on Aricó and Bolívar, "América," alongside a translation of the lost (at least to Spanish language readers) Kovalevsky notebooks of Marx. These notebooks were partly published in English by Lawrence Krader as *The Asiatic Mode of Production* in 1975, but left out some sections of Marx's writings on Latin America that remain forthcoming from the massive MEGA undertaking.[204] What AGL is able to recover in his introduction is Marx's nuanced understanding

[203] These details on the formation of the E.G.T.K. are informed above all by Fabiola Escárzaga's *La comunidad indígena insurgente.*

[204] Much useful information regarding the MEGA and the anthropological notebooks is given in the work of Enrique Dussel and by Kevin Anderson's *Marx at the Margins.* The specific details on these particular notebooks are given by Néstor Kohan, "El Marx tardío y la concepción multilineal de la historia." Kohan explains that Marx's notes on Kovalevsky regarding original communities of the Americas such as the Dakota, Maya, Inca, Aztec, Nootka, Náhuatl, Eskimo, and Aimoré, alongside other studies of communal property in India, Algeria, etc., are housed in the collection of the *Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale*

of the incompatibility of European theories of feudalism for grasping the alternative modes of production that populate the continents of the global south. This completely refutes the mid-20th Century stereotype of Marxist 'stage-theory', which suggests a standardized model of development from the primitive community through feudalism to capitalism, before advancing onto communism. Instead, the notebooks show Marx comparing the property and social relations of ancient India, Algeria, and Latin America based on the anthropological work of the Russian Maxim Kovalevsky (alongside a wide array of scholarly sources).[205] In examining Peru's pre-colonial social formation, the category of 'private property' is dismissed in favor of collective and individual 'possession', arguing that if landed property cannot be 'alienated' then its use and maintenance more closely resembles stewardship than our concept of land-ownership.

The implications of these distinctions are explored by AGL in this extended section which it is necessary to quote in full:

> Against this "feudalist" position, Marx was concerned with grasping the real nature of societies with extensive communitarian relations, because that communitarian aspect, still widely surviving under colonization and industrial capitalism, was for him the key and core possibility for socialist revolution in those countries,[206] without being obliged to pass through the complete proletarianization of society that, in many cases, while bringing a new form of society closer to the possibility of communism in equal measure foreclosed it; such as in Europe where the full subsumption of society (including the countryside) to capital has created its own mechanisms that also constantly strangle the socialist wars of the proletarian masses. The persistence of communitarian relations under transformed conditions or on paths of dissolution, on a national scale, are for Marx a new revolutionary force, not only granting the industrial proletariat the possibility of an allied revolutionary bloc in its struggle against capital, but furthermore the community makes of itself an objective force

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Geschiedenis-IISG in Amsterdam, catalogued as IISG B140. Partially published by Krader in English, the rest of the sections on the Americas from IISG B140 are only available in Hans-Peter Harstick's *Karl Marx über Formen vorkcapitalischister Production: Vergleichende Studienzur Geschichte des Grundeigentumbs 1879-1880.* Frankfurt/Main: Campus-Verlag, 1977. The MEGA website, as of 2024, claims to be nearing the final publication of the booklet that Marx titled "A", in a single edition for the first time, containing his excerpts from 1879-1881 on Kovalevsky alongside Sewell, Bücher, and others, in the MEGA² IV/27 issue.

[205] Kovalevsky, Maxim. *Obscinnoe zemlevladenie. Priciny chod i posledstvie ego razlozenija [Posesión comunal de la tierra. Causas, desarrollo y consecuencias de su decadencia],* 1879.

[206] Karl Marx, "Letter to Vera Zasúlich." in *Cuadernos de Pasado y Presente,* No. 90, 1980. [AGL's footnote]

> added to those born into antagonism with capitalism, showing us the proximity and possibility of communist revolution in our countries.
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> But, just as Marx takes note of this revolutionary characteristic of the peasant community, he also points out the presence of internal and external antagonistic forces that lead to the dissolution of existing communal bonds: external forces such as the capitalist relations that, in the uninterrupted process of incorporating the countryside under its laws, seek to choke off the community or, in other cases, formally subsume communal labor to capital, transforming the ancient associative relations into caricatures; and internal forces such as the tendency towards individual control over some lands, inequality in the control of livestock, the possession of "domestic indians" by the communal authorities for cultivating land prior to and during the colony, individual labor on parcels or, finally, private property, which push the community into dissolution. Conscious of this, Marx chose not to glorify the community in its present state, nor much less did he try to invent charitable excuses for requesting the bourgeois state to "protect" the community. On the contrary, he saw that the ancestral community could only develop itself and promulgate its collectivist roots so long as it was capable of sustaining general uprisings against the capitalist regime, that is, so long as the communal masses carry out a revolutionary war as a fundamental part of the Socialist Revolution of urban and rural workers, which must put an end as much to the individualist forces interior to the community as to the capitalist regime that plagues it around the world. Then, the community will not only have to conserve itself, but will be pressed to recuperate its initial conditions of association and control by the producers over production; and most of all, it will do so in new and superior conditions due to the existence of new productive forces and wealth, as well as the global presence of the proletariat, which makes possible the incorporation of that wealth and its social, common, and communitarian control directly by the workers; therefore, the overcoming of the ancient conditions that for centuries pushed the community towards its slow dissolution.[207]

For García Linera, Marx grasps implicitly both the nuanced importance that the Andean indigenous have for launching socialism on the continent (in part by resuscitating their proto-communist form of production and social unit, the *ayllu*) as well as dialectically pinning their victory to the proletariat's. Therefore he avoids the en vogue fetishization of indigenous as noble savages that was the strategy of the neoliberal Bolivian governments in the 1980s, foreseeing that the peasant's conservative tendencies stem both from the exterior pressures of capitalism (privatization, wage-labor) as well as interior forces such as the accumulation of property by individuals.

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[207] Originally published as *Introducción al Cuaderno Kovalevsky de Karl Marx*, La Paz: Ofensiva Roja, 1989, and later in the 2007 edition of *La potencia plebeya: Acción colectiva e identidades indígenas, obreras y populares en Bolivia* by CLASCO, Bogota and Siglo del Hombre. [translation mine]

Furthermore, the passage helps restore the dialectical vitality of Marx's use of the term civil society. For Rousseau, private property is the launch of civil society, which is moreover a privateer (a privateer of land no less). Civil society is the curious social arrangement that recognizes as natural law the claim to private property upon land, which for Rousseau is inherently indivisible, making the civil society that codifies this arrangement something perverse. What Marx describes as civil society's vitality (terminology at the crux of the AGL-Aricó dispute) has to be the dialectical energy that brings together this indivisible quality of land, qualified here as that of the 'stewards' who recognize its non-possessability, and the State that enacts violence, taxes and appropriation of property based on society's governing wishes. Civil society then emerges as the meeting point between the sub-propertarian base of material wealth and the State's violent and perverse misdirection of its resources.

In addressing Aricó, AGL couples these insights with the scattered texts written by Marx on Latin America in specific alongside writings on indigenous and anti-colonial movements from India to Algeria. Noting Marx's defense of Mexican autonomy against US annexation policies and the later Anglo-French invasions, while nominally based on 'rights to independence' and in opposition to the expansion of slave-states, AGL characterizes these positions as of a piece with Asian resistance to the English as part of a "global reform movement" for national autonomy against colonialism. What is more, Marx's pessimism regarding the region's underdevelopment is taken together with the revolutionary potential of the indigenous peasantry as two complementary puzzle pieces that reflect a Marxist grasp of Latin American reality.

A final indication of AGL's interest in the Kovalevsky material is seen in another publication of Marx by Ofensiva Roja. While selections from Krader's *Ethnological Notebooks* are self-explanatory, more curious was Álvaro's introduction to Raquel's translation of an

unpublished 1845 critique of Friedrich List. List was a German industrialist and advocate of protectionism against Adam Smith's free trade promotion. Marx measures their utility at different points along the bourgeois path of national development, which the proletariat must break with to escape its perpetual servitude in the advanced free market. Selecting texts that were 35 years apart in Marx's career, AGL finds another class subject tempted to protect obsolete economic privileges that can only be radicalized by their own collective power.

Following incarceration, AGL sought the adequate forms of organization that follow from these insights, in a trajectory that now clarifies his distinct interpretation of Marx's Bolívar article. Some concluding comments are necessary on that trajectory as it relates to his training in Mexico that curiously also sheltered Aricó, Quispe, and Bolivia's then best-known Marxist, René Zavaleta. Although their milieux overlapped at the UNAM, Raquel and the García Linera brothers were students ranging around 20 years old, while Zavaleta and Aricó (then about 50) had participated in revolutions and survived military coups. AGL experienced the violent disruption of Mexico's political culture brought about by the dirty wars in Central America which was given such narrative heft in Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives,* another resident exile. In Zavaleta's case, more than a refuge, these currents seemed to draw him to Mexico and enrich his criticism of the MNR's revolutionary nationalism. His tenure there until his death in 1984 included important institutional posts such as the directorship of the FLASCO, marking an internationalist turn in works such as *El poder dual en América latina* that confronted the new trends of armed insurgency and military coups.

The Mexican Revolution produced in the 1930 Estrada Doctrine one of the world's preeminent foreign policies, Cuba's notwithstanding, from its material support for the Spanish Republic to AMLO's embattled assistance to the coup-targeted regimes of Correa and Morales.[208] In its role

[208] See Appendix C.

as a safe ground for many of the militants escaping the dirty wars in South and Central America, its closeness to Cuba, and undergoing its own crisis of a post-revolutionary ossification, Mexico in the late 70s and 80s seems to mark a time and place of transition in the continent's revolutionary politics. In Escárzaga's work, this is the originary moment of *la comunidad indígena insurgente,* a phase designating the three indigenous-led revolutionary movements in Perú (the Shining Path and MRTA), Bolivia (the EGTK), and Mexico (EZLN). Indeed, this turn is concretely theorized by the EGTK as the shift in the revolutionary subject in Bolivia from the mining proletariat to the indigenous peasant with the 1986 state closure of the mines and dismissal of 30,000 workers, sparking both a real migration to the cocalero regions of Cochabamba and the tipping of power from the older political parties towards the major campesino union, the CSUTCB. However, the primacy of indigenous identity in the struggles examined by Escárzaga does not necessarily constitute a break with the prevailing concern with neo-colonialism and US imperialism seen in the revolutions in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Grenada. The thrust of AGL's intervention via the Kovalevsky Notebooks is towards the continuity and interrelation of proletarian and peasant struggles.

This section has examined the contribution of the Kovalevsky Notebooks to our growing understanding of the link between the class dynamics of independence and the Latin American reality that ensues. Looking more closely at the indigenous question in Bolivia specifically, the following section completes this reconstruction of independence and sets up the contrasting picture of Aricó's Argentina, after which the debate's conclusions can be fully drawn.

Armies of the National-Popular

Following their release from prison after about 5 years, AGL's career begins to separate from the other EGTK cadre. Raquel Guttiérez participates in the early 2000s mass movements that eventually see two governments collapse and the election of Evo Morales as Bolivia's first indigenous president. She then returns to Mexico as an activist-academic, becoming a visible and mordant critic of the Morales regime. Their romance ended, AGL positions himself in Bolivian media and print spheres as an *intérprete* of the indigenous struggles, with which he allied, countering the fear and rejection aimed at them by the creole and mestizo public. In naming AGL his vice-presidential candidate, Morales at once pacified light-skinned fears of an all-indigenous government, while simultaneously gaining support from indigenous sectors favorable to AGL's involvement with radical *katarismo*.

However, it is the indigenous component of the EGTK that most demonstrably confronts Bolivia's underdevelopment and merely nominal national independence, and where to best see the violent implications these carry in the context of late 20th Century U.S. hegemony. The trajectory of AGL's comrade-in-arms Felipe Quispe is more complicated and resists simple classification as either allied with or opposed to the MAS movement after 2005. Never identifying as a Marxist himself, his formation instead involves a deepening of the *indianista* movement launched in the 1960s by Fausto Reinaga. He incorporates Marxist concepts of class conflict and the liberatory organization of socialist society into his reframing of the Tupaj Katari uprising, deliberately hewing closely to the student, proletariat, and especially campesino unions' mass katarista line; a line Reinaga increasingly bucked as his career ended in obscurity and isolation. Just as with AGL, Quispe's years of militancy and incarceration (from the mid-'80s to mid-'90s) were fruitful for theoretical production. First, in 1986, he published *Revolutionary War of Ayllus, 1781-1783.* This text unearths the indigenous uprising that shook colonial Peru, with Quispe trenchantly emphasizing the conflict's class components, as well as the proto-communist character of the (still-surviving) Aymaran social mode of the *ayllu.* In other

accounts, such as Reinaga's, Tupac Katari had been a *cacique* nobleman just like the indigenous leaders Tupac Amaru II and Thomas Katari; whereas Quispe "recovers the fact that he was not a noble but an indian commoner, making his program more radical in that he not only fought colonial domination but the exploitation of the peasantry as well."[209] He also cites the female leadership of Katari's wife Bartolina Sisa and his sister Gregoria Apaza. The uprising's base were commoners, those indebted by the *encomienda* legacy and the forced labor system known as *mita.* Now a central text for the Katarista movement, *Revolutionary War of Ayllus* redefined the character and living conditions of the traditional Aymaran warriors in whose image the "Tawantisuyo continent" of the Incan empire would be resuscitated.

Sisa's leadership allows us to trace the connections between this uprising and the ultimately successful wars of succession that began in 1810. Juana Azurduy de Padilla, of mestizo and indigenous descent, was born in Chuquisaca at the time of the uprising and would become a guerrilla leader against the Spanish. She spoke Aymara and Quechua, attacked the system of silver mining, led indigenous battalions, and participated in the early 1809 revolution of Upper Peru that precipitated the long war she would see through to completion. In this way, she stood in stark contrast to members of the elite like Katari's executioner Pedro Domingo Murillo, who sought leadership over the Chuquisaca revolt.

The sometimes spectacular nature of the guerrilla is inverted in Quispe's retrieval of ancient Aymaran wisdom, leading him to later be known as *el Mallku,* the supreme condor who communicates with the heights of the spiritual world. Early robberies and appropriations of the EGTK were in fact motivated by the need to properly disseminate and publicize these efforts. In his 1988 *Tupak Katari vuelve…carajo!,* the communitarian form of production marking the *ayllus*

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[209] Escárzaga, Fabiola, "The EGTK: Bolivia's Aymara Insurgency." Cabell, P., trans. *Historical Materialism Journal,* forthcoming.

is contrasted to the deep dysfunction and rampant poverty that the Spanish wrought. Their racism is characterized as a social stupidity in contrast to the flourishing intellectual development of the *amauta* system of "ideologists, philosophers, military strategists, astronomers, and engineers." The war of 1781 made use of their familiarity with the territory and local particularities, encircling the cities and paralyzing their access to the outside world, a tactic known as the *cerco* or siege by the indigenous majority (one of Quispe's 'discoveries' that was crucially enlisted in the revolutionary wave of 2000-03). His description of a 'socialism of *ayllus,'* nominally rejecting Marxist labels, is instead a deeply scientific and practically informed system of communitarian measures including, "The *aynuqa*: the rotation of soil in the cultivation zones, rotating cultivation of different products so the land will rest; the *waki*: collaboration with land and seeds and equal repartition; the *ayni*: lending of labor; the *minka*: compensation in products for labor cooperation with the farming endeavors; the *pirwas*: deposits; and the *sixis*: cereal deposits."[210] He describes the commoners' participation in the war council and the full mobilization of society between 1781-83 in supplying the fronts. Quispe emphasizes the refusal of the creoles to collaborate and the essential reinforcements from Rio de la Plata that ultimately shift the tide in favor of the colony, but does not shirk at naming the traitors and internal enemies from the ranks of indigenous and mestizos. These betrayals are linked to the contemporary 'masquerade' of agrarian reform that was won and militated for by the Left from the 1952 revolution. Just as with the conclusions AGL draws from Marx on the reactionary effects of land partition, Quispe highlights the vertical social structure that the 'liberated peasants' are integrated into, in the sense of neoliberalism's further transfer of resource control into the circle of hands from the 'yellow' unions and political parties, up to the monopolies, the mining, industrial, finance and commercial bourgeoisies, and above all the hands of foreign capital.

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[210] Escárzaga, *ibid.* And Quispe Huanca, Felipe. *Tupak Katari vuelve…carajo*. Chukiyawu Marka, La Paz: Ediciones Ofensiva Roja, 1988.

This emphasis on the continuity of 1781 with the present, however suppressed and formally subsumed, demonstrates the relevance of the perspective on independence drawn from the Bolívar debate. The conditions that Quispe articulates also affirm several of AGL and Marx's considerations on the Americas' ancient social forms. While Quispe's rivalry with Evo Morales sees him outside of and opposed to the novel MAS party that governs following 2006, this should not be taken as merely a continuation of what Marx described as the hollow authoritarian states overlaid upon a civil society without integration of its vitality. Much of the indigenous base from the CSUTCB that made the revolution would go on to participate in the state-union network of administration, one example being the central role within MAS of the Federated Union of Female Peasants in Bolivia – Bartolina Sisa (FSMCB-BS). Similarly, Quispe's Pachakutik party and mobilizations reflect a radical opposition in flux with the base that militates for the coalition's original goals and progress, avoiding the 'regime change' efforts and identitarian depoliticization with which USAID has targeted the new middle classes and the artistic-academic complex.[211] Rather, Bolivia's ('pink?' 'red?') 21st Century economic boom may in fact suggest that Marx was again prophetic in where his Kovalevsky Notebooks identified the source of social vitality.

[211] See for example the alignment of the Mujeres Creando group with western anarcho-feminism. And Escárzaga, Fabiola. "The EGTK: Bolivia's Aymara Insurgency", *ibid.*

Argentina and the Public Sphere

- This section reviews Aricó's biography in light of the Bolívar debate, and contrasts the conditions of Argentina and Bolivia.

This personal engagement with indigenous civil society, which is overlaid but unintegrated by the state, sheds light on AGL's reading of Marx. The crux of his debate with Aricó hinges on the category of national development, a concept seemingly esoteric to radical Marxism's other future-orientated preoccupations like council communism and dual power. The particular path of national development pursued in Argentina follows a historical sequence that will need to be carefully reconstructed in order to witness Aricó's curious claim that the State is the producer of the nation and civil society. Furthermore, Argentina's high degree of social integration, implicit to *peronismo*, makes it an important case for an investigation of the national-popular in the Americas.

García Linera finds in Marx a defense of indigenous autonomy as a socially vital force capable of throwing off neoliberal rule through the substantive development of the nation's natural and human resources. In much more industrially developed Argentina, Aricó experienced the State reaching down into civil society and managing to accomplish the counterfeiting of social vitality. That process was read by AGL to have failed in Bolivia where, despite their own internal individualist tendencies, the rural movements and indigenous commune maintained significant autonomy from various attempts at 'indianist' co-optation. These competing encounters with the Americas' combined and uneven development demonstrate the crucial principle for each thinker of orientating national development away from the capitalist path.

"Pancho" Aricó's early political life coincided with a vibrant and deeply unstable period of Argentine history, which finally gave way to the U.S. and DINA-backed military junta that took power from 1976 to 1983. This volatile and unpredictable epoch was marked by widespread worker militancy, the persistence of the nationalist-collectivist Peronism, a proliferation of leftist guerrilla groups, and the crash-landing of the import-substitution economic strategy that had brought about mass participation from the previously unintegrated trade-unions.

Already once exiled, Aricó engaged with a broad range of left-wing militancy during the 1960s vía the short-lived journal *Pasado y presente (Pyp),* above all theorizing the events in motion and offering strategic commentary to strikers and guerrillas alike. The group was seated in the industrial stronghold of Cordobá, "The epicenter of the social conflict of the '50s and '60s, which saw a convergence between the left peronist and socialist milieux, a breakdown of the student-worker opposition, and was home to the birth of the [Peronist] Montoneros and the [Guevarist] ERP's signal period of maturation."[212] Their influence was also felt during a worker

[212] Aricó, José. *La cola del diablo*: *Itinerario de Gramsci en América Latina,* Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2005.

uprising known as the *Cordobazo* in 1969, the most far-reaching of several explosions where power in the cities passed over to student and worker-councils behind barricades. Thus, Aricó had first-hand experience with forms of self-governance directly administered by workers. An inescapable distinction from the indigenous guerrilla context that would influence García Linera is the decidedly urban setting of the two main guerrillas mentioned above, although Aricó also collaborated with Masetti's Guevarist EGP operating out of the Salta jungle. The dynamics of *descampesinación* noted by Zavaleta were not a factor in Argentina, which earlier in the century had squashed the peasants of Patagonia, driven rural workers to the cities, and seen its once mighty agricultural trade fall. Suspected of ties to the Montoneros, Aricó managed to escape arrest when their preparations were eclipsed by Varela's coup.

Aricó returned to exile from 1976 to 1983, this time in Mexico, where his theoretical output would redouble. There he published *Marx y América latina,* the work that AGL would read and respond to in "América." Cortés writes that he "formed part of the Argentine Solidarity Commission (CAS), as did several of his comrades from Pasado y Presente. Presided over by… a former member of the Contorno journal, the CAS group carried out diverse solidarity activities that ranged from providing housing, work and immigration papers for arriving Argentines, as well as denouncing the Argentine dictatorship. The group also acted as a space in which exiles could formulate different political and cultural initiatives." Aricó also continued the journal *Cuadernos de pasado y presente,* a key document of anti-authoritarian Marxism in Latin America, among whose tendencies included Paul Mattick, Rosa Luxembourg, Anton Pannekoek, and I.I. Rubin. One of Aricó's distinctions is bringing the premiere archive of left-communist texts to Latin America for the first time. The continent's rich history of anarchist and grassroots insurrections demands more attention to theories that emphasize the synchronicity, rather than irreconcilability, between Marx's critique of capitalism and movements that adopt anti-authoritarian or populist characters. However, Aricó's own writing departed from

that constellation, whose nodes can be traced forward through the left-communism of Chilean Laín Diez to Julio Cortés Morales and the Argentine *Cuadernos de negación.*[213]

Hugo Vargas attributes Aricó's later output with being the central diffusion point of Gramscian thought in Argentina, ideologically bridging *peronismo* and socialism and thus alienating parts of the extra-parliamentary left.[214] For the British journal Aufheben, much more than a progressive or socialist ideology, Peronism was an essential mechanism for capitalism to overcome the peculiarities of Argentina's early industrial take-off and unruly labor movement, allowing forms of workplace-control and shop floor autonomy that, rather than gaining hegemony over the state, instead secretly elevated the union leadership into a labor aristocracy.[215] That ultimately positioned these *traidores,* 'traitors,' for the final betrayal of assisting the junta's seizure and subsequent persecution of left-militants around the country. In one of the great documents of revolutionary cinema, Raymundo Gleyzer's *Los traidores (1973),* narrates the rise of a union opportunist, Barrera (barrier), who perfects the capitalist technique of a 'false-strike' during periods of over-supply, only to entrap and torture the wildcat organizers who defrock him in a chilling anticipation of Gleyzer's own grisly murder a few years later.[216]

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[213] On Diez and the concurrent trajectory of 'communization' on the continent see Jara, Fabiola and Edmundo Magaña. *El rol del lumpen-proletariado en Chile (1970-1973),* Valparaiso: 2 & 3 Dorm, 2017.; text translated from the same IISH archives that house Marx's notes.

[214] *José Aricó: Pasado y Presente,* Revista Común, México, www.revistacomun.com

[215] Aufheben. "Picket and pot-banger together: Class recomposition in Argentina?" *Aufheben #11*, 2003. One of the signal accounts of *peronismo,* this essay combined critical distance with informed acumen, drawing especially from the Laclau-Gramsci scholar Ronaldo Munck.

[216] Strikes are a major theme in *Los traidores*, often considered from a skeptical standpoint. When the owners are suffering from over-supply, they have Barrera 'let some steam off' with the workers by performing a strike, thus saving them from paying wages for work they don't want done. The same theme is found in Bertolt Brecht's *St. Joan of the Stockyards*, which is also concerned with the false mobilizations of public power. For Brecht, the only proletarian public sphere or positive content of publicity comes about in the moments when the workers critique this false organization of their power. Gleyzer's critical practices within the PRT seemed to be doing just that exactly at the moment where his project was cut short, as he had anticipated it would be. Furthermore, the public sphere of *Los traidores* is dominated by authoritarian and corrupt male figures dictating public action with only their private interests in mind, *qua* Habermas's 'public sphere composed of private property owners.' The owners and union bureaucracy secretly managing a strike out of economic pragmatism is both a biting commentary on the essential, conservative role the bureaucracy played in *peronismo*, and an endorsement of the wildcat and self-organized mobilization of the early 1970s that the PRT linked itself to.

Barrera's neoliberal victory converted the semantics of national development to the realm of GDP, per capita income, and growth rates, but the AGL-Aricó debate puts it into conversation with councilist theorizations over the content and production of communism. Most immediately, what is the socialist substance of the *ayllu,* in its historical, Incan reality, and in its limited, 'interior to capitalism' contemporary reality? How does the indigenous nation's *amauta/mallku* knowledge system relate itself to Western concepts of democracy, rational discourse, and development? What potential do the relations described by Marx as 'possessive' rather than proprietary have to undo or revolutionize the land-labor-capital complex? What latent warfare capacities on the continent, corollary to the 20th Century guerrilla, might a communist or other counter-power exercise amidst the increasing portents of a 21st Century World War?

AGL's and Aricó's distinct experiences bring them to differing assessments of independence and the Republics that followed. AGL's contact with and investment in the autonomous Aymara led to the theorization of (indigenous) civil society unintegrated by, and thus still destined to complete, the construction of a nation hithertofore merely contained by the State as an extension of the colonial elites' privileges and extractive capacities. At his most dynamic, he posits the development of Aymaran society and capitalism as dual trajectories that at a certain point begin to interpenetrate. Thus, the vitality of society is the engine of national construction, but capital nonetheless shapes the conditions under which that society lives, and even develops the tendencies towards individual possession that are internal to the community. In Argentina, the uncertain accomplishments of peronist worker militancy suggests that it is the needs of the State, and capital behind it, that in fact manipulate the fates of the workers' society. Yet, as with AGL, Aricó's theory has a nuance, as it refuses to give up on worker organization, instead emphasizing the false opposition between shop-floor organization and worker consciousness. In other words, if capital was able to 'learn' workerist culture (through their proxies in the traitorous

stewards and union bosses), the proletariat in turn is capable (through its tools like Marxism and failed experiences with self-organization) of learning capital's limits and avoiding dead-end practices such as seeking to manage the bourgeois State. *Peronismo* was in some ways a defeat for the working class, and in other ways a manifestation of its strength.

Conclusion: A Napoleon of Defeat

Aricó's core contribution to the debate can now be reconstructed, from which to draw some conclusions on how the Bolivian-Argentine axis reflects aspects of the indigenous-State polarity of Latin American reality. What is perhaps most intriguing in Aricó's thought is his defense of the political as the real determining instance of social life. On this ground he criticizes Marx for "reducing politics to the merely arbitrary" by holding that only civil society produces the state, and not, as Aricó maintains, vice-versa. Attempting to rectify this position, and apply the interrelated categories of class and national sectors that Marx allegedly reserved for analyzing events in Europe, Aricó offers a formidable correction to the Bolívar essay:

> It is surprising that [Marx] did not pay any attention to sources relating to the attitudes of the various layers of Latin-American society prior to the wars of independence, the peasant- or rural rebellions against the creole élites at the head of the revolution, the weakness of these élites's base among the mass of the population, in particular among black and indigenous people, who tended to back the Spanish cause; the abolition of forced labour and servitude; the distinct characteristics of the wars of independence in the South, where the urban élites managed to maintain control of the process and stave off the threat of an open confrontation between rich and poor, as compared to Mexico, where the revolution began as a generalized rebellion by the peasantry and indigenous people; and finally, the governing class's profound fear of a process reproducing the events of Túpac Amaru's indigenous uprising or the black rebellion in Haiti.[217]

[217] In the continuation of this long paragraph, Aricó qualifies Bolívar's limitations: "Standing between political and social disaggregation and the revolutionary desire to impose a new order ensuring individual freedom, between the need to destroy the old colonial order and the fear that this would unleash the uncontrolled fever of the masses, the Bolivarian project was not limited to authoritarianism or Bonapartism. Faced with the various options dividing the independence movement, itself having to deal with the continent's almost boundless heterogeneity, Bolivar fought to advance a project that, given the

At his most compelling, Aricó beseeches Marxism to take account of the wider, political reality of these social forces that, a few lines later, he terms “the national-popular.”

It is all the more strange that one of *Marx y América latina*’s legacies would become the defense of a populist Bolívar against the undeserved prejudices of Marx, when Bolívar was emblematic of that ‘governing class’s fear’ of racialization. Following the opportunism of using the slaves as cannon-fodder, Bolívar betrayed the Haiti that had saved him, campaigned loudly against the threats of a “pardocracia” (mulatto power) and executed several rival officers such as José Padilla in 1828, for the audacity of wanting “absolute equality.”[218]

In excusing Bolívar’s fear of unleashing “the uncontrolled fever of the masses (see footnote above),” Aricó in fact aligns with Losurdo’s definition of Bonapartism, albeit the ‘soft power’ version preferred by the U.S.. Indeed, Losurdo claims that Bonapartism emerges from just this dilemma when “it would not be wise or prudent to deny or take away the masses’ political rights, but it is appropriate to limit the exercise of these rights to the ability to choose from among individuals placed in a clearly superior sphere and endowed with very broad powers. What has, in more recent times, been called the ‘imperial presidency’ was the real alternative to a disemancipation process that, if pursued too openly, could have provoked sharp and even violent reactions.”[219] Where disenfranchisement through property or other qualifications is untenable, Bonapartism emerges as a concentration of power in the executive, a signature of Bolívar’s reign. That he intended that executive to secure the region a great power status is a bitter irony. If Bonapartism sought to quell domestic unrest through military adventures abroad,

growing hostility towards political radicalism that dominated Latin America’s governing élites after 1815, would establish a system based on a central authority that could play in the new situation the same role that the ecclesiastical and military administrative apparatus in the days of the Spanish crown. To a certain degree, Bolivar was trying to repeat in Spanish America what the Portuguese monarchy had managed to do in Brazil.” *Marx and Latin America,* p. 64. [here I have tried to improve on Broder’s translation]

[218] Helg, Aline. “Simón Bolívar and the Spectre of ‘Pardocracia’: José Padilla in Post-Independence Cartagena.” *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 3, 2003.

[219] *Bonapartism or Democracy. Op. cit.*

Latin America today presents the inverse: perennial risings from below, perpetually bullied by the country which perfected the formula.

Furthermore, in insisting on the autonomous character that politics can have from the economic, Aricó forfeits the dialectical character of Marx's State-Civil society relation, and sacrifices the awareness that politics are at least partially a false projection of illusions and performatory iterations of superstructural phenomena. As such, he concludes that Bolívar sought a "just" political compromise that would grant "representation" to all social elements, and attempts to compare this feat to Lenin's revolutionary party leadership in a vain justification.[220] The presumed innocence of a political leadership that can stand outside of the class struggle and make of the state a transparent conflict-mediator is reminiscent of this century's Social Democracy that falls into coalition with the liberal ruling class parties. But there are core distinctions. Aricó deployed Gramsci's thought in order to radicalize *peronismo,* thus generalizing hostility to authority as a norm, and forfeiting the state as a site where the proletariat would continue to contest with other sectors for power. So while Aricó adds description to the popular forces he found lacking in Marx, his argument presupposes that these would integrate into the state without qualitative transformation of the subjects and their state-form. At its worst, this formula would be enlisted by right-wing peronists for a neoliberal compact, within which any elements that threatened the globalization project were scuttled.

As we have seen, AGL offers a correction to this formula by foregrounding the necessary entanglement of the radical proletariat with the indigenous communes, the two forces that would indeed meet with short shrift under the Perónist Menem's neoliberal program. Aricó as well anticipated the convergence of the indigenous peasantry with capital's gravediggers, but with a

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[220] "The republican virtuosity advocated by Bolivar bore surprising resemblance to the conception upheld by Lenin…" *Marx and Latin America, Loc. cit.* pp. 64.

key difference. Lacking any contact with the autonomous Mapuche struggle in Argentina, Aricó would say to Waldo Ansaldi in 1986, "It was in Mexico for the first time that I came to know the indigenous peasantry."[221] Yet he compensated with voracious reading and in 1978 published a long introductory essay to an assortment of articles on Mariátegui, *Cuadernos de Pyp No. 60*, "Mariátegui y los orígenes del marxismo latinoamericano," which evinces a broad awareness of Peru's indigenous reality. Two years later he hosted the important Coloquio Mariateguiano in Culiacán, Sinaloa on the Peruvian Marxist's legacy. Mariátegui, considered unrivaled among Latin American Marxists by Michael Löwy, is held up for comparison by Aricó, naturally, with Gramsci. In the *Cuadernos de Pyp* introduction, Aricó applauds *el Amauta*'s search for the conditions of national-popular awakening against the grain of any preformulated schemas, writing:

> The alliance between the working class and peasantry, which is the basis for revolutionary socialist action, assumed in Peru's concrete conditions the particular historical form of the proletariat's alliance with the indigenous masses. But their unity was only possible if the *gamonalista* agrarian bloc were broken by the creation of autonomous and independent mass indigenous organizations. [The *gamonales* were the big parasitic landowners who violently expropriated the indigenous *ayllu*.] The fracturing of the intellectual bloc and the formation of a leftist tendency based in the perspective and demands of the indigenous masses, that maintained a sympathetic understanding with the urban labor struggles, represented an act of fundamental importance for Mariátegui, and therefore he called the creation of the Resurgimiento Group [in Cuzco] the preparatory launch of a significant national transformation. He believed that this movement (or other similar ones that appeared in various places in Peru) followed a path that would inevitably coincide with that of the working class…[222]

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[221] Cortés. *José Aricó and the New Latin American Marxism*, *Op. cit.*

[222] [Translation mine] Full quote: «Y porque en el Perú se trataba de organizar precisamente un gran movimiento nacional y popular capaz de crear una nación integrada, moderna y socialista, la necesidad de operar en el interior de una fuerza social histórica e ideológicamente situada se convertía en un problema político de primer orden. La heterodoxia de las posiciones de Mariátegui con respecto al problema agrario no derivan entonces de sus inconsecuencias ideológicas, de su formación idealista, ni de su romanticismo social, sino de su firme pie en tierra marxísta. Si el problema deja de ser considerado desde el punto de vista (idealista, claro está) de la adecuación de la realidad a un esquema prestablecido de propuestas rígidas, para ser visto desde el punto de vista gramsciano del análisis de las condiciones para que pueda formarse y desarrollarse una voluntad colectiva nacional-popular, Mariátegui nunca aparece más marxista que cuando se afirma en el carácter peculiar de la sociedad peruana para establecer una acción teórica y política transformadora. En su actitud frente al movimiento indigenista, y más en general frente al proceso de confluencia de la intelectualidad radicalizada y las masas populares peruanas, Mariátegui tiende a considerarlos —y el recuerdo de Sorel no es por ello casual— como una ejemplificación histórica del "mito" soreliano, es decir "como una creación de fantasía concreta que opera

Whereas AGL extracted from the *Kovalevsky Notebooks* the internal dynamics of the campesino social form that could both bolster and inhibit communization, Aricó focuses on the external conditions necessary for the peasant-worker encounter to be propitious. AGL found in Aricó an accomplished set of impasses in Latin American Marxism that pushed him to grasp the actual meaning of the indigenous peasantry's ascension in 1986 to the head of Bolivia's revolutionary movement. His critics tend to have it conversely that the Marxist path inevitably led the MAS towards authoritarianism: extractivism with an indigenous face. The Bolivian oligarchy had survived the nationalist labor MNR and the neoliberal, multi-plural indianism, but they suffered an unprecedented blow in 2005 under ripened conditions resembling those Aricó had described in Perú. In turning to the Kovalevsky Notebooks at a crucial point during these events, the EGTK found novel prescriptions for a peasant-worker alliance based on the region's historical conditions, just as the indigenous role within the popular classes adumbrated by Marx claimed a major victory. While Marx lacked contact with the Americas' indigenous world, he nonetheless charted a methodological approach that has been carried on in the revolutionary tradition from Mariátegui to AGL. Had Marx and Engels paid attention to the war of the Triple Alliance, they might have espied the same proto-socialism that struck Galeano, and they

sobre un pueblo disperso y pulverizado para suscitar y organizar su voluntad colectiva". La alianza de la clase obrera con el campesinado, que constituye el presupuesto de una acción revolucionaria socialista, en las condiciones concretas del Perú asumía la forma históricamente particular de la alianza del proletariado con las masas indígenas. Pero la confluencia de ambas fuerzas sólo resultaba posible si el bloque agrario gamonalista era destruido a través de la creación de organizaciones autónomas e independientes de las masas indígenas. La fracturación del bloque intelectual, la conformación de una tendencia de izquierda que colocada en la perspectiva y en las reivindicaciones de las masas indígenas, mantenía una relación de comprensión con las luchas obreras urbanas, representaba un hecho de fundamental importancia para Mariátegui, y por eso afirmó que la creación del Grupo Resurgimiento anunciaba y preparaba una profunda transformación nacional. Como creía firmemente que este movimiento (u otros semejantes aparecidos en diversos lugares del Perú) recorría un camino que indefectiblemente habría de coincidir con el de la clase obrera, respondió con violencia á quienes atribuyeron a oportunismo su posición. Ocurre que Mariátegui, a miles de kilómetros de distancia de otro dirigente marxista al que sólo conoció por interpósita persona, arribaba en virtud de una experiencia teórica y política tan singular como la de él, a la misma conclusión acerca del papel de los intelectuales, en cuanto que representantes de toda la tradición cultural de un pueblo. Nos referimos a Antonio Gramsci y a su escrito *Algunos temas sobre la cuestión meridional*, redactado por la misma época de la batalla pro "indigenista" de Mariátegui.» Introducción. "Mariátegui y los orígenes del marxismo latinoamericano." *Cuadernos de Pyp No. 60*, México, 1978.

certainly would have noticed the principals' Bonapartist pretensions in tension with the colonial schemes Louis Napoleon launched in Paraguay. Further inquiry will have to determine what role Latin America's 19th Century wars played in the development of the capitalist system.

Aricó sought to defend the method of Marxist materialism against the uncritical Hegelianism of Marx himself, positioning himself against dogmatic readings prescribed by an authoritarian Comintern. He spoke for a militant milieu that would determine its own relation to socialist thought and who, by questioning the supposed classics, would strengthen its critical praxis. The situation looks different today. Marx and Hegel are widely dismissed as a pair of European structuralists lacking our awareness of racially and sexually heterogenous subjectivities, by a form of expression that has little interest in the rigorous tarrying with the negative that birthed the dialectic. Dismissing Marx's view on Bolívar is not done in the name of a materialist class-analysis of independence, but against history itself as where racism comes from, and therefore as not having practical lessons for today's crucibles of independence and liberation. AGL quickly understood this and pointed out that Marx's late thinking on the people of Latin America was, if measured by its alignment with the most violently exploited group, to the left of Aricó's own. That reading has been welcomed coolly by some in the U.S. that identify with the anti-oppression orientation of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui against the poison pill of AGL's MAS governance.

Yet because Aricó attacks Marx in defense of a nuanced reading of Bolívar, which he does initiate in places, it belongs among the works that have defined Latin American Marxism – the tradition best equipped to grasp the meaning of independence as a truncated victory under a paradigm of class capture that today continues to impede the universalist realization of abolition and liberation. The Napoleonic symbol of Bolívar likewise has been reclaimed by the lower classes that Marx instinctively defended, in Venezuela and elsewhere. That character signifies a

unified Latin America without internal hierarchies that wields a power on the world stage commensurate with its size, significant resources, and rich social history.

Conclusion

What reality is shared between the Caribbean, South and North America? This dissertation presents a novel history of the Americas, moving from an incomplete or aborted struggle for independence from colonialism to a reconquest beneath the avarice of a U.S.-led enforcement of world capitalism. That history finds its greatest representation in the work of the Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier. In three interrelated essays, I argue that the Latin American reality revealed in Carpentier's literature affords a reconceptualization of the Americas and is complementary with seminal accounts of the region's genesis such as Galeano's *Venas abiertas de américa latina* and James' *The Black Jacobins.* That reconceptualization is composed of three key theses on the pre-history of the present. The first of these is the uncertain fate of the revolutions for independence that sees the history of plunder from the colonial period sublimated into the regional and racial divisions of the postcolonial era. The second is the unique popular character of the continent's political and cultural movements, tied to its history of creolization and the considerable 'extant nature' that colonialism failed to extinguish, which define what Carpentier labeled *lo real maravilloso*. The third is the rise of the United States as the world's guarantor of capitalism, its hegemonic role in the region's development, and its suppression and distortion of the communist movement that constitutes its central opponent and threat. A demonstration of each thesis from Carpentier's work and a discussion of their implications loosely conforms to the structure of chapters 1, 2, and 3 respectively, which overlap as well.

Each chapter works in a distinct register around a set of interrelated concepts. In regional-historical terms, the focus here is the independence struggle in Latin America, and Chapter 1 deals extensively with the literary representation of that struggle in *El siglo de las*

luces. This includes an evaluation of literature's capacities for historical realism, which in turn results in a re-appreciation for Carpentier's formalization of Latin American reality. At the same time, the chapter takes a polemical stance against the dominant reading of Carpentier by González-Echevarría, scrambling the context, comparisons, attention to form and revolutionary intentions of the text to dispel what I argue has been an inadequate approach.

Chapter 2 is guided by Carpentier's socio-musicological study, taking his methodological vantage point of *folklórico* for a study of national-popular music in the U.S. and Chile. This connects with Chapter 1 most clearly in the picture it develops of Latin American reality, no longer through historical fiction but rather the inventive cathexis that moves the musical spirit. Historical concerns are again foregrounded, now in a post-independence period in which the U.S. has preserved the unemancipated conditions of the earlier colonial order. Carpentier typifies one strain of cultural Marxism that militated its political aims especially through arts and letters, which in many contexts of the Cold War was plenty 'Marxist' enough to face violent crackdowns from the U.S. and local authorities against any form advancing the liberation of labor. Thus, in characterizing Latin American reality according to its natural specificity, endogenous vanguard politics, *mestizaje,* and national-popular folklore, this idiosyncratic condition begs the question of origins, even as the link to independence has been largely foreshadowed.

In another polemic, the Third Chapter now takes Carpentier's own political commitment and description of independence as a starting point for re-approaching the Marxist tradition in Latin America. Concluding many of the first two chapters' core concerns, the relationship between independence and the present is thoroughly explored, as are questions surrounding the scholarship that has determined the Marxist line on independence.

Who is this argument for? Broadly, I am speaking to a range of disciplines and readers of literature, history, and politics. The focus on independence is especially pertinent to Latin American Studies, as it posits a genealogy of the central impasse facing any substantive liberation efforts in the region. In a military, geopolitical context, that is the metastasized Monroe Doctrine and Cold War policy that infamously saw coups and interventions in every major state in the region. Of course, this history was already written by Galeano, even before the most blatant crimes of Operation Condor; crimes themselves superseded by the pioneering Clintons' Janus-faced human rights discourse, which emboldens murderous proxies like Juan Orlando Hernández of Honduras while at the same time naturalizing and depoliticizing the deaths of his victims.

That Latin America today enjoys something far short of true independence is not challenged by any commentators of the realist school. Yet, because this fact is inconvenient to the dominant liberal world-view that international relations are ordered by laws, norms, and democratic standards, it tends to be named in peripheral, radicalized, or demoted sites within public discourse. Any prospects for altering this arrangement are not immediate, and there is hardly space here for unpacking the contingencies and paths that could redetermine the region's role in the world. I want to merely show on a rhetorical level that circumvents any overly-arduous argumentation that 21st Century socialism will necessarily need Latin America, and this dissertation has justified this in several ways. Fraternal relations between states that largely allow free entry and enjoy a deeply-held commonality – while treating differences in the humorous mode that Carpentier calls the transcultural – demonstrate an example contrary to the impending division of the world into two hostile camps. Furthermore, not just within the purview of climatic collapse and cataclysmic alterations in the web of life, but as well the simple contact with nature that determines all labor and production, and therefore the relations that humans have with the earth being elemental to any reorganization of social and economic

forms,[223] Latin America boasts intact traditions of contact with an extensive reserve of flora and fauna matched by few parts of the globe. Finally, its heralded social movements and cyclical periods of enduring socialist governance suggest that the contradictions that often pertain to future-oriented conceptions could here be pragmatically simplified to the struggle for independence from the imperialist power for the masses who consistently mobilize.

Alongside the key role of history in Carpentier's Latin American reality, political and cultural currents have been highlighted as well. The guerrilla has emerged as a figure exploiting its close relationship to the land and the properties of its native territory to intervene in the great-power struggle and push towards liberation. I have also defined the national-popular in relation to the unique indigenous, black, and mestizo composition of civil society. Finally, the vitality and revolutionary energy underlying these developments is seent to carry a transcultural and universalist principle, emphasizing migratory and internationalist currents in a reconstruction of the region's history that cuts radically across the received limits of academic disciplines. One could allege that such a schematic reduces the wondrous quality of the baroque or *maravilloso* to simple materialism. But my argument is that the marvelous particular to the Americas in Carpentier is tied to its concrete histories, even as it is the potent alchemy of narrative form (fiction, historical fiction, something more documentary in the social and musical essays) that realizes that quality.

How does the argument here intervene in the scholarship regarding Latin American independence? My central claim is that universal independence was never achieved, and that the recuperating forces responsible for the advent of the bourgeois republics have been redoubled today, where they stand behind the perpetually weak status of the continent on the

[223] This point was explored as part of a worthwhile consideration on the ecological foundation of the Russian (and Mexican) revolutions given by the editors of *La Oveja Negra* (Biblio Alberto Ghiraldo) in conversation with Julio Cortés Morales at the University of Santiago, Chile, in September, 2017.

world stage. At the same time, I have emphasized Carpentier's notion of Latin American reality in part to convey the actually existing contributions Latin America stands ready to make to a socialist or otherwise transformative movement against the U.S.'s self-serving rules-based order.

I have attempted to convey the confusion Echevarría has instilled regarding the political valences of Carpentier's life and work. By orienting his thought around the concept of Latin American reality, I have argued that the national-popular and U.S. hegemony emerge as central categories for political thought in the 21st Century. That conceit would find a rich and valuable application in exploring the accomplished writers to come after Carpentier – foremost to my mind being Roberto Bolaño. The stakes of this re-reading of Carpentier can be seen, in conclusion, by sketching some of the insights and telling blindspots produced by thinkers of the national-popular and hegemony, when applied to the current context.

Locating the place of these elements in García Linera's thought requires Bolivia's other best-known Marxist, René Zavaleta Mercado. A generation older, Zavaleta covered some of the same ground earlier and more thoroughly, such as in tracing Bolivia's development with close attention to class positions and character. One of his central concepts will be important for our discussion because of the shared terrain: that of *lo nacional-popular,* or, the national-popular. Chapter 2 of this dissertation, "Music of the National-Popular," investigated Carpentier's use of a related term to analyze the cultural face of Latin American reality. Zavaleta's posthumous and most ambitious work was published in 1986 as *Lo nacional-popular en Bolivia*, analyzing Bolivia's historical periods from the last third of the 19th Century through the first third of the 20th. He would write the book from Mexico at the same time as the stays of AGL and Aricó. According to Luis Tapia Mealla, "the period that was to be Zavaleta's main focus, the 1952 revolution and

its process into the ‘80s, was never done. A terrible illness killed him at the end of 1984.”[224] *Conditions for Socialist Revolution in Bolivia (Concerning Workers, Aymaras, and Lenin)*, the major work conducted by AGL in 1988, with collaboration from Raquel and Quispe, works as an interesting complement to this contemporaneous study, covering the ‘three eras’ of Bolivian history, the colonial, the republican, and the post-’52 neoliberal era. According to Fabiola Escárzaga, the EGTK was unaware of Zavaleta then, and came to their own finding of the national-popular concept, but one that remains later and less explored than Zavaleta’s.[225] However, recent scholarship reveals a much closer, and more problematic relationship, largely splitting over whether García Linera’s assimilation of Zavaleta’s concepts into the Bolivian pluri-national state represent a reactionary misappropriation by an authoritarian strand of Marxism (the position taken by Freeland and Cavooris) or a revolutionary achievement (as argued by Illan rua Wall and Stuart Alexander Rockefeller).[226]

In defining his methodology, Zavaleta posits the popular forces as a concrete movement towards the production of juridically free subjects, in conflict with and adjacent to liberal democratic forms: “El problema que interesa estudiar en esta investigación es el que propone la formación de lo nacional-popular en Bolivia, es decir, la conexión entre lo que Weber llamó la democratización social y la forma estatal. Con esto entendemos las pautas de socialización tal como existieron y sus índices de poder así como los llamados proyectos de masa. En otros

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[224] Mealla, Luis Tapia. “History and Structure in the Thought of René Zavaleta.” *Historical Materialism,* Vol. 27, No. 3, 2019. Part of Historical Materialism’s 2019 Symposium on Zavaleta’s *Towards a History of the National-Popular in Bolivia: 1879-1980.*

[225] Here is her citation of the overlap: “As much as Zavaleta’s posthumous book *Towards a History of the National-Popular in Bolivia (1986)* tackles the problems that were relevant to [the EGTK], it never reached their hands. Despite being a useful Marxist review of Bolivian history, Zavaleta’s political militancy first in the MNR and then the PCB and MIR made him unrecommended to them. Therefore they were a step behind in proposing ‘the national-popular.’” Escárzaga, Fabiola. “The EGTK: Bolivia’s Aymara Insurgency,” *Op. cit.*

[226] Freeland, Anne. “Motley Society, Plurinationalism, and the Integral State. *Álvaro García Linera’s Use of Gramsci and Zavaleta,*” part of the HM Symposium on Zavaleta, *Op. cit*.
Dossier: “Álvaro García Linera: A Bolivian Marxist Seduced.” Ed. Cavooris, Robert, *Viewpoint Magazine,* 2015. <https://www.viewpointmag.com>

términos, la relación entre el programa y la factualidad."[227] Thus, as in the AGL and Aricó exchange, the national-popular concerns the relations of mutual reinforcement between the state and civil society, "as a continuous, rather than static, process (Tapia)." Importantly for Zavaleta, this draws a special attention to moments of crisis (state and social) as potential breaches for reconstitution along radical or reformist lines, and these transitions in turn are most revealing of a society's true class relations. Here especially, he is closer to Aricó, seeing crises as not economically determined so much as resulting from an accumulation of class antagonisms, and conceiving of the Bolivian state especially after 1952 as politically integrating workers and peasants in a manner echoing that of *Peronismo.*[228] The later AGL, on the other hand, puts the national-popular concept in assemblage with the communitarian-popular (*lo común)*, concerning the social elements, movements, and forces that stand outside the nation, which is to say above all the indigenous peasantry. That proposition attended a controversy over whether this turn in his thought after taking power is symptomatic of the state's integration of *lo común* on a territory where it remains hegemonic.[229] Zavaleta, for his part, laid the foundation for the use of the national-popular explored in this dissertation: as a prism for social analysis of the Americas where the indigenous peasantry is placed in historical context (and obviously at the center of the narrative about colonization), and is rescued from reified academic notions like a romantic, idyllic past; or a now frozen process that ended with decolonization; or pastoral notions of a people's folk-culture that deny their contest for power within the nation-state.

It is beneficial to note how Brazilian reality modifies the concepts we have drawn from Carpentier. In an influential essay, the preeminent Brazilian critic Roberto Schwarz posits that

[227] Zavaleta Mercado, René. "Introducción." *Lo nacional-popular en Bolivia,* México: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1986, p. 9.
[228] Zavaleta also makes clear that the national-popular in Bolivia is a case study for the broader contemporary debate over the state in Latin American society, citing here *Cuadernos de pasado y presente* on Gramsci and an article on Althusser.
[229] Ruiz, Sergio Felipe Ayala. "Álvaro García Linera y las contradicciones entre Estado y democracia." *Estudios Políticos,* Núm. 56, Universidad de Antioquia, 2019, pp. 199-220.

the Gramscian national-popular expression in Brazil in fact constituted not political vitality so much as a regression. There, the artistic explosion of *tropicalismo* and the assertion of a national culture that encompassed a broad camp of students, semi-rural and excluded sectors coincided with a revolutionary defeat, "transforming underdevelopment into art rather than overcoming it." Then does Brazilian reality compose a distinct set of laws and obverse conditions, or do these discoveries radicalize our definition of Latin American reality?[230]

What Schwarz calls popular culture can be distinguished from most iterations of the national-popular in his emphasis on its intellectual and educational components, often with a mass character. It reflects the often static sense in which the national-popular is merely a desire and chord among the people which, if struck properly, will resonate soundly. But what Schwarz articulates is a more fungible capacity for the population or its factions to adopt new ideas and programs, and in this way build up a communist potential. Here is his articulation of this spirit rising in Brazil prior to the crushing dictatorship of 1964:

> These were times of splendid irreverence. In Rio de Janeiro the CPCs (Centres for Popular Culture) would improvise political theatre at factory gates and in trades and student union meetings; and in the slums they were beginning to make films and records. The pre-revolutionary winds were decompartmentalizing the national consciousness and filling the newspapers with talk of agrarian reform, rural disturbances, the workers' movement, the nationalization of American firms, etc. The country had become unrecognizably intelligent. Political journalism, hand in hand with satirical humour, was making great strides in the big cities. There were even a number of parliamentary deputies who made some interesting speeches. In short, intellectual production was beginning to reorient its relationship with the masses. Then came the coup…

The repetition of the word 'intelligence' in this section serves as a reminder that we face the frustrating dilemma of an opposition between the people as a stubborn mass, and a pedagogy or knowledge that will reach them from outside. If this is a dilemma that pertains to both

[230] Schwarz, Roberto. "Neo-Backwardness in Bolsonaro's Brazil." *New Left Review* Vol II, No. 123, May/June 2020. and "Culture and Politics in Brazil, 1964–1969." collected in Schwarz. *Misplaced Ideas: Essays on Brazilian Culture*, Ed. John Gledson, London and New York: Verson, 1992.

conceptions of the national-popular as well as Schwarz's popular culture, it calls for deeper investigation of the latter as a warning against the most reactionary iterations of populism seated on vapid and exploitable definitions of 'the people.' In Schwarz's case, the dilemma remains most frustrated in *tropicalismo* where the two sides stand irrevocably separated. Conversely, in the radical pedagogy of Paolo Freire where "nothing could be less tropicalist," the opposition is decidedly resolved through the act of teaching the "archaic nature of rural consciousness" to become literate.

Thus Schwarz, at least at this moment, affirms the concern with the production of political subjects that underscored Aricó's conception of hegemony.[231] A seductively vague amalgamation of democratic reform and revolution that led Aricó and Ernesto Laclau to imagine that bourgeois institutions could be renovated by a left political culture rather than coercive force, hegemony was both the theoretical and symptomatic response to the U.S. military's destabilization of Latin American workers' movements on behalf of world capitalism. At his best, Aricó grasps "the distinctive nature of the exercise of bourgeois hegemony as against proletarian hegemony; the bourgeoisie exercise power through a consensus based on manipulation and fragmentation, on the destruction of the hegemonic capacity of the proletariat" as its counter-revolutionary strategy. But the comparative politics of *Herr Vogt* that he eschewed would lead more directly to unmasking and confronting the invisible hand behind Operation Condor, as works like *The Jakarta Method* prove was inescapable.

Carpentier's Latin American reality, already a defensive position, is under threat. The concept emphasizes the continent's insurgent characteristics that colonialism, imperialism, and postcolonialism have both attacked and catalyzed. Furthermore, clarifying Marx's position on the

[231] Su profundización central de la hegemonía se da en unos cursos de México en 1977, *Nueve lecciones de economía y política en el marxismo,* editado por El Colegio de México en 2011.

Americas is not intended to offer a lost map for organizing from an infallible strategist. It is the case, however, that Hegel and Marx demarcate a highpoint for materialist philosophy as it confronts capital's dominance over politics and most of the globe; and therefore they continue to pose a scandal for the bourgeois worldview that represses the dialectic in equal measure to the forces that embody its concrete reality. This analysis has arched towards the hard power forms of astroturfing imperialism that are complemented by an institutional capture excluding orthodox Marxism, universal claims, candid speech, political realism, or affronts to donors. Yet, as I have argued, Carpentier's Latin American reality is a future-oriented concept that offers a vision of fraternal relations among states, advocacy for transcultural exchange and combination, non-proprietary appropriation of natural wealth, militant anti-capitalist aesthetics, and the restoration of the primordial commons.

Appendices

The question of independence has been examined from the era of *El siglo de las luces* and *El reino de este mundo*, that of the U.S., Haitian, and Spanish American Revolutions. In the Appendices, I take up the moment of Carpentier's writing, the mid-20th Century Latin American revolutions against U.S. imperialism. A guiding line here is the proposition in Galeano's *Venas abiertas* that the U.S., counter-intuitively, be considered a component within the broader Latin American sphere. These sections also advance the proposed solution to the representational problems posed by the divergent historical levels of Great Power contests and class struggles, social movements from below, and popular culture tendencies. That resolution takes the historical novel typified by Carpentier as complementary with the invested narrative history exemplified in *The Black Jacobins*, arguing that literature can be read as a form of history and conversely contributes to the representational problems inherent in historical narrative.

*   *   *

Appendix A offers a counter-history of the California coast as a sector of Carpentier's Latin American reality, connecting it to Galeano's inclusion of the U.S. within Latin America.

Appendix B continues these considerations in a focus on the 1870s, bridging the European era of Bonapartism with the paths of Martí and Flores Magón at the closure of independence.

Appendix C starts from the Cuban Revolution as the defining event of Carpentier's life, moving back to his early years in the aftermath of Martí's campaign, and then considering how Communist politics are rendered aesthetically in his Latin American reality.

Appendix A. América, the Beautiful

The thinkers I have assembled around Carpentier in this dissertation attest to the interpenetrating levels of history, in which the act of independence was both a Great Power affair resulting from geopolitics as well as the reflex of a push for liberation from civil society. This concept is necessary for grasping Carpentier's formation during the pre-revolutionary years of Cuba, a concern of all three appendices. In this section, I track the stark division of the U.S. from Latin America by way of its representation in Galeano. The implications of this for Latin American reality are then explored in a counter-history of the California coast as a fulcrum of the perplexion caused by the reified border.

Carpentier's intellectual life was dominated by the dual realities of Cuba as an unfree nation and yet one inundated by the international horizons promised by Martí's national liberation struggle. These realities are both formalized in *El siglo de las luces,* written in the midst of the 1956-59 revolution. For 1898 is only a revolution in the nominal sense that the word served the growing colonial power in the USA, itself born from the earlier revolutionary wave. In all intents and purposes, the Spanish-American war sees the U.S. continuing its territorial and maritime expansion into the Pacific and Caribbean, simultaneous with its annexation of Hawai'i. The cynical deployment of revolutionary rhetoric at the time can be seen in the Western cabal that overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893, terming itself The Citizens' Committee of Public Safety. The United States' appropriation of the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Cuba stems from the increasing weakness and expendability of Spain for the European balance of power, and for England specifically. Even unburdened from maintaining military stations in its colonies, Spain had little to offer in the first world war to eventually break out between England and

Germany, whereas the U.S. was a sought-after ally.[232] Instead, the cruelties Spain had wrought upon the Cubans and Filipinos were brought home to repress the serious threats to the monarchy from a deep embitterment over economic stagnation, and the radicalization towards peasant anarchism propagated by the apostles of Bakunin.[233]

Cuba's African population had been a key force in the war for independence, and had suffered many of the worst reprisals for it. One of the war's leaders was Juan Gualberto Gómez, a black man and close partner of José Martí, while the skilled guerrilla Antonio Maceo, second in command, was mulatto. Martí's own ability to reside and regroup in Mexico during the Cuban Ten Years War starting in 1868 points on one hand to that country's role (as with Guatemala to a lesser extent) as a beacon for accepting political refugees and harboring the hopes and rearguards of progressive forces in the region. Martí expressed favor for Mexican nationalism (the position Marx came to embrace), supporting the sovereignty and constitutionalism of Benito Juárez and Lerdo de Tejada, and participating as a deputy in a worker's council (*el congreso obrero)* to fight against the Porfirista coup. The pan-American map traced by the exilic route of his forward march towards Cuban independence, Mexico City – Paris – Caracas – New York – Havana – Guatemala City, resembles the *rumbo* of revolutionaries already mentioned like de Miranda and Bolívar, as well as Carpentier, Castro, and many of their contemporaries in the Caribbean who chart a by-then endemic intertwining of philosophy, the arts, and anti-imperialism: Walter Rodney (Guyana), Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon (Martinique), Claude McKay, Bob Marley, Marcus Garvey (Jamaica), C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, George Padmore (Trinidad), Francisco Caamaño (Dominican Republic), Maurice Bishop (Grenada), Jacques Roumain (Haiti), Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes (Southern U.S./Harlem/Caribbean), and Paul Robeson (who was highly active with anti-colonial movements in Africa and the Caribbean

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[232] Anderson, Benedict. *Under 3 Flags: Anarchism and the anti-colonial imagination,* London: Verso, 2007.
[233] Paz, Abel. *Durruti in the Spanish Revolution,* Trans. Chuck Morse, Oakland: AK Press, 2006.

while exiled in London).[234] The spatial movement of the revolution's base between Mexico, the Caribbean, and Venezuela is one of the experiences formalized in *El siglo de las luces,* where these hopes at several points reside embarked from any landmass at all, with Ogé's first return to San Domingo, and then with the decree of abolition that must break the British blockade onboard Victor's ship.

Even more swiftly than in Spain, anarchist agitation in Mexico was laying the grounds for the 20th Century's first peasant revolution. The relationship of the United States with Mexico during this period charts the transition of the U.S. from a site within the constellation of revolutionary movements to its increasing congelation as an exporter of political repression. Galeano's *Las venas abiertas de América Latina* makes a signature but overlooked quip that we should think of the United States, counter-instinctively, as one part of greater Latin America. The suggestion deserves consideration.

Published in 1971, the book has become intertwined in the public mind with the revolutionary wave of the 1960s and the sequence of popular governments nationalizing resources before being overthrown by C.I.A.-backed forces. This risks the misconception that it is a history of that era rather than a participant, in fact offering the long history that precedes and informs those events. Galeano's friend Salvador Allende, for example, had only just entered power when the book was being finished. His Unidad Popular coalition and the Chilean left were not so much repeating the 1890s attempt to nationalize *guano* (nitrate) before falling to a foreign invasion (a key event in *Venas abiertas*), but rather, having learned from that sequence, were attempting to build belts of directly administered worker democracy (the *cordones industriales*) that could

[234] Horne, Gerald. *Paul Robeson: The Artist as Revolutionary,* Pluto Press, 2016.

supersede copper nationalization and fight against the U.S. invasion they understood to be inevitable.[235]

Galeano also emphasizes the continental interconnection that sees resources and humans flowing northwards while privatization and the techniques of repression flow southward. Taken together, his proposition's effects are hard to miss: redeeming the terminology of 'the Americas'; inverting the subalternity of the Global South; recollecting the theft of California in 1848. Added to these could be reminders of the U.S.'s large Spanish speaking resident population, or the deeper Spanish history of Louisiana and Florida, or that Miami and Los Angeles figure within a Latino region in a way distinct from the 'Chocolate Cities' (say Atlanta or Oakland) except perhaps New Orleans and Mobile, which might conjoin with the Garifuna coasts of Central America to demarcate the Afro-Caribbean. Beyond the notorious demographic changes making the U.S. more latino, an even more illustrative fact is that in the last 20 years, arrests of non-citizens have gone from one-third to two-thirds of all arrests made. Juan Gonzalez goes so far as to state, "The entire security apparatus of the state has been rapidly transformed into an immigration policing operation."[236] Integrating these points, Galeano's proposition has the effect of restoring natural history to North America: the intercontinental function of the massive latino working class is put back into the context of genocide and colonialism, collapsing the border's ideological rigidity. The status of Puerto Rico, the Keys, Guam, Hawai'i, the Serranilla Bank, the South Pole, the Bering and Alaska suddenly articulate an arbitrary and far-flung incision through any natural boundary or bioregion, bringing to mind the near global web of U.S. military bases and even its colonization of the moon and satellite space.[237] Some of the tiny Caribbean islands

[235] Patricio Guzmán's *La batalla de Chile (1974, etc.)* is the key document of the coup's foreknowledge and the record of *poder popular*'s existence. I also had the blessing of viewing the opening screening of the *cortometraje, Cordones industriales (2017)* by Ana Lopez and Valeria Yañez of the Colectivo Tarea Urgente at Le Monde Diplomatique's offices in Santiago, a deserving follow-up investigation into the forms of socialism that existed under the Unidad Popular and a testament to the bridges erected between that generation and the re-emerging forms of direct democracy in the 2019 uprising.
[236] *Harvest of Empire*, *Op. cit*.
[237] *Law of the Sea: From Grotius to the International Tribunal,* ed. Lilian del Castillo, Brill, 2015.

or reefs that may go unnamed or merely seen at distance in *El siglo de las luces* have recently won attention due to the rising economic struggle between the U.S. and China. With the coming obsolescence of the Panama Canal, China has begun construction of a replacement through the Nicaraguan territory of its Sandinista ally, forgoing an option through Mexico; a plan originally floated prior to Panama, but dashed in favor of Mexico's rail construction.

> The project of connecting the Pacific Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico by means of a canal through the Isthmus of Tehuantepec was repeatedly put forward in the USA, which strove to dominate the trade routes and markets in Central America. However, in the 1870s the American capitalists rejected this project, preferring to invest their capital in less expensive railway construction in Mexico.[238]

Such discussions began in 1788 with Jefferson suggesting that Spain should construct the Canal.

Following the achievement of the Erie Canal in 1825, the U.S. sought a construction partnership with New Grenada, which was rejected by Bolívar. Nonetheless, by the 1840s the Mallarino-Bidlack treaty awarded the U.S. rights to intervene in the Darien Isthmus (Panama) militarily, and the gold of California made its way to New York via a land portage where the Railway and Canal now exist. In the 1880s, the French administrator of the Suez Canal, Ferdinand de Lesseps, built upon British designs for the canal, dispatching sophisticated engineers including Gustave Eiffel to conduct the majority of the technical employment needed. However, in 1903, Teddy Roosevelt crudely used the 1846 treaty to justify an invasion of the Panama region, facetiously defending 'separatists' but in practice annexing them. Having brokered peace in the Colombian Civil War of 1899-1902 between the Liberal and Conservative Parties, the U.S. occupation could militarily dictate its superiority to Colombia. The Army Corps

[238] Footnote 284 by Lawrence to Engels' mention of Tehuantepec, cited on page 224. Engels, F. "The Movements of 1847." *Marx Engels Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 527, New York, NY: International Publishers, 1975.

of Engineers completed construction and opened the canal by 1914. These events helped coin the phrase “gunboat diplomacy.”

Panama’s isthmus was only a slightly shorter oceanic divide than Tehuantepec, with the continental divide’s elevation reaching 95 meters at Mount Culebra to be blasted by the Gaillard Cut that connected the Pacific-bound Lake Miraflores with the Atlantic linked waters of Río Chagres and Gatun. It was the largest-ever construction project by the U.S., significantly altering the powerstakes of world trade. South America’s southern cone immediately suffered from the drop in commercial traffic. The revolutionary wave from the 1960s followed by the rise of regional narcos bolstered Panamanian ambitions for independence, with President Carter capitulating the treaty that would turn over sovereignty in 1999, pledging all the same its perdurable military intervention to defend ‘neutrality.’ Hawkish U.S. politicians opposed the treaty entirely, both before and after the 1989 U.S. invasion that cemented its assertions to hegemony, whether over economic or ideological alliances.[239] The U.S. also has colonial-era maritime claims on waters that would affect access to the new canal, as well as juridical control over the contested claims to the San Andrés and Providencia islands won by Colombia under dubious circumstances, strategically located approximately 100 nautical miles from Nicaragua, as opposed to nearly 500 from Colombia.[240]

The creation of Panama touches on the semantics of the Americas raised by Galeano, positioning it in Central America while the remains of Colombia become South America. This division may be felt in the greater autonomy given the countries further from the U.S. border.

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[239] Crandall, Russell. *Gunboat democracy: US interventions in the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2006. See also *The Panama Deception (1993),* dir. Trent, Barbara. A Panamanian-made documentary on the war, *Invasión (2014),* dir. Benaim, Abner., appeared in the context of the Pink Tide’s renewed attention to interventions, following the coup in Honduras and the death of Hugo Chávez.

[240] Colombia’s left turn will likely alter its utilization in any future U.S./China struggles over the waters, although Petro maintained the sovereignty claims at the ICJ as recently as 2023.

The early 21st Century saw improved economic outlooks in South America, while Central America was held under the euphemistic ‘transition to democracy’, spiraling poverty and emigration, with the 2009 coup in Honduras blocking any Pink Tide spread. The force of Galeano’s perspective is to see behind the phenomena of national borders and conflicts, grasping the international solidarity practiced by communist and capitalist parties alike, and naming the system of labor and resource exploitation as the real matter at hand underlying the competition of states. The Chilean bourgeoisie is shown to be manipulated first by the British thirst for nitrate and then the U.S.’s for copper, but it is an agent of exploitation rather than a ‘latino victim’. The United States in this light also discloses an internal class conflict and historical shifts between more liberatory and counter-revolutionary purviews.

The border between the U.S. and Mexico is often now reified as the absolute boundary of Latin America.[241] However, its development complicates the picture. In 1801, prior to the launch of Westward Expansion with the Louisiana purchase, Thomas Jefferson foresaw the elements of empire: a British ally to the north, a weakened Spanish-mestizo nation to the south, and control of the territory from the Atlantic all the way to the Pacific. Writing to the future author of the Monroe Doctrine, he states:

> However our present interests may restrain us within our own limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits, and cover the whole Northern, if not the Southern continent with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws: nor can we contemplate, with satisfaction, either blot or mixture on that surface.[242]

[241] David Kurnick calls the border one of our most spectacularly visible divisions between the global North and South. Kurnick, David. “Comparison, Allegory, and the Address of “Global” Realism (The Part about Bolaño).” *Boundary 2,* Vol. 42, No. 2, 2015.
[242] He had written Monroe similarly in 1793, alarmed at the threat Haiti posed to slaveholders in the U.S., strategizing to avert that “the West Indies islands remain in the hands of the peoples of colour,” and then promising the French in 1801 to “reduce Touissant to starvation.” Jefferson, Thomas. “To James Monroe.” July 14, 1793, in John Catanzariti, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson,* 26:503, Princeton, N.J., 1995. And, Blackburn, Robin. “Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of Democratic Revolution.” *The William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, Vol. 63, No. 4, Oct., 2006, pp. 643-674.

Thus a tension emerges between a vision of genociding a larger swath of the Americas for white settler colonialism, against considerations of propping up the poorer neighbor as a buffer from which to draw and expel cheap labor willy-nilly. When California was seized a half-century later, it would be celebrated from Europe by Freidrich Engels, writing to Marx,

> In America we have witnessed the conquest of Mexico and have rejoiced at it. It is also an advance when a country which has hitherto been exclusively wrapped up in its own affairs, perpetually rent with civil wars, and completely hindered in its development, a country whose best prospect had been to become industrially subject to Britain — when such a country is forcibly drawn into the historical process. It is to the interest of its own development that Mexico will in future be placed under the tutelage of the United States. The evolution of the whole of America will profit by the fact that the United States, by the possession of California, obtains command of the Pacific. But again we ask: 'Who is going to profit immediately by the war?' The bourgeoisie alone. The North Americans acquire new regions in California and New Mexico for the creation of fresh capital, that is, for calling new bourgeois into being, and enriching those already in existence; for all capital created today flows into the hands of the bourgeoisie. And what about the proposed cut through the Tehuantepec isthmus? Who is likely to gain by that? Who else but the American shipping owners? Rule over the Pacific, who will gain by that but these same shipping owners? The new customers for the products of industry, customers who will come into being in the newly acquired territories — who will supply their needs? None other than the American manufacturers.[243]

Aricó and AGL both point to this citation as evidence that Marx's mature position by the time of the U.S. Civil War was a radical departure from such earlier views. Galeano, meanwhile, emphasizes the parallels between mining exploits in California following the Mexican-American War and South America, suggesting continuity between the latino and gringo formulas. Nevada's Comstock Lode brought the greatest silver discovery in history, powering the Union mint's printing of greenbacks during the Civil War. It was named after its proprietor, a sheepherder who died poor, and was prospected by George Hearst, who founded the Anaconda Copper Co. that would later control the Chilean deposits nationalized by Allende. Hearst's son William Randolph became the nation's most powerful media tycoon, holder of major interests in Mexico, and an infamous antagonist of the working class. Hearst fought against Upton Sinclair's

[243] Engles, F. "The Movements of 1847," first published in the *Deutsche-Brüsseler-Zeitung,* January 23, 1848. English translation from Marx, K. and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, London: Lawrence, 1930.

socialist campaign for governor of California, mining strikes in Colorado and Utah, promoted xenophobic images of Filipinos, clamored for colonial possessions through war, and sought to 'gentrify' the radically diverse slums of San Francisco, an early ancestor for the city's 21st Century social media moguls.

Returning to the early Marx and Engels' notion of 'backwards Spain,' they were at least half-correct in wishing the inhabitants of America liberated from the yoke of that decadent empire. In Spain's attempt to ward off British, Dutch, Russian, French, and U.S. acquisitions, it sent zealous colonizers to territorial reaches like California where it had neither standing nor capability. The native teen rebel remembered in local history by the name Pomponio hated the Conquistadores with such fervor that he made common cause with their Russian enemies. The Spanish mission system arrived as far north as San Rafael, acting as a beachhead against the southernmost Russian settlements on the nearby Russian River. Imprisoned at the Yerba Buena (San Francisco) Presidio before one of his many escapes, Pomponio told the Russian agent Zavalishin that he had once allowed him to pass unharmed through his peninsula territory because the man also fought Spaniards, and would keep his identity secret.

Born around the time of Jefferson's letter to Monroe in Mission Dolores (SF), Pomponio developed contacts with adults in rebel bands still unknown to the Spanish settlers. Those were recent arrivals in Alta California, Portola and Junípero Serra's first expeditions settling in San Diego in 1770 and establishing Santa Cruz in 1790. During the 1760s, the two men had presided over the expulsion of the Jesuits, the near extermination of indians from Baja California, and a vicious extension of the Inquisition across New Spain. The Missions demarcated spiritual territory, the Presidios were military outposts, and the Pueblos were secular settlements. These last, as depots of journeymen, frontiersmen, and ex-convicts from debtors' prison, were far more diverse than those of the Church and military.

A humorous anecdote about the Branciforte settlement, so renowned for debauchery that it was renounced by the Spanish Crown in 1802, depicts these divisions pertaining to Pomponio's world – a brief half-century of violent but unaccomplished colonialism lacking in central authority that would transform suddenly and irrevocably in 1848. Mission Santa Cruz suffered several setbacks that convey the difficulties of the larger Christianizing project, as unrealistic as it was grandiose. First established on the banks of the San Lorenzo River, flooding in the first year forced it to be rebuilt in 1793 above on the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Resentments from the incarcerated indigenous people led to the murder of the overseeing friar André in 1812. The deceased was laid out privately and his death pronounced a victim of cardiac distress. It quickly circulated that this was devised around an uncouth cause of death: the Padre's testicals had been pulverized between two stones.[244]

Closeness to the sea and distance from the empires meant vulnerability to pirates, as well as marvelous arrivals like that of Richard Henry Dana Jr., whose Free Soil movement sought to scupper any expansion of U.S. slavery to the territory. Dana's memoir grasps some of the paradoxes of post-contact California, with its mix of wild freedoms and retrograde authority structure. Women, for example, could own property in Mexico, but not in the U.S.. Dana concurs, in a sense, with Engels' assessment, presuming that the economic progression of the colonies melts away both aspects of pre-modern barbarism, as well as vestigial refuges of social freedom:

> Ever since the independence of Mexico, the missions have been going down; until, at last, a law was passed, stripping them of all their possessions, and confining the priests to their spiritual duties; and at the same time declaring all the Indians free and independent Rancheros. The change in the condition of the Indians was, as may be supposed, only nominal: they are virtually slaves, as much as they ever were. But in the missions, the change was complete. The priests have now no power, except in their religious character, and the great

[244] *California Voices,* trans. & ed. Gregorio Mora-Torres. University of Texas, 2005.

> possessions of the missions are given over to be preyed upon by the harpies of the civil power, who are sent there in the capacity of administradores, to settle up the concerns; and who usually end, in a few years, by making themselves fortunes, and leaving their stewardships worse than they found them.[245]

Here, Dana ties the decadent corruption of the Mission system to the advancing forms of class exploitation promised by western expansion, years before he would join the western anti-slavery faction of Lincoln's Republican coalition. Thus, he undoes the idyllic portrait of the Missions as outside of time and space, noting the region's interconnected colonial and labor struggles. In his colorful depiction of California's anachronistic Wild West, the internationalism of the Pacific Theater is felt through its many nationalities with distinct interests: Russian trappers and diplomats, Hawaiian itinerant laborers canoeing along the coast, Yankees such as himself, Spanish relics, Mexican Californianos, native americans, and the African slaves being eyed as the fertile region's agricultural base. Dana's vision of the dissolution of the Missions as a contested space rather than an inevitable forfeiture to the U.S.'s imperial consolidation opens our historical lens to alternative lines of development.

Yet, Dana's account does not exhaust the existent class conflict in California's brief Mexican period. Hostility to Mexican administration was another example of the U.S.'s cynical independence provocations. The Mexican Governor of California José María Figueroa is remembered today, if at all, for ordering the distribution of former mission lands to Native Americans in 1835, which was opposed and left unenacted by the ranchers and land-speculating interests. In a more spectacular inversion, one can contemplate the events preceding Figueroa's action as an instance of progressive colonialism, as the radical Mexican President Gómez Farías attempted to stave off Russian and U.S. incursion into California with the Híjar Padrés colony in 1833. Many of those selected integrated smoothly into the new society. Might a more progressive California have come together, had Figueroa's indigenous

[245] Dana Jr., Richard Henry. *Two Years Before the Mast,* Harvard Classics, P.F. Collier & Son, 1909.

sympathies been combined with Gómez Farías's liberal reforms for independent development? The constant threat of foreign incursion aided the dictatorial forces in Mexico and the reestablishment of ecclesiastical power. Shortly before, anti-indigenous sentiment in Tejas had inspired Spain to allow the first U.S. frontiersmen to sow cotton on those territories, a development that would lead to annexation and the U.S.'s rising appetite to assimilate Mexican land.

Such facts peel back the reified mythology of the West, as seen in the prevailing tale of the dread pirate Hipólyto hoisting the Argentine flag over Monterrey in 1818. This delicacy of the western walking tour belies a rich historical context. Hipólyto was likely born André Paul Bouchard in 1780. At first inspired by the French Revolution, he participated as a youth in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign that was intended to sever British control over India. In August of 1798, Admiral Nelson of the British Navy defeated the French Mediterranean fleet in the Battle of the Nile and Bouchard was taken prisoner.[246] This dashed Napoleon's hopes of an alliance with the Ottoman Empire and weakened France's hold over Malta, Egypt, and Syria. Might a French victory have led the Middle- and Near-East to a decolonial 19th Century? Such were the hopes of the young Bouchard. Nelson failed to rout Napoleon, who returned to become First Consul and then launched the Saint-Domingue Expedition, surviving with him a valuable officer corps including Comte Dumas experienced in fighting the American Revolutionary War, which commanded the next 15 years of military preeminence. Bouchard was sent to Haiti to suppress the revolution there, an event Chapter 1 examines in detail.

Long unaware of LeClerc's secret order to reinstate slavery, the few surviving French of the nearly 60,000 soldiers who perished in the campaign were severely disillusioned with the

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[246] He was most likely returned to French territory in Egypt immediately. See Warner, Oliver. *The Battle of the Nile*, London: B. T. Batsford, 1960.

right-turn of the French Revolution. After LeClerc's death, Rochambeau took command against the Haitian Dessalines until surrendering in November of 1804. His devastated troops were taken prisoner by the superior British Navy before finding their way back to France. Bouchard spent time in the United States and was evidently not in the Americas until Víctor Hugues already oversaw Guyane as convoy to the French Consulate, slavery having been reinstated in Guadalupe by his successors Desfourneaux and Richepanse in 1802.[247] When did Bouchard and his compatriots learn that their mission was a counter-revolution? Even Rochambeau under LeClerc did not know of the latter's secret order to revoke abolition. The soldiers and much of the French public were, in LeClerc's own words, lied to about Haitian reality. The Expedition's rationale was to terminate the Catholic Toussaint's treacherous alliance with the British, whose slave colony in next-door Jamaica made clear its own desire to re-enslave Toussaint's people; abolition, meanwhile, having been one of the most popular of all the Revolution's founding orders among the Paris masses. While little is known about Bouchard's experience in Haiti, the significance of his presence there should not be understated. A disastrous slaughter on both sides, to have survived was alone miraculous, and scholars should attend to the effects of this utterly disillusioning moment in French libertarianism and the radical realignment he represents thereafter.

When the May Revolution in Río de la Plata began in 1809, several prominent Frenchmen including Bouchard took up the struggle for an independent Argentina, recalling the conclusion to *El siglo de las luces* where Sophia and Esteban attempt to wrest a revolutionary sensibility back from its state manipulation by warring France and Spain. Taking his brother's name Hippolyte and converting it to the spanish Hipólyto, Bouchard is today a patriot in the lore of

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[247] While Hugues and Hipólyto do not cross paths during the Saint-Domingue Expedition, a character named Hippolyte of the expedition does appear in the Guadelupean playwright Maryse Condé's 1989 Jacobinian tragedy, *An Tan Revolisyon,* in which Hugues is a protagonist.

Argentina's founding that celebrates its adopted European nationalities.[248] Hipólyto first participated in the anti-colonial defense of Paraguay alongside Manuel Belgrano and the Maltese corsair, Juan Bautista Azopardo. This circle fought for an independant, indigenous Argentina known as the *Plan del Inca,* that had earlier been advocated by Francisco de Miranda. It sought to restore the Incan *caciques* as a constitutional monarchy now liberated from Spain, to be headed in Cusco by Juan Bautista Tupamaro, the brother of Tupac Amaru II.[249] They gained San Martín's influential support, but the merchant class was the prevailing power at the Congress of Tucumán, and Buenos Aires' regional dominance became the *sine qua non* of the new state. Hipólyto also aligned with the Irish-born Guillermo Brown, founder of the Argentine Navy and another refugee of the Napoleonic Wars. Brown had been gang-pressed by the British and escaped, but was then imprisoned by the French he had aided. Disillusioned, like Víctor Hugues he became a merchant in the Americas, only to resort to filibusterism when squeezed by the maritime powers. Hipólyto was granted a *marque* commission by Brown and the nascent Argentine republic to attack and weaken Spain's Pacific fleet, laying siege to Guayaquil in 1815 before launching an even more ambitious goal to liberate Alta California. He did not take the short route.

Hipólyto sailed east to Madagascar, on to Indonesia, Hawai'i and then California, an odyssey that saw him taken prisoner in Chile before arriving home bankrupt after nearly 3 years. The voyage entailed duels between rival officers, mutinies followed by their recovery and executions, sinking of enemy pirates, and raids on African slavers. His warm reception by peoples allied against the Spanish empire demonstrate the early trans-pacific constellation that Benedict

[248] The excellent Argentine television mini-series about the 2001 crisis, *Vientos de agua,* fashions a similar founding myth in which the anarchist José emigrates from Andalusia's 1920s mining wars and adopts the name of his martyred brother Andrés. Meanwhile, the feminine of the name he took, Hipólita, was the name of the slave woman charged with caring for Bolívar.

[249] Walker, Charles and Clarke, Liz. *Witness to the Age Revolution: The Odyssey of Juan Bautista Tupac Amaru,* Oxford University Press (Graphic History Series), 2020.

Anderson documents at the end of the 19th Century. Early in 1818, Hipólyto blockaded the port of Manila and the waters around Isabela island for two months. Anti-Spanish filipino fighters were employed on his crew in the attacks against the American coasts, and they found the Hawaiian indigenous monarchy quick to recognize the Provinces of the Río de la Plata as an independent nation.[250] This alliance proved tactically important.

In 2006, while staying with the squatter community of Kalalau on Kauai, I learned of the little-known work of oral Hawaiian folklore, *Tales from the Night Rainbow,* which transcribes histories originating as far back as 800 B.C.[251] The tradition it recounts conforms with the theory that native Hawaiians descend from the Polynesian warrior societies that spread across the Pacific in the centuries prior to Spanish conquest and largely liquidated or perhaps integrated with the original 'little peoples' of the islands. Spain's Manilla galleons brought colonialism to the islands, but not in extensive conquest. The kingdom that received Hipólyto enjoyed a brief window of sovereignty under the shroud of great naval powers. Their alliance against Spain was motivated by modest imperial ambitions in the Pacific, but even more so in defense against explorers like James Cook, the rising European empires and the eventual U.S. occupiers. WWII hagiographies obscure the ideological appeal carried by Japan's Co-prosperity Sphere, which intended to include Hawai'i in making 'Asia for Asians' against Dutch, U.S. and European colonial occupations. Walter LaFeber may be the most prominent U.S. historian to voice this contrarian understanding of the Pacific War that poses the movements against British colonialism across the island chains as a key rationale underneath the rise of Imperial Japan in the mid-19th Century. In the 1930s, Trotsky foresaw these movements combining with labor militancy to overthrow the empire from within and ally with other workers' states in the region, in

[250] Floro L. Mercene's *Manila Men in the New World* suggests that a group of Hipólyto's filipinos joined in San Blas México from the communities formed there from escapees of the Galleon trade.
[251] The work was apparently republished by Pasifika Foundation Hawai'i in 2005 as *Tales from the Night Rainbow: Mo'olelo o Na Po Makole.*

a sense reclaiming a righteous anti-occupation spirit from Japan's abused version. Hipólyto's own Pacific campaign followed only a few years after Napoleon's 1812 invasion of Russia, at the time one of the powers vying for the American Northwest, demonstrating the interconnection of American independence and the Napoleonic Wars encircling the globe in a single chain of theaters.

Provisioned and armed by King Kamehameha I, Hipólyto arrived off California in October, 1818 and began razing and looting Spain's coastal outposts, eventually moving down Mexico into Central and South America at the embryonic stage of those new republics. In late November, they stormed the Presidio fort at Monterrey and flew atop it the Argentine flag during a 6-day occupation. News of Hipólyto's festivities in Monterey struck terror in the Santa Cruz Mission. Occupants of the secular Villa de Branciforte less than a kilometer away were quickly informed of the news and instructed to guard the Mission's livestock and possessions while the clergy made for the inland refuge of Mission Santa Clara. Upon returning after a half-score to now ravaged Santa Cruz, evidence quickly mounted that Hipólyto had at the time been attacking Santa Barbara in the south, and that the Branciforte *poblanos* had looted the Mission in his stead, in their revelry even adorning themselves in holy cloths.[252]

Those strained relations of course did not compare to the slavery meted upon the local Ohlone population. The leader Charquin's strong rebel band of Quiroste who were based near Pescadero about 20 miles up the coast, alongside the Oljon hounded Santa Cruz from the time of its founding. These groups frequently raided the Missions, forming a network that extended to the more sympathetic alcaldes at San Rafael and the disgruntled population passing between the Missions and the communities. Pomponio later exploited his access to both groups, leading

[252] Further sources consulted on Hipólyto include Jan Siegel of The Capistrano Dispatch and De Marco, Miguel Ángel. *Corsarios argentinos: Héroes del mar en la Independencia y la guerra con el Brasil,* Buenos Aires: Editorial Planeta, 2002.

a remarkable series of uprisings and skirmishes far along the coast before finally being executed at the young age of about 24. Native-born inside the Mission system, he was a sworn enemy of Spain and an early victim of the newly 'Mexican' Californianos, who had expanded their conversion of neophytes Northwest to Sonoma even after Mexico City's independence. His closest companions were denizens of other Missions whose common language was Spanish. He linked together a remarkable number of indigenous groups from his own Coast Miwok to the Ohlone, Guaulen, Nicasio and Huimen people, and shared contacts with the rebel leaders Marino, Quintino, Estanislao, and Cipriano. His connections with the free tribes saw a gifted leader in the youth and taught him a mastery of dissimulating in the vast creekbeds, streambanks, cañadas, shrublands, arroyo canyons and foothills encircling the San Francisco Bay. On several occasions, he escaped soldiers by digging holes, scaling walls, and slipping shackholds, outwitting dozens of men deemed his racial and spiritual superiors. Before his end, he eluded a Corporal Valera either by asking to relieve himself and then murdering his captor, or, there is a legend that he cut off his own heel to remove the tight shackle. One of his evasions

enlisted a cavernous network of Tafoni sandstone known as Devil's Canyon, near the craggy convergence of Peters and Lambert Creeks where he was known to lay out. An entire detachment of soldiers set out to catch him from the site of Palo Alto's modern tech-hub, hiking several miles west across a still existing route known as the Old Spanish Trail. Empty-handed, the search party feebly carved a cross in the stone as a warning that remains today. Just underfoot some of the world's richest real estate, these stories are

almost unknown, spread out between a few local history books and the oral accounts of Ohlone elders like Ann-Marie Sayers.[253]

[253] Goerke, Betty. *Chief Marin: Leader, Rebel, and Legend*, Heyday Books, 2007. I interviewed Ann-Marie at her home in Indian Canyon near Hollister in 2006, where parts of this history were recounted. She is a recognized authority on Ohlone heritage. Recognition of local tribes and public knowledge of this history has expanded dramatically since I began my research, as has the dire need for it (California's wildfire crisis is just one example).

Appendix B. The ‘70s Were Depressing

The 1870s began with defeats of popular forces at the Paris Commune and the Guaraní of Paraguay, two events compared by a radical French geographer in South America, Élisée Reclus, in *La Guerre Du Paraguay*. By the end of the decade, Porfirio Díaz was ensconced as Mexico’s president, and the War of the Pacific that would devastate Peru and Bolivia had begun. In this section, I consider the decade as a bridge from the Bonapartist era spawned by the events in *El siglo de las luces* to the career launch of José Martí, Cuba’s national hero whose unfinished work would be taken up in Carpentier’s early activism. Moving back and forth between the two periods, I narrate the vicissitudes of Latin American reality spatially anchored across the U.S.-Mexican border.

UCLA historian Kelly Lytle Hernández uses the label “Juan Crow” to describe the wild west California period of the 1870s, a brutal racial regime that preceded the end of Reconstruction in the south by several years. Late into the 19th Century, bounties were placed without legal pretext on Native Americans, who often changed their identities to Mexican for protection. In 1873, the Modoc leader Captain Jack was pursued by a white posse into the volcanic rocks of Lassen, whose cavernous features he exploited to kill off scores of attackers before his death. In 1877, a mob lynched two mestizo men from a bridge in Santa Cruz, where a few years earlier, a policeman had shot and wounded the bandit Tiburcio Vázquez. Vázquez also made use of California’s untrammeled rock formations, establishing hideouts in Los Angeles and Kern Counties before being hung in 1875. The areas around the Kern River were unpassable swamps dating back to the great bi-centennial Central Valley flood lake, until Army Colonel Thomas Baker employed massive irrigation efforts that resulted in the productively lush soil of the valley floor breadbasket.[254] Nonarable and boggy swamplands were often undesirable to

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[254] Kern County Museum, Bakersfield.

colonists and designated as native reservations, only in cases like the Western Shoshone to have uranium discovered, which would leave the territory lastingly poisoned by mining tailings. Bands of Coast Salish pushed off their traditional territory were placed in lowlands at Mt. Currie infested by mosquitos, ticks and leeches. A century later, Tommy Orange's *There There* describes a different class of bloodsuckers, the vogue ethno-tech projects like genome-mapping plaguing urban indians. Poor conditions at Mt. Currie actually led the community to continue foraging sites that for centuries had benefited from traditional stewardship with a remarkable diversity of berry and mushroom species. A local native named Couchie who helped to radicalize the Squamish 5 in the 1980s also worked with the Native Youth Movement-associated group that went on to re-occupy those traditional lands. First premised on preventing a ski lodge development similar to Mt. Whistler, the year-round encampment called Sutikalh ("Home of the Winter Spirit") revitalized the suppressed cultural practices. The mosquito hoards faced by the Pitt River nation in Northern California similarly had the effect of stimulating ingenious protection methods, such as a PA broadcast around their meeting and council spaces of recorded dragonfly wings.[255]

Similar foils plagued colonial projects like the Panama Canal: rapid railway construction, yellow fever and malaria that decimated immigrant laborers, and zealous versions of expansionist ideology. It is often overlooked the extent to which 'the fever' helped shape the world's ethnic dispersion. North and south of the tropics, but not in them, white Europeans could repeatedly accomplish settler-colonialism, from Australia to Argentina, and South Africa to North America. As Charles C. Mann has demonstrated, a fundamental cause of the African slave trade was the Africans' resistance to mosquito diseases. Witness to a plague in 1793 that wiped out 10% of

[255] Much of this section derived from interviews conducted by the author. Pitt River Nation Summer Gathering 2004; Sutikalh with Chief Hubie, Summer 2007; Carrie Dann, Western Shoshone, Winter Solstice 2008. See also Hansen, Ann. *Direct Action: Memoirs of an Urban Guerrilla,* Oakland: AK Press, 2002. And Zig-Zag, *Sutikalh, It Takes a Whole Community to Stop a Ski Resort,* Warrior Publications.

Philadelpia and Washington D.C., Jefferson found a silver lining for his nascent anti-urban vision of westward expansion, writing to Benjamin Rush in 1800, “the yellow fever will discourage the growth of great cities in our nation.” For the Colony of New South Wales in 19th Century Australia, a virulent Protestantism inspired efforts to clear swamp lands for sheep herding, exploiting Luther’s copro- and scoto-phobic importunities to clear God’s Own Country of any demonic dwellings. Advanced practices of fire manipulation by native Australians and Californians had each produced vibrant ecosystems, which gradually transformed and diminished under policies of fire suppression, further severing both populations from their traditional cycles and livelihoods.

Vázquez became a folk hero to the Mexican communities of California, celebrating his indigenous heritage and making use of the mythic cross-border flights and scrimmages employed by Geronimo and Santa Ana, in turn inspiring Pancho Villa. The author Cormac McCarthy is one of the more famous depictors of the border, combining the grisly sensationalism of Charles Bowden with the pastoral austerity of Faulkner. McCarthy brings to life the color of the sky and land, in one memorable scene from *Blood Meridian* even registering the electric phosphorescence clinging to the clothes of riders asleep in a stable. His border is at once penetrable and unromantic in its violence, cruelty, and beauty. At the same time, he creates heroes and monsters out of the border’s most vulgar mythos: to its north are stoic, virtuous, free-riding rangers; southward lurks depravity, insecurity, and hideous crimes.

Galeano’s ‘Latino United States’ also reckons with the indigenous question, by proxy implicating Canada, which emerges with a sheepish grin beneath the child Trudeau’s mud-streaked cheeks. The 1870s mark the end of the Indian Wars with the death of Crazy Horse and the defeat of Sitting Bull in South Dakota. A century later, Dee Brown’s *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* appeared, followed by Peter Matthiessen’s *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse.* The two books

were integral to the story of the American Indian Movement and the reawakening of indigenous resistance. Brown's history of the Indian Wars portrays the visions and worldview of Crazy Horse, a Lakota warrior and deeply spiritual man whose tactical innovations on the battlefield, like those of the Apache Geronimo, influenced the art of guerrilla warfare:

> For a long time Crazy Horse had been waiting for a chance to test himself in battle with the Bluecoats. In all the years since the Fetterman fight at Fort Phil Kearny, he had studied the soldiers and their ways of fighting. Each time he went into the Black Hills to seek visions, he had asked Wakantanka to give him secret powers so that he would know how to lead the Oglalas to victory if the white men ever came again to make war upon his people. Since the time of his youth, Crazy Horse had known that the world men lived in was only a shadow of the real world. To get into the real world, he had to dream, and when he was in the real world everything seemed to float or dance. In this real world his horse danced as if it were wild or crazy, and this was why he called himself Crazy Horse. He had learned that if he dreamed himself into the real world before going into a fight, he could endure anything.
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> On this day, June 17, 1876, Crazy Horse dreamed himself into the real world, and he showed the Sioux how to do many things they had never done before while fighting the white man's soldiers. When Crook sent his pony soldiers in mounted charges, instead of rushing forward into the fire of their carbines, the Sioux faded off to their flanks and struck weak places in their lines. Crazy Horse kept his warriors mounted and always moving from one place to another. By the time the sun was in the top of the sky he had the soldiers all mixed up in three separate fights.[256]

Crazy Horse prophesied his people's return to their traditions and to the battlefield. After unprecedented victories against the U.S. cavalry, he was eventually defeated and his tribes were relocated to reservations. The same fate befell the other free peoples, whose diminished numbers were given small tracts of land often considered worthless or unproductive. In an instance of historical irony, several of these reservations held ores of uranium that would only become known to the nuclear industry later in the 20th Century. This was the case for the Black Hills of the Lakota, where Crazy Horse had been buried, where 200 poorly provisioned and starving indians were slaughtered by a U.S. regiment in 1890, and where the American Indian Movement would renew its armed struggle in the 1970s.

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[256] Brown, Dee. *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee,* Bantam Books, 1970.

AIM arose from civil rights agitation among the indian communities of Midwest cities like Minneapolis and St. Louis, somewhat in the vein of SNCC and the Black Panthers. Key to AIM's generation into an armed organization was the group's encounter with traditionalists still on the reservation, where their languages and practices were intact. An important element from the latter bloc was the Sun Dance led by a medicine man named Crow Dog. The Sun Dance brought together the spirituality and militancy that had been banned with the Ghost Dance after 1890. With first-hand interviews, Matthiessen narrates the story of Leonard Peltier, a Lakota AIM activist raised in a BIA boarding school who would come to play a key role in the organization. Peltier's leadership stemmed from quiet actions of service to the community and a stoic example of living with purpose. After the FBI stormed the Black Hills, where their proxies had been tormenting the community, Peltier and other members of AIM returned fire and two federal agents were killed. Matthiessen was convinced by multiple first-hand accounts that Peltier, Dino Butler, and Bob Rabideau led a group of women and children out of the vicious firefight and federal dragnet by following a local hawk up a small creekbed that seemed to wait and signal to them. It is the strangest irony that amidst a campaign of terror by the FBI to induce paranoia and suspicion within AIM, the white Matthiessen gained Peltier's intimate trust for *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,* which government lawsuits kept banned for years – only for it to be revealed at the end of his life that he had early on founded the Paris Review as a cover for his activities as a C.I.A. agent. The story evokes the blurriness of the C.I.A. agent who, apparently as a friend, accompanied Frantz Fanon at his deathbed. The extent of the CointelPro destruction of AIM has been widely reported, with the murder of combatant Anna-Mae Aquash being blamed by the FBI on suspicious AIM members after she had been snitch-jacketed, while Aquash had claimed before dying that the personally involved FBI agent David Price had himself promised to kill her. Peltier sought refuge in Canada while international calls for his freedom and an investigation were heard, but he was captured and illegally extradited, remaining alongside Black Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal as the country's best-known political prisoners for five decades.

Canada, with a much larger native population in gross and relative terms, would face its own insurgency beginning with the stand-off at Oka in 1990. Stormed by white mobs in defense of a private golf course in Quebec, a group of Mohawks laid claim to their traditional, unceded territory, and saw indians across Canada for the first time flex their capacity to disrupt the economy through road barricades and burning blockades on rail lines. The home country of the international mining firms, Canada has excelled in presenting a benign face to the world, despite revelations that the recently discontinued residential schools had served to implement policies of genocide. In a predictable boomerang, survivors of the schools helped to radicalize the Native Youth Movement and sought out projects like Sutikahl that demand the removal of 'KKKanada' from territory that was never ceded by treaty. This is the North America unmasked by Galeano, plundering the resources of its southern neighbors, undermatched laborers and internal colonies.

The 1870s were also important for relations between the U.S. and Mexico. In 1874, Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary was founded, the final resting place of Mexican revolutionary Ricardo Flores Magón. According to Christina Heatherton, Leavenworth first served as a central fort in the capture of Santa Fe and Los Angeles during the Mexican American War, was used to launch many of the Indian campaigns, and trained black 'Buffalo' soldiers for these deployments and upcoming battles in the Philippines. Initially a military prison, its first inmates were native people, Mexicans captured from the newly conquered territories, and formerly enslaved Buffalo soldiers.[257] Flores Magón was born the same year, to a Puebla *criolla* and Zapotec indian who had fought the U.S. invasion and was a lieutenant colonel in Benito Juárez's Liberal army. His parents met while defending the Siege of Pueblo in 1863.

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[257] Heatherton, Christina. "University of Radicalism: Ricardo Flores Magón and Leavenworth Penitentiary." *American Quarterly,* September, 2014.

In 1876, Porfirio Díaz overthrew the Liberal government and began his 35-year rule. According to Lytle Hernández, following the completion of the transcontinental railroad, the Porfiristas initiated the robber baron invasion of Mexico's railroads, oil, and mining sectors, setting off the mass migrations from the countryside that swelled the underclasses inside the U.S.. Initially joining student demonstrations in 1892 against Porfirio's third term, Magón became an important theorist of peasant anarchism whose agitation helped catalyze the Mexican Revolution. His journalism was targeted by a Gag Rule in 1903, forcing his flight into the U.S., where he would launch a newspaper, form a political party, and by 1908 raise the PLM army. The Magonistas were the targets of intense counter-insurgency that sought to suppress labor militancy on both sides of the border and protect U.S. interests in Mexico, motivating the anti-communist forces of the Palmer Raids and the nascent FBI.

Flores Magón was a key figure of the internationalism that marked labor and socialist praxis on both sides of the border in those decades. His contacts and allies included WWI pacifists, the IWW, Emma Goldman, and Eugene Debs. Some of his cross-border anarchism was incorporated into the 1915 *Plan de San Diego,* an anti-white detachment of the Mexican Revolution composed of African-, Mexican-, Asian-, and Native Americans that sought a companion uprising in the U.S. before being cut down by a wave of lynchings in Texas and New Mexico.[258] His writings also inspired the indigenous campesino Augusto Sandino in Tamaulipas as he worked in the oil refineries during the 1920s, and who in 1927 after returning to Nicaragua led the peasants of Segovia in a six year guerrilla insurgency against the U.S. Marines' occupation.

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[258] Hernández, Kelly Lytle. *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands,* Norton, 2022.

Flores Magón's life ended in 1922, jailed in Leavenworth, concerned in the last years with the growing anti-Mexican racism and political repression that targeted the cross-border labor movement he had championed. The surveillance of the Magonistas by the federal government developed after the revolution into a racial regime attuned to socialist organization of especially peasant labor, maintaining the western agricultural monopolies and output norms, imposing tightly managed immigration controls, restrictions on housing, wage suppression, segregation in schools, and impunity for workplace safety regulation.[259] At the start of the Great Depression in 1929, "Unemployment skyrockets, a furor arises over competition by Mexican labor for jobs and the Hoover administration initiates a massive deportation program. As many as a million Mexicans were just loaded onto trains and shipped out of the country. Some estimates are that as many as 60% of those deported were actually American citizens."[260]

Nonetheless, links between socialists in the two countries remained highly visible in the 1930s and 40s, including among the arts. Hollywood was visited in the late 1920s by the Soviet film director, Sergei Eisenstein, who planned to make a film about the Haitian Revolution with Paul Robeson. He was assisted by Charlie Chaplin and Upton Sinclair in traveling to Mexico, a society he was fascinated by, before making his homage to the Mexican Revolution, *Zapata Vive! (1933).* A certain continuity exists between Zapata's role in mobilizing the indigenous peasantry, with the radical agrarian program written in the Plan de Ayala, and the keen attention given by Eisenstein to the Soviet landscape and peasantry. That preoccupation is present across his work, in how animals are filmed for example, but most centrally in *Old and New (1929)* aka *The General Line.* The earlier version had been strongly aligned with the Trotskyist program for industrialization and agrarian reform, forcing it to be re-edited to hew to the new reality of Trotsky's banishment. The film depicts the resentment by the poor peasants for

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[259] Chacón, Justin Akers. *Radicas in the Barrio: Magonistas, Socialists, Wobblies, and Communists in the Mexican American Working Class,* Haymarket Books, 2018.
[260] Gonzalez, Juan. *Harvest of Empire (2010). Op. cit*.

large-holders and the need for labor-saving technology. These populations would only a few years later suffer famine, unlike in Mexico where the 1930s agrarian reform helped to alleviate hunger. Leonardo Padura's *El hombre que amaba a los perros* narrates how in the 1930s the Communist Party in Russia takes up the industrialization and agrarian form that the Trotskyist opposition had been guilty of demanding. But the middle-sized and small-holding peasants, out of fear and retribution for the appropriations of large-holding peasants, burn their animals and exhaust the reserves of heirloom seeds needed for regeneration, bringing on the famine.

For Lenin, the reaction of the peasantry is a reflection of the bourgeoisie's hatred of the land and false appreciation of labor – its intellectually removed management – which is arguably more pernicious than ever. The end of Marx's analysis of the capitalist mode of production, *Capital Vol. 3*, is not so esoteric and general as it is portrayed due to editing and compilation problems. Rather, several major studies emphasize that Marx's real conclusion is a simplification of political economy, whose importance now lies in being popularized and familiarized for mass labor – not an endless academic publishing industry. For Balakrishnan, the conclusion is that capital never departs from its origin in the land-labor-capital triangle. Even in the advanced World Market, capitalism is the supremacy of *those who own the land,* and the virtual bondage of those who work it.[261] In that vein, Marx's late dedication to studying communal property relations appears as a continuation of that conclusion.

From the position of anthropologists like Eric R. Wolf, the peasant question positions the center of the 20th Century in Asia and Latin America, with the U.S. in a side role. From this view, Marx was prophetic in his linking of peasant and anti-colonial struggles based in India, and their opposition to Britain. India and Russia were both sites of uprisings in 1905, while the Mexican

[261] Rubin and Heinrich both produced major systemic readings of Marx promoting the coherence of the Kapital volumes as a system. See also Balakrishnan, Gopal. "The Abolitionist." *New Left Review,* Vol II, No. 91, Jan-Feb, 2015.

Revolution ran concurrently with the First, Second, and Third Chinese Revolutions in 1911, 1913, and 1917. Those events saw the establishment of the Chinese Republic, the uprising and outlawing of the KMT and Sun Yat Sen, and the forming of alliances that would finally take power in 1949. The Indian Communist M.N. Roy emerged from the 1905 rising against the partition of Bengal. He became a key link for anti-British alliances during the First World War, organizing Indian armed struggle first with military support from Germany, then in Indonesia, Japan, China (via Sun Yat Sen), the U.S., and Mexico. As with Martí and so many others, his exile also spurred his organizing, first embracing Marxism in the U.S. and even, alongside the peasant-born Katayama Sen of rural Japan, founding Mexico's first Communist Party.

As is well known, Trotsky's asylum in Mexico was sought from President Lázaro Cárdenas by Diego Rivera, another figure in the story of Latino culture being purged from the U.S.. Rivera's explicitly Communist politics brought a high degree of attention to the radical history conjoining the two countries, which was under attack. Memory of the Mexican-American War had quickly been suppressed, especially inconvenient facts such as the Irish-Americans known as the St. Patrick's Brigade who took up arms on behalf of Mexico. Rivera was associated with the socialist-arts movement that under the New Deal brought radical writers like Nelson Algren and Richard Wright into state-sponsored programs. They would be joined by Hemmingway and the Writers Project in galvanizing support (as Carpentier was doing) for Republican Spain, whose only allies were the USSR and Mexico. But the peak of this internationalism would be cut short by the disruption of WWII, the intense anti-Communism of the U.S.'s post-war consolidation, and the doubling down on the Monroe Doctrine that follows.

The censoring of Rivera shifted the bar for politically-tolerated art, most notably the 1933 reversal by Nelson Rockefeller to remove *El Hombre Controlador del Universo* for its overt socialism, and explicitly its central profile of Vladimir Lenin. In Mexico, the assassination of

Trotsky heralds the conservative turn of the PRI, as its revolutionary politics begin to freeze under overt pressure from the U.S., which for Gleyzer's *La revolución congelada (1969)* is completed with the massacres of 1968. Simultaneously, the political participation by refugees, once welcomed by Carranza as in Roy's case, became prohibited. This is observed especially in the shift of latitude afforded Guatemalan militants, who under Benito Juárez were at first fully welcomed and supported. According to Nathalie Leduc, "Desde el siglo XIX, en los años 60, el gobierno de Benito Juárez acogió a los exiliados guatemaltecos que lideraron la revolución liberal en Guatemala en 1871, entre otros Justo Rufino Barrios y Miguel García Granados."[262] But especially after 1968, crackdowns in Mexico City expelled radicals to the countryside, leading to endogenous guerrilla groups like that of Lucio Cabañas in Guerrero and then eventually in Chiapas; by which time groups in refuge like the FAR and EGP were forbidden from internal mettling.

> Cabe apuntar que, ligado a esto último, para ese año se supo que varios asilados que vivían en México habían recibido amenazas en la tierra receptora por parte de elementos de una organización clandestina de visos anticomunista. Lo anterior explica, de alguna forma, el hecho de que la representación mexicana no otorgara asilo en los siguientes años a miembros de la guerrilla argumentando que, con base en las leyes penales de su país, las solicitudes de aquellos no procedían, lo que puede interpretarse como un endurecimiento de la política de asilo del país receptor y explicar la disminución de exiliados por vía abierta.[263]

Elsewhere, Rivera and Kahlo's helm of the Mexican vanguard was inherited by Elena Poniatowski and Octavio Paz. Paz had participated in the Socialist Writers coalition on behalf of the Spanish Republic during the '30s, but his reactionary phase in the late '60s and '70s

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[262] Leduc, Nathalie. "Voces del exilio guatemalteco desde la ciudad de México." *Les Cahiers Amérique Latine Histoire & Mémoire,* #2, 2001.

[263] Rodríguez de Ita, Guadelupe. "Exiliados guatemaltecos en México: Una experiencia recurrente." Pacarina del Sur: http://pacarinadelsur.com/home/abordajes-y-contiendas/319-exiliados-guatemaltecos-en-mexico-una-experiencia-recurrente and Leduc, *ibid:* "En Guatemala, en los últimos años de la década de los 60, con una represión interna en auge, se produce pues una derrota, tanto del movimiento guerrillero, como de la reorganización del PCG, de los grupos socialdemócratas, y de nuevo una nueva frustración que se vuelve a superar en el exilio y en la clandestinidad en Guatemala. Estas secuencias, el activismo político, la represión, el exilio y la clandestinidad, se repiten en los años 70, 80 y hasta los años 90, es imposible encarar un retorno."

mirrored the repressive turn then being taken by the PRI against dissidents. Using Paz as a comic foil, Bolaño's *Los detectives salvajes* stages a fictional plot to kidnap and ransom the national laureate by vagabond poets who support the Central American revolutions, capturing the disdain felt by the youth of the '60s towards the nexus of PRI and the ex-vanguard.[264]

In the U.S., repression was much more severe. Prominent communist figures like Richard Wright and Paul Robeson were undone and forced into exile. The aesthetic of socialist realism had acted as a bridge across the border and was codified within New Deal programs like the Federal Art Project of the WPA. They had assisted the socialist realist painter Hershel Levit, famous for his mural portraying the persecution of Crispus Atacus. Here we see a late attempt to reclaim the *mestizaje* and working class underside of the Revolutionary War. According to William Hogeland, the War of Independence was long remembered and understood by the U.S. public as a consolidation of elite creole power, until Cold War anti-Marxism oversaw a decisive patriotic revision to suppress this class-based analysis. W.E.B. Du Bois' pioneering study of race, class and U.S. geography was another victim of government repression, as Du Bois was tried in court for Communist ties and denied freedom of travel through the 1950s. He ultimately died in Nkrumah's Ghana where he sought exile, dramatic in light of the fact that he had persevered through waves of earlier repression under Jim Crow without fleeing. Robeson was born to a mother of free Quaker Abolitionists and a father that had escaped a Carolina plantation only to attend university in Pennsylvania. Paul's remarkable stature became one of the most recognized in the world, but the anti-communist onslaught proved more than capable of burying his reputation and livelihood. These examples of the worldwide reach into the quotidian by the Red Scare is a reminder of why the term's association with Witch Hunts has been so indelible. That link, inscribed by Arthur Miller's *The Crucible,* demonstrates narrative's

[264] Lau, David. "Poetic Realism and the Neoliberal Transition in Roberto Bolaño's *Los Detectives Salvajes.*" *Critical Insights* #15, 2015*.*

representational capacity to convey the ramifications into the unconscious by ideological currents that historicism's traditional indices fail to register.

The degree to which anti-communism saturated the pores of U.S. society in the 1950s is dramatically depicted in the recent biography of Algren, *Never a Lovely so Real.* Once described by Hemmingway as the greatest living American author, Algren rendered proletarian dialect and the world of the underclasses in unadorned, accessible quips. He coined phrases in the 1940s like "I got a monkey on my back" that fulfilled language's unique role of preserving class-consciousness, offering a potential wormhole from the 1930s to young readers at the dawn of the '50s. His circles extended to Simone de Bouvoir, Sartre, and France's post-war socialist vanguard, a groupuscule with the rare prominence to withstand the coming wave of reaction against their Communist commitments. Algren also thrust himself into contentious public controversies such as the Rosenbergs Defense Committee and the left-wing presidential campaign of the New Deal Vice-President Henry Wallace (who, on being ousted by Truman in 1947, predicted that the U.S.'s military adventurism would soon make it "the most hated country in the world"), efforts that reveal a continuity of internationalism that threatened to survive under McCarthyism. Unaware at the time that the FBI had helped destroy his career and isolate him socially, he died feeling himself a failure, only later being redeemed by historians such as his friend Studs Terkel, and then Colin Asher's FOIA requests for the damning FBI files.[265]

Instead, the late 1950s saw a younger generation of socialists and folk nostalgists attempting to rehabilitate blacklisted performers and roll back the conformity that had overtaken the arts. As a young performer, Joan Baez sought to draw attention to the exclusion and blacklisting of former Communist Party member Pete Seeger. Seeger was another surviving link between the '30s and '50s, having traveled and learned music at a young age from the Almanac Singers and

[265] Asher, Colin. *Never a Lovely so Real,* W.W. Norton, 2019.

anti-fascist, IWW-affiliated troubadours like Woody Guthrie and Leadbelly. He performed with Woody and Paul Robeson in 1949 in Westchester, NY, where a racist, anti-communist mob attacked and almost killed them. Music was a vehicle for international solidarity among socialists across time and space. Anarchist songs from the Spanish Civil War that celebrated the International Brigades were picked up by radicals in the Americas, including Seeger's circle in the U.S., in Veracruz, Mexico where refugees from the Republic in the 1930s were celebrated with parades, and in Chile where they were later recorded by Rolando Alarcón. However, latin music was increasingly stigmatized as a genre separate from and alien to 'authentic' roots music, although its influences are all over the homegrown-touted innovations like the blues. Challenges to the breakthroughs, and forced 'whitening' of content by Chicano musicians, can be seen in the limitations placed on early doo-wop and rock musicians like Richie Valens (née Valenzuela).

The solidarities and commitments practiced within the folk tradition were not stomped out at once. Following the coup in Chile, Phil Ochs organized a concert at Madison Square Garden in honor of his martyred friend, the socialist songwriter Victor Jara. Ochs' career, ending two years later with his suicide, retained vital connections to left-wing and internationalist causes, but was formally generic to Woody Guthrie 30 years hither. As seen, folk was a fraught genre that, once just another style among a cosmopolitan list of products, became a caricature of itself.

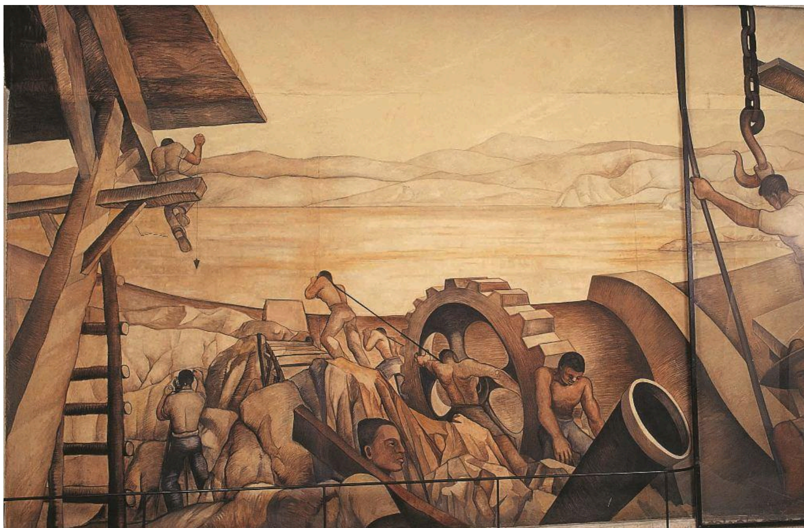
At the same time, the *Nueva canción* movement that Jara had been a part of was widespread elsewhere in the Americas, including in Mexico. One forerunner was Judith Reyes, a political writer, radical organizer, and protest singer who wrote a *corrido* in tribute to her fallen comrade Arturo Gámiz Garcia (a leader of the Partido Popular Socialista who died during the 1965 failed launch of a *foco* guerrilla in Chihuahua). Reyes had connections with socialist artist unions from the heyday of the 1930s such as the Sociedad de Autores y Compositores, and was detained

and tortured for several months following the 1968 Tlatelolco massacre. Another protest singer and radical organizer to survive Tlatelolco, as well as the Corpus Cristi massacre in 1971, was José de Molina, who died as a result of a police beating for protesting in the Zócalo during the State visit of President Bill Clinton on 5 de Mayo, 1997. A symbol of the ‘68 generation, he was joined in the relaunched *folklorista* movement by the young vocalist Amparo Ochoa. She interpreted several songs from the Mexican Revolution, glorifying its female soldiers in “La Adelita,”[266] the agrarian program of the Plan de Ayala in “Bola suriana de la muerte de Emiliano Zapata,” and radical peasant consciousness in the humoresque “El barzón.” Despite their many historical and cultural overlaps, these songs had virtually no reception in the United States.

[266] The grainy photographs that have made the Adelitas emblematic,of hacienda-backed posers draped in the long-bullet belts that were the Revolution’s informal uniform, have their own fascinating relationship to anti-Asian nativism and creole ethnicity. See Elena Poniatowska’s *Las soldaderas.*

Appendix C: Carpentier and the Cuban Revolution

In Jameson's influential essay, "Periodizing the '60s," Pinochet's coup d'etát on 9-11-1973 brings to a close the brief revolutionary wave, with all it entailed, that was launched with the Cuban Revolution's success in January, 1959. This appendix will look at the genesis of that event and its crucial role in Carpentier's life. Analyzing the Mexican Revolution's impact on the United States above, I noted expulsions from the countryside, the ensuing North-South immigration regime, and increased militarization of the border. The overseas territories like



Puerto Rico that Spain lost in 1898 also saw an expansion of maritime activity and strategic border policies. For example, the U.S. imposed citizenship on Puerto Ricans in 1917, "just in time to draft 20,000 Puerto Ricans and send them [a month later] to fight in WWI."[267] They fought in segregated units. At the same time, the island had no local government, English was named the national language, and Spanish was prohibited from being taught in school. Emigration was kept very low until the late 1940s, when islanders were recruited to the U.S. for labor shortages in the Northeastern factories, while an export promotion program known as Operation Bootstrap caused a collapse of the sugar plantation system in favor of urban export

[267] Martín Espada interviewed by Juan González in Onyx Films' *Harvest of Empire (2012).*

manufacturing.[268] The 1950s saw a wave of immigration from the island to the U.S. 10 to 20 times greater than in previous decades.

In *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle,* Guy Debord notes that the rise of a state legal apparatus is invariably accompanied by the tandem development of organized illegality, such as the networks that arose along the U.S.-Mexican border and its ascending ports for the smuggling of contraband, fugitives, prostitutes and immigrants. These paralegal structures become entwined with Latin America's prolonged underdevelopment, binding the national governments to the vicissitudes of the black market, whose enforcement arms then increasingly interfere with the performance of democracy. Furthermore, in the full-blown counter-insurgencies of the Cold War like Nicaragua and Colombia, state-intelligence agencies found in organized crime an ace-card for creating paramilitary fronts against communist guerrillas. What Debord's Hegelian formulations of this dynamic disclose is that the capitalist legal system incubates pockets of corruption and backhanded abuse, complemented in turn by the discretionary power to entrap and deploy those participating in the illegal trades.

These tendencies first become evident just after the Mexican Revolution as the countries' economic imbalance produce the cross-border vice-dens of Ciudad Juarez and Nuevo Laredo for drug-use and illicit pleasure-seeking. With the onset of Prohibition, the lucrative liquor smuggling networks lead to the rise of the first 'narco-cartel' under the direction of Ignacia Jasso, 'La Nacha'.[269] Jasso and her lover Pablo González began as a pair of romantic outlaws performing robberies, extortions, banditry and drug-running; but following his death she skillfully developed a criminal network that thrived on greasing the palms of low-waged public servants.

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[268] Image: *La Presa y la Represa (1953)* by Rafael Ríos Rey, Puerto Rican folklorist and muralist of social realism. From the Vestíbulo of the famed Edificio Empresas Ferré, Ponce, today Trinity College of Puerto Rico.

[269] Smith, Benjamin. *The Dope: The Real History of the Mexican Drug Trade,* W.W. Norton and Co., 2021.

As her profile rose, she expanded her infiltration among the legal and political class, manipulating the constitutional protections known as *amparos* as a defense against law enforcement of her financial activities. She became a well-known public enemy in the U.S. and was jailed on the Islas Marias, only to convince authorities of her conversion to Evangelical Christianity and secure a release. She typified a generation of provincial crime families along the border that often enlisted humble and unspectacular methods, much like that of Juan Nepomuceno Guerra's smuggling operation in Nuevo Leon, which would later metastasize into the Gulf Cartel, a financially diversified international network.

Similar developments took place in the new nation of Cuba, whose government and economy were greatly determined by Washington. The puppet-regimes of Alfredo Zayas and Machado guaranteed the prosperity of the U.S. companies invested in the island under the Platt Amendment's "right of intervention." However, the aspirations for independence demanded by Martí by the 1920s led to a vast gulf between the reality of economic subservience and radical articulations of socialism appearing in the island's aesthetics and politics, such as in the manifesto of the Grupo Minorista signed by Carpentier. This document emerged from an alliance of Communist and avant-garde circles that combined the struggle for national liberation with the launching of various innovations in artistic expression. Carpentier had traveled to Mexico in 1926 and was deeply impressed by the cultural politics of the *muralismo* movement.

One of the U.S. financial interests being harbored by the dictatorships was the mob-accountant Meyer Lansky's nascent National Crime Syndicate, which by the 1930s had established a base for its money laundering, liquor smuggling and drug-running. The Trafficante dynasty owned major Havana casinos, night-clubs, cabarets, hotels, bolita lotteries and a drive-in movie theater, much openly and "legally." By the 1940s, the president and dictator Bautista himself was a co-owner of the Hotel Nacional alongside Lansky and Lucky Luciano. Like the Cuban

government, the mob sought to prevent destabilization of their business activities, taking part informally in the crackdowns on agitation. The hotels, resorts, and casinos where this underworld flourished were the same that peddled the most vulgar spectacles of 'Afro-Cuban' music and sexuality. The United States had assumed the right to intervene militarily on the island without discretion in order to protect its business interests. Crude domestic propaganda portrayed this as a mutually beneficial agreement that subordinated the inhabitants' self-determination to an idyllic playground for licentious excesses. A port of call for sailors and the Navy fleet, the image of Friendly Havana fascinated a cross-section of wealthy and cosmopolitan culturati, while in practice denying even the most basic political manifestations.

That contradiction proved to be untenable and brought assistance from unexpected sectors to the anti-dictatorial struggle, but the mafia was deeply resistant to political reorganization. After 1959, the Cuban Revolution battled intensively to root out these cartels and earned their wrath, suggesting the eventualities that today in Colombia confront any prospects for a radical government. In fact, anticipating the now-accepted cocaine traffic, the mafia had used Cuba as an important way-point for moving heroin into the U.S.. Among its other effects, the revolution is an early case in the reorganization of the international drug cartels' smuggling routes that would intersect with and adjust around some of the major political developments in the following decades and dramatically alter states like Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Barbados and Jamaica.

Thus, the society in which Carpentier was raised exhibited a decadent form of wealth alongside an air of liberated cosmopolitanism, nominally post-colonial yet reserved for the elite business and tourist class. The extent to which this state of affairs failed to meet its liberal self-denomination can be seen in the willingness by factions of the capitalist class to support Fidel's agitation for an egalitarian society. The Sugar King Julio Lobo is a striking example.

Wielding a massive stake in the world sugar trade, Lobo nonetheless backed the campaign in the Sierra Maestra, and initially continued business in Havana's nascent revolutionary climate. Demanded by Guevara to become the head of the state sugar industry and facilitate the plantations' nationalization, Lobo left the resources behind to pursue a much more modest fortune in shipping from New York. Losing the intellectual pool of his and others' upper-management, sugar output significantly faltered until a fixed trade-line with the USSR saw the nearly crippled export infrastructure stabilized.[270] Lobo was himself an adamant Bonapartist (his private collection nourishing the Museo Napoleónico de Havana, at the opening of which Carpentier read a poem), signifying the cosmopolitan flavor of intellectual currents that populated Carpentier's formative scene.[271] In *El siglo de las luces,* the stagnancy and inequality of 20th Century Cuba is reflected back onto its 18th Century in the novel's early chapters, depicting a timeless childhood free from ruptures, where essentially anything is possible for those with means (and domestic employees). To those youths who become the acolytes and emissaries of Víctor's radical project, the overseas above all hold meaning and first capture their imaginations, eventually breaking up the halcyon reverie. For Carpentier's generation, national liberation and its mythology of Martí's advance from Mexico was at once a promise of breaking this stolid isolation, foretelling Fidel's launch of the Granma that would purposefully retrace that voyage.

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 figures centrally in Carpentier's life as a veritable before and after for his standing vis-á-vis that nation. His unequivocal support for the pariah state would hurt his literary reception in the West, but his covert support offered from Venezuela had already heralded his significant post-revolutionary role as an international promoter. In 1964 he returned to Cuba from a tour through the Socialist and Third Worlds to revise his original essay on *lo real*

[270] Rathbone, John Paul. *The Sugar King of Havana,* Penguin, 2011.
[271] Shared with me by the archeologist Luke Dalla Bona, author of *The Collection of the Museo Napoleónico, Havana, Cuba.*

maravilloso, celebrating a newfound realism in the practice of internationalism cutting across China, India, the Islamic World, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. Appending the *maravilloso* essay to the end of these global reflections, he concludes that the realism he had earlier assigned to the Americas was found to emanate from various sources in the international scene, among their nature, social organizations and cultural heritage.[272]

The Cuban Revolution is a key event for the hemisphere's 20th Century, definitively international in both that word's activist sense (eg. Che's revolutionary internationalism) as well as bearing on events from Angola to Canada to China. The scholar of guerrilla movements Timothy Wickham-Crowley states that Cuba's revolution is the defining event for the guerrilla wars in the second half of the 20th Century. The effect was two-pronged: one was the ideological and figurative example set by the Sierra Maestra campaign; the other is direct material support to insurgencies throughout the region, attested to by Washington's intelligence as well as Fidel's own admission that "we helped all of them." Each movement was slightly different, requiring a nuanced materialist account of social, economic, and historical conditions. For example, Fidel's visit to Venezuela in January of 1959 (as Carpentier was departing for Cuba) immediately galvanized the Venezuelan Communist Party's adoption of armed struggle against the rule of Rómulo Betancourt. Revolutionary internationalism is a key compositional element of Carpentier's material, and I take the guerrilla as a representative figure of this historical context.

The revolution's shadow has also been long. The example of international solidarity is arguably better embodied by the feats of Cuban medicine and its traveling doctors than the unsuccessful fronts launched by Che, its most famous doctor, in the Congo and Bolivia. Furthermore, the admiration Carpentier had for Fidel was mirrored by artists and leaders from a broad swath of

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[272] Carpentier. "De lo real maravilloso americano." *Tientos y diferencias*, Montevideo: Arca, 1967. And Alexis Márquez Rodríguez's Prologue to Carpentier, Alejo. *Los pasos recobrados: ensayos de teoría y crítica literaria,* Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 2003.

the globe, from García Márquez to Muhammed Ali and Nelson Mandela. The story of Ecuador's great painter, Oswaldo Guayasamín, is exemplary. Born into the stark poverty that was the lot of the country's indigenous majority during the early 20th century, Guayasamín's starting distance from the metropol was as remote as almost anywhere on the planet. Painting with the most rudimentary oils available, his works captured a battered humanity that is at once inimitably Ecuadorian and resonant with a global identity. Those early works, in their nearly colorless earth-tones, are still visible in the house in Quito where the artist dwelled in his final decade with Fidel as a frequent visitor, personally designed to act as a museum and artistic temple once he died. The sensitivity of his community's treatment on canvas so impressed Nelson Rockerfeller at a gallery exhibit that Guayasamín was awarded a residency in New York, quickly becoming one of the tiny nation's few world figures, rivaled at the time only by the balladeer Julio Jaramillo.

In New York in the 1940s, Guayasamín met Diego Rivera, became influenced by the *muralismo* movement that included Orozco and Siqueiros, and undoubtedly viewed Frida Khalo's work. His signature modernist style was deeply informed by Mexican *mestizaje.* That identity, closely linked to the revolution of 1910-1927, brings together the Three Cultures celebrated in the plaza of Tlatelolco, associated with the nation's three distinct epochs:

1) The pre-Columbian of the indigenous peoples,

2) The colonial period dominated by the light-skinned Spaniards,

3) Post-independence, associated with the racially-mixed mestizo, which especially after the revolution is a reappropriation of both indigenous identity and Spanish mythology, recast in a nationalist amalgamation that combines resistance to foreign invaders, Catholic and Aztec iconography, an indianism that includes Father Miguel Hidalgo and Benito Juárez, and the mobilization of class categories, above all the peasantry.

Only later would Guayasamín go to Europe and engage its artists; his modernism is thus an

inter-American creation. The works he created and curated testify to a mastery within the *mestizaje* matrix*,* hailing the royal transfiguration of the ancient Inca, Valdivia, and Shuar civilizations as a global and cosmological heritage, while demanding a universal standard of art capable of recognizing the futurism, vanguardism, and classicism of past and present Ecuadorian reality. His international circles of which Fidel was a regular included artists whose work he admired like Roberto Matta (Chile), Paco de Lucía (Spain) and Mercedes Sosa.[273] The two musicians' portraits stand alongside those of his family members and of unknown peasants, each a meditation on the affinity of the creative process with the basic elements of human experience that radically de-center the Global North. From Guayasamín to Carpentier, a generation of artists looked at Fidel as an embodiment of their own anti-imperialism, and a real life mirror for their aesthetic creations. The expression of love for Fidel as a personification of the Cuban Revolution was the obverse of what Carpentier criticized as the revolution's instrumentalization and cynical deployment in the hands of the United States.

This is the place to note the perpetual motion of *El siglo de las luces,* from which we find totally absent the sedentary rhythms of peasant life one might see in Juan Rulfo and which figure so centrally in the revolutionary theories of AGL and Quispe. Instead, Esteban finds in Spain idle decadence seeping out from the Church, in a long, counter-revolutionary ooze descending from the peak of the Inquisition. Carpentier's colorful disdain for cultural rot can be understood in his prideful enlistment of a living Baroque style revitalized in its post-colonial Americanist

[273] Photo detail: Fundación Guayasamín. Portraits completed in 1961, 1981, 1986, 1996.

adaptation. As the novel moves to French Guiana, the lethargy haunting the colonists and former Jacobins manifests itself as a swampy miscegeny, cut off from mixing with the vibrant maroon life inland and beyond the colony's borders. An opposition emerges in Carpentier between the sedentary peasantry of the continent and the cosmopolitanism of the archipelago, and one deduces that this is a disarming of something illusory, discovered in his musical ethnographies to be in fact an endemic peasantry-in-motion.

This opposition also appears in Bolaño's literature, recalling the comparison with his own life of peripatetic exile. In *The Insufferable Gaucho,* it is depicted as a humorous and timeless expression about the continent itself and its *mestizaje*. In the titular story's artful lifting of Borges and its homage to his employment of local color, we recognize that opposition of the global north and south more clearly than in Carpentier. The Borges story being imitated is "El sur," which, alongside other masterpieces like "El Aleph," show the author at the height of his powers of humor, self-effacement, and experimental authorship. Borges is the name of a character in the story who represents an effete intellectual creole, fearful and mistrustful of the humble physicality of the continent's natives. Borges outdoes himself, in that his realism emerges from the interplay of the specific local qualities with the universal 'labyrinthian' concept pieces for which his immense stature in world literature has come to be associated. This is a productive tension that remains unresolved in his best work. Hailed as the Kafka of the South and the progenitor of the Latin *boom,* it is thought experiments such as the "Library of Babel" on which his celebrity has flown: in that instance, the story is about a library in which literally everything ever written or conceived is stored and cataloged. Similarly, Salmon Rushdie has recounted the common experience of picking up *The Metamorphosis* after hearing that it is 'about' Gregor Samsa, who one day wakes up to discover that he has been transformed into a giant bug. Of course, it is Kafka's understated description of that experience that makes it great literature, the form it takes, not that he merely invents the concept and gets out of the way. Another extreme

example would be Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow,* which is summarized as being about a guy who gets an erection every time a V-2 rocket is shot. As in each of these cases, it is this, yet that plot in itself gives no account of its radical form, which represents the dramatic historical experience and tectonic changes in consciousness marked by WWII.

An opposition between the northern and southern hemispheres might be found in Borges and Carpentier, but it becomes more pronounced and defined later in Bolaño's globe-spanning narratives. Each one of his localities registers a Geiger-measure of the banality that haunts our era, and which radiates from capitalism's northern heartland. Whereas in *El siglo de las luces,* the young United States are a recently post-revolutionary state only weakly asserting its regional interests, in Bolaño's late 20th Century they figure as not only the distant exporter of capitalist terror, but also the epicenter of dead life robbed of its movement, as in *Los detectives salvajes* where writers go to stop writing.

Thus we have named two political impasses conditioning Carpentier's origins. First is the neo-colonialism of the United States over Cuba; and second is the universalism promised by Martísta national liberation – the revolutionary who, along with his horizons, is betrayed by the United States as they assume control over the independence movement. These components are featured in the two great films of the revolution's first decade, Mikhail Kalatozov's *Soy Cuba (1964)* and Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's *Memorias del subdesarrollo (1968). Soy Cuba* narrates the tortured path of the Cuban community plagued by its slavist past and neo-colonial present as it struggles towards the redemption of liberation. The United States and their corporate emissaries in United Fruit are representatives of Kant's *überlegen,* overseeing the community's human raw material with cold *ratio*, yet structurally removed from grasping the subject's sumptuous reality

(which for Hegel must come through labor).[274] The emotional tone of the Yankees reads like the terminus of the utilization of its revolutionary support or ambivalence from another era. This is the liberation of capitalist liberalism, which is blind to the passion and suffering of the Cuban *pueblo* and fails to suppress its long, ecological memory extending back through Lucumí santería rites to the island's origins. The writhing, haunted dance of Betty/Maria in a US-owned casino is an interplay of musical variation, the bamboo vegetation of the club, and an ancient mask, as she inhabits the various roles history has assigned to the island's inhabitants. The performative play demonstrates what Franz Fanon and Stuart Hall emphasized about the mask or veil's ability to both hide and reveal.[275] In the Aymaran culture championed by Quispe, masks work as portals to the characters who go in-between the animal and spiritual worlds, like *Oso* (bear) and *Kusillo* (trickster).[276]

In the community's painful passage, this one-sided form of reflection gives way to the bitter irony of the market's freedom and the neo-colonial abuses it wreaks. The period between 1898 and 1959 is sometimes revised by the right-wing as one of pastoral tranquility, but Carpentier's personal history undoes this picture. Two distinct military coup d'etáts interrupt the national liberation struggle that combined a swath of vanguardist, constitutionalist and socialist movements, Participating in many of its facets, Alejo spent 7 months in prison before taking an extended self-exile to Europe in 1928, where he would be a supportive witness to the rising Spanish Republic.

[274] Wallace, Christopher, *Walking in Place: Time and Totality in Hegel's Modernity*, 2017, Monash University, Thesis. See also Kant's first introduction to the Third Critique and Hegel's Lord/Bondsman dialectic in the *Phenomenology.*
[275] See Fanon's essay on the veil and its critical reconstruction in Isaac Julien's *Black Skin, White Mask (1995).*
[276] See the installation of masks in La Paz, Bolivia, from Chaco, Amazonian, Aymaran and other indigenous cultures. Museo Nacional de Etnografía y Folklore, "Máscaras, los Diversos Rostros del Alma"

Cuba was not alone in these years. The Marines invaded Haiti in 1915 at the behest of Citibank, forcefully seized its gold, and stayed to occupy. The US imposed martial law, according to the New York Times of all sources, “installed a puppet government” and took “full financial control.”[277] Following the occupation, the *corvée* law for indentured labor was resurrected, seeing the US military seize men and force them “to work far from home for no pay.” This led these workers to arm and revolt as the *cacos* under leaders like Charlemagne Péralte, who was tortured and maimed by the US as an example. *Corvée* deserters were shot. The U.S.’s own investigation at the time estimated over 3000 Haitians were murdered. In 1918, Maj. General Smedley Butler ordered Marines to dissolve the Haitian parliament at gunpoint, lowering wages to 10 cents a day and setting off mass Haitian migration to Cuba and the DR, an exit trend that became perpetual. In 1922, the U.S. installed fascist-admiring Louis Borno as President and its military guaranteed payments to Wall Street until 1934. “I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues,” Butler wrote in 1935. In 1934, Jacques Roumain founded the Haitian Communist Party, just as his literary star was rising. A collaborator with many anti-colonial thinkers such as Langston Hughes, Roumain was frequently jailed and exiled. In 1943 he was made Haiti’s chief diplomat to Mexico, where his work redoubled, but he inexplicably died the following year. The robbery of Haiti was known as the Farnham Plan, and by managing trade through the Panama Canal, it was copied around the region, such as in the D.R. where the U.S. simply controlled the import and export taxes.

The popular outrage these legalized rackets induced was met with grotesque excesses of violence. Indeed, it is the brutal repression of students at the university where Fidel Castro was a youth leader in the late 1940s, blinding and castrating protesters as if to outdo the old Spanish ‘butcher of Cuba and the Philippines’ Valeriano Weyler, that radicalized the resistance and first

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[277] Méheut, C., Porter C., Gebrekidan, S. and M. Apuzzo. “Demanding Reparations, and Ending up in Exile,” and “Invade Haiti, Wall Street Urged. The U.S. Obliged.” *The New York Times,* May 20, 2022.

skyrocketed Fidel's national and international profile. Carpentier's exile and periodic returns appear to be the generative experience for his internationalism: the superficiality of capitalist liberalism, as it echoes 'liberal monarchism' and supports military dictatorship, is exploded both spatially and historically in comparisons to the diverse past and currents in Caribbean poles like Caracas (where he finished the bulk of *El siglo de las luces)*. Venezuela, hardly liberated from its oligarchy, nonetheless had its own progressive urban centers and vibrant, autochthonous guerrilla movement, with extensive circulation of arts, letters, and visitors from far-afield. In *El siglo de las luces,* the Spanish, English, and Dutch Guyanas (now respectively parts of Venezuela, Guyana, and Suriname) appear more culturally developed than the French Guiana backwater, and Esteban's tragic flight through Paramaribo highlights the ironic potential of these more progressive regions.

Mid-century Venezuela has undergone a pastoral revision similar to that of pre-revolutionary Cuba, as one in which class division existed naturally, belying decades of conflict in the country that became Carpentier's second home. Venezuela in the 1930s was, like Colombia, highly integrated into world trade and the export of natural resources, but its historical development follows an entirely different path. One distinction is the influence of the guerrilla movement upon the Bolivarian revolution of Hugo Chávez that gained power in 1999, initiating two decades of fierce hostility with the decidedly anti-guerrilla Colombian state. The dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gómez (1908-35), who was reputed to be the richest man in South America, decreed that the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) could only exist underground and in illegality, which had the effect of radicalizing party militants. Furthermore, a highly-developed civil society joined in common coalition and forms of struggle with contrasting aims: for democracy, the legalization of political parties, of the PC in particular, suffrage or implements of social welfare and the nationalization of petrol. In this climate, by the early 1940s the PCV controlled over two thirds of

the country's official labor unions.[278] Thus despite the PCV's small size it represented a wide social alliance between peasants, urban workers, intellectuals and various trades from the middle as well as lower classes. Its main rival was the earlier legalized, liberal Acción Democrática (AD), militating for reforms but attracting workers with a softer approach at confrontation, and from this group would emerge the central political leaders of the 'transition to democracy'. Foremost among these was Rómulo Betancourt, who several times in power shifted with savvy between courting and supporting labor gains, and limiting and censoring its militancy.

This impasse between repressive liberalism and military dictatorship, closing the space for any meaningful labor representation that offered a communist horizon, would see factions of the PCV begin armed struggle in 1961 as the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (FALN) and, then, the Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR). From out of that broad National Liberation Front, some militants would re-enter electoral politics as the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party, whose founder, the ex-guerrilla Teodoro Petkoff, was a minister in the government prior to Hugo Chávez's. Chávez had been among the military garrisons infiltrated and organized in the 1980s by the founder of the FALN, Douglas Bravo, a key influence upon Chávez's political formation. Bravo represented the extra-parliamentary faction distinguished from both Petkoff's – once commanded by Bravo in the FALN and whose MAS would later effectively defer to Chavismo – as well as Chávez's own, forming a part of the left-opposition to Nicolas Maduro that identifies as a true base of Chavismo militating for a socialist renewal.[279]

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[278] *I Congreso del Partido Comunista de Venezuela (PCV),* Parque Central – Caracas, July 1987.
[279] Reinaldo Iturriza and Geo Maher. "Constituent Power." Sidecar Blog, New Left Review, Feb 3, 2022. https://newleftreview.org/sidecar/posts/constituent-power
and Maher. *We Created Chávez: A People's History of the Venezuelan Revolution,* Duke University Press, 2013.

In Carpentier's most sustained literary representation of Venezuela, *Los pasos perdidos,* a spatial opposition exists between the metropole of New York and the remote reaches of the upper Orinoco river. This is skillfully seated in the musics pertaining to each region. In the U.S., music produces the kind of joy associated with gratification (*placer*); whereas far from the colonial gaze of Caracas, music would simply allow contemplation, or even distraction, as the sounds of nature perform a kind of jouissance. Carpentier's village of the indigenous tribe comes 15 years before Márquez invented Macondo, and it stands both outside of time as well as of the magical elements that in *Cien años de soledad* delineate capitalist modernity from the elements it exploits. There, things lacking names are pointed to, yellow butterflies announce the arrival of a lover with a tragic destiny, and the 1928 massacre of striking United Fruit workers is wiped from public memory. But in *Los pasos perdidos* (which is free from the sorts of gimmicks that see Márquez reference Carpentier with a Víctor Hugues cameo) it is simple flooding that erases the village's links to the capital. This could be interpreted as constituting a more absolute resistance to the reifying effects of capitalist globalization. The Gran Savannah (a remote region visited by Carpentier in the country's south-east that inspired the novel's deep ecology) comes into existence for the market as a source of the authentic, to discover the primitive instruments responsible for music's origins. In Carpentier's statements during this period that he had previously usurped the title of musicologist, he simultaneously distances himself from the romantic gaze then raging among the bourgeoisie in Caracas for "authentic" music (we could include nature, the guerrilla, and everything nominally latina in the nation), while continuing his amateur appreciation as a listener and practitioner in the less spectacular realms of letters and politics.

The severity of the novel's mockery for the scholars of primitivism may only be rivaled by the outrageous hilarity of Bolaño's later "Part About the Critics." Carpentier's antipathy could be an

attempt to distinguish the depth-envy of the bourgeois academic from the concrete realities of Latin America's 'intact nature' that he passionately defends in remarkable passages like this,

> That primal nature, chaotic, grand – that really exists. And it would be absolutely vain to attempt an interpretation of America, in whatever region, without taking into account the fact of an intact nature, the sort of nature that the Europeans have left behind and been unable to see for at least 3 centuries… What is hard to find in the jungle is a mediocre person. In every case, they have a humanity that I have simply never found among the pallid existentialists so in fashion today among those who persist in following the example of what is already well on the way to dying in Europe.[280]

One is struck in this passage by its celebration of natural difference, such as obtains Venezuela, whose social dramas play out across a vast diversity of Caribbean coast, the end of the Andes, deep Amazon, Guyanan *tepuis,* and Caracas's centrality as a port. For the riches that built the capital were based on the colony's most lucrative products: cocoa, tobacco and sugar. There is an ethnobotanical implication to the slave-labor that produces these luxuries for a nascent bourgeoisie, and in doing so, extirpates the vast diversity of medicinal and psychotropic species endemic to the continent's ecologically lush tropics.

It is that *experiential* laziness that I presume bothered Carpentier about the Caracas ruling class, much as it did Galeano.[281] Such perversely universal taste for the exotic is shown through Alea's lens to be shared by the Havana bourgeoisie in *Memorias del subdesarrollo*. Here returns that other component, universalism, which passes through Martí but we can now see for Carpentier stems from much further back, including to the highly literate and liberal bourgeois cultures that thrived under the oligarchies in some of the banana republics. The Havana presented by Alea is one for whom the revolution in fact promises a romantic future free from the lethargic and deadlocked colonial remnants that fetter their mode of production. Alea's

[280] Carpentier, Alejo. *Entrevistas,* ed. Virgilio López Lemus, Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 1985, p. 28, 29. Cited and translated by Brennan.
[281] See the descriptions of 1960s Venezuela in Galeano, Eduardo. *Días y noches de amor y de guerra,* Mexico: Siglo XXI editores, 1978.

depiction of a revolutionary academic panel, on which sits the novelist of *Memorias del subdesarrollo* Edmundo Desnoes, captures the dueling formulas of this transition. One, by the reactionary bourgeoisie, for whom the horizon entails joining the First World's capitalist modernity, is trapped in the Kantian paradox of *überlegen,* which would abolish all that is sloven in agriculture (and therefore, according to Marx, productive labor itself).[282] The other, by the radical social elements, envisions this transition instead in the direction of internationalism, with its concomitant qualitative changes to local production. This was the formulation that Carpentier had been an early progenitor of. Building on his musical criticism, literary responses and political journalism, *La música en Cuba* in 1946 creates an original tone of *mestizaje* futurism, in which the spaces of European contradance are filled in with African rhythms and creole Cuban improvisation that make an explicitly national creation.

That the nation remains central to his democratic, anti-imperialist formula is in stark contrast to Bolaño, for whom the nation always appears in the light of melancholy. A brief addendum on Carpentier's political activity rounds out the pre-revolutionary picture of his movements. In his 20s, he wrote extensively for left-wing publications and was part of the milieu that launched the first Communist Party of Cuba with Soviet backing. In 1927, he was arrested for signing a manifesto against the Machado dictatorship, which led to his first major literary effort from jail, *¡Écue-Yamba-O,* an inventive class-based survey of Afro-Cuban folklore. Amidst frequent absences and cautious returns, Carpentier embraced internationalism as a balm for the regime's shameless efforts to keep the island cut off from arts and regional currents, just as his sociology and historicism sought to recover the scorned African and indigenous cultures.

[282] Deserving of more discussion is the ecological substratum of *Capital, Vol 2.* Amidst his movement towards many capitals and departments, with the mathematical tables of turnover time, Marx returns to the *fugue* of fertilizer, decomposition, and the slow cyclical time of organic production that capital would vainly overcome. Jonathan Crary's *24/7: Late Capitalism and the End of Sleep,* picks up on several of these aspects without referencing *Capital, Vol 2* specifically. Much as the proletariat has been depicted by the likes of Harry Cleaver as the spectral resistance hero to capital's protagonist in *Vol 1,* a reading of this role of cyclical 'time of nature' in *Vol 2* is wanting, on the grounds for a common cause between land and labor.

All that remains is to establish the link between Carpentier's intellectual itinerancy, political commitment, and the formula mentioned at the start of this study by Echevarría "for writing fiction in Latin America based on the history of the New World," whose model work is *El siglo de las luces.* An illustration of a commitment to Communism transliterated in narrative form is found in Senegal's independence, concurrent with Cuba's from 1958-60, in Ousmane Sembène's beacon for an alternative web of cross-Atlantic pollination. Coined the father of African cinema, his influence on Hollywood is unknown, despite being a major guide for John Singleton's urban African-American dramas *Boyz n the Hood (1992)* and *Baby Boy (2001),* the younger director making a pilgrimage to study from the elder in Senegal. Sembène spoke a Wolof dialect as a child in a fishing village, later fought for the Allies in WWII, participated as a strike-leader for the CGT on the docks in Marseille, and studied film in Moscow. Those experiences informed his powerful oeuvre across five decades, including the overlooked masterpiece *Camp de Thiaroye (1988),* which narrates the real events that befall a detachment of Senegalese soldiers upon returning from the French front. Several of the soldiers had been interned at Buchenwald and they were then detained indefinitely by the colonial authorities to prevent their rehabilitation by, and potential assistance to, Senegalese civil society, which would not gain independence for another decade. The highest ranking sergeant, Diatta, is an exceptional leader destined to be the cornerstone of an enlightened military bureaucracy. Called before the French tribunal for a debriefing exit interview, Diatta proves himself a highly literate humanist: ambitious for the collective's needs but personally humble, manifesting deep sensibilities and eloquence regarding the plight of his men under depraved treatment by Europeans, their modest wants for survival, and the fraternal love they effected between the French and Senegalese nations. Sembène's pacing is deft, building up unceremoniously to a speech of overwhelming moral weight while, with Shakespearean-timing, the camera dwells on the tribunal's mulled reaction. "Communiste," the Major has surreptitiously written on a note passed along to his colleagues'

menacing approval. The misprision of Diatta's liberal humanism as communism has the double effect of laying bare the real victims of the communist witch-hunts (which relied on C.I.A. kill lists that were notoriously rife with personal scores and garden variety political schisms[283]), as well making his exemplary character meld into the communist's personification. The censoring of Diatta sets off a series of actions that lead to the barracks being placed under gunpoint, from which they attempt to escape to their homes, and are to a man summarily slaughtered. Sembène thus formalizes the dueling currents of historical agency discussed in my introductory chapter. On the geo-political level, the specter of Communism is subsumed in a worldwide struggle between the former colonies and the hegemonic power of Europe and the U.S.; on the subjective level of the community, the same signifier, Communism, acts as a focal point for the decisive struggle that ends with the death of the story's protagonists.

The well-wrought development of Diatta's conversion from an apolitical to a subversive captures the far-flung signification encircling the Communist project in the 20th Century, in which Carpentier chose his path. Among other things, "Latin American reality" rendered what Gustavo Meoño, founder of the Guatemalan guerrilla ERP, describes as the basis of his own conversion. A youth witnessing the intense poverty suffered by the urban poor and highland Mayans, Meoño became interested in the social collectives forming to alleviate poverty through mutual aid and food sharing. That the most elemental human activity of breaking bread was enough to be labeled a Communist by the Ríos Monte dictatorship convinced Meoño that there was no practical difference between the word and the government's definition.[284]

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[283] Jakarta, in this way, exemplifying a general tendency found from Hollywood to Bogatá. See Bevins, Vincent. *The Jakarta Method: Washington's Anticommunist Crusade and the Mass Murder Program that Shaped Our World,* PublicAffairs, 2020. and Oppenheimer, Joshua. *The Act of Killing (2013).*
[284] Interview with Meoño in the film *Granito: Cómo atrapar a un dictador (2011).*

Sembène's art is a landmark for a cultural Marxism that grafts political struggle to social realism and the virtues of traditional renewal, which under Echevarría's care Carpentier shares no part of. Sembène's most politically read work, *Xala,* is a useful complement to Fanon's warnings for the national liberation struggle. In a setting resembling post-colonial Senegal, the neo-colonialism maintained by the new nationalist rulers endures a biting satire. Capable of conveying great conceptual depth, Sembène often makes heroes of the concrete members of the community that blend modern and traditional elements, such as *Xala'*s poor and deformed outcasts whose ambiguous ablution of spit humiliates El Hadji, the greedy former nationalist who betrayed his home-village.

A similar ambiguity obtains to *El siglo de las luces,* in the never-absolute disillusioning of Víctor Hugues, and the second life of his ambitions, glimpsed in Sophia and Esteban as they catapult against both backwards Spain and the ossified revolution of France. As the epilogue drifts between the Great Power clash and the after-life of revolutionary ideas, it reveals the final irony of the moment of the novel's publication: a historic revolution in Cuba birthing a new imagination of the Americas as liberated territory; and, simultaneously, the foreclosure of any social-democratic possibilities inside the United States, now embarked on a permanent war around the world to suppress any economic rivals or alternatives.