

“leopard”, and the many other individuals and families who sought a better world (and to whom Twinam dedicates her study), you need to read this book.

Patricia A. Schechter
 Portland State University
 schechp@pdx.edu

© 2015, Patricia A. Schechter

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08263663.2015.1090093>

“Mi genio es un enano llamado Walter Ego”: estrategias de autoría en Guillermo Cabrera Infante, by Claudia Hammerschmidt, Madrid, Iberoamericana, 2015, xiii + 412pp., US\$44.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-84-8489-677-7

Ellipsis and proliferation, original and duplicate, truth and lie; these internal incongruencies within the novel *Tres Tristes Tigres* by Guillermo Cabrera Infante stipulate the book entitled “*Mi genio es un enano llamado Walter Ego*”: *estrategias de autoría en Guillermo Cabrera Infante* by Claudia Hammerschmidt. Refusing to be a victim of language and stamping his authority over language, Cabrera Infante’s use of wordplay leads to another disputation in the novel: the construction of the language and the inability to translate it. Bustrofedón, the “Messiah of language”, as named by William L. Siemens (1975, 81), personifies this opposition, the center of language discourse. These parallel conceptions, which hardly find a way to converge, get embodied in the novel by Cabrera Infante. Jonathan Tittler (1978) rightly identifies that, amidst all these playful puns in *Tres Tristes Tigres*, the readers get lost and alienated. The readers are forced to change the reading pattern, thanks to the hedonistic narrator. This sheer arbitrariness and the plurality among the signifiers, signified, and the referents within the ever powerful language steers this scientific study by Hammerschmidt.

As a continuation of her thesis on the same author, Hammerschmidt intends to fill in the gaps that were left empty and open in her original thesis for potential impending alterations and remodeling: a (W)alter Ego of the present work, within the new context provided by a freshly upgraded bibliography. Cabrera Infante himself says in an interview that books are always means for improvements, since perfection is not a state, rather an objective (Guilbert 1974). Walking on the same line, Hammerschmidt too claims the study to be a “work in progress”, a scientific study always carrying on itself the scope for further investigation, which would constantly add further to the existing bibliography.

Thus, the perpetuated review within the novels of the Cuban author encourages Hammerschmidt to initiate another perpetuated analysis of his work, submerging herself deeper into the frenzy of the signifier, signified, and referent. A large number of previous studies have had much debate on the use of language and the linguistic persiflage by Cabrera Infante in his novels, especially in *Tres Tristes Tigres*. The lack and excess of language, as described by Hammerschmidt herself, leads to further paradoxical notions and takes her further into the labyrinthine world of words invented by Cabrera Infante. Hence, the linguistic skepticism of the novel is being juxtaposed by Hammerschmidt in this book, with linguistic re-appropriation retrospectively by Cabrera Infante, to grant more meaning to the prevalent arbitrariness and close the distance between the “I” narrator and the “I” narrated.

The linguistic tricks that Cabrera Infante plays on his readers and the hide-and-seek game between the original and the facsimile circumscribe the main analysis of Hammerschmidt's book. The study is a rotational one, as she seems to be in a quest for the truth, forcing out the information that is being withheld from the readers, that perhaps does not exist at all, behind what only appears to have been unmasked by Cabrera Infante in his novel and not to be betrayed by the mirror room that *Tres Tristes Tigres* is. She fears that the original "story" keeps getting lost in the act of retelling, translation, and lies. Hammerschmidt peels off the novel's skin, layer by layer, and tries to decipher the truth. However, she expresses cynicism towards what each layer reveals, as Cabrera Infante's work is erected on the foundation of re-telling and intratextual references, always disclosing an inverted and a deformed superficial truth, an elusive original. The gargantuan mosaic of intratextual references put together in the plane of *histoire* and *discours*, in the sense theorized by Genette (1972), with an inscrutable spatial and temporal description, drives Hammerschmidt to call Cabrera Infante's novel a dramatization of the Nietzschean "lie". The "lie" comes in the form of a mimesis that is ironical in itself: the creation of an original using, or rather replicating, the reality.

This "Cervantine sort of realism that refuses to create an illusion" (Tittler 1978, 296) comes under Hammerschmidt's radar while extending her analytical trajectory to translation. Translation constitutes an important part of this scientific study. Hammerschmidt tries to re-read the theory of *traduttori-traditori* through the inter-linguistic translations within the novel *Tres Tristes Tigres*. She analyses the constant process of supposedly utopic translation that takes place throughout the novel; a project that in turn eventually converts into lies. The second part of the study is dedicated to the bi-polarity of the self-immolation and the self-reconstruction act of the Cuban author. The timelessness and spacelessness in his works is recuperated by his signature, under interminable renewal. Hammerschmidt consoles the nomadic readers of Cabrera Infante's work by identifying the "narcissistic and self-reflexive" (p. 279) republication of his signature, in different forms of pseudonyms, in the interior of the text while destroying the self repeatedly.

Thus, this book by Hammerschmidt can be termed as an attempt at an integration process of enigma that reigns in the writings of Cabrera Infante. Situating the study in a vast range of existing bibliography on the subject, Hammerschmidt creates a chain among them which leads her investigation to assume a holistic character. The book exudes nodes in different directions, highlighting the diversity in the vantage points, very hard to congregate in the end into one final node: the study hardly has a "final" achievement, as it stands out as a reinvention of the "original". Mirroring his style of initiating a novel from the middle, without a beginning or a decisive end, Hammerschmidt establishes an a posteriori study of her previous thesis, starting with an *Advertencia*. The smooth transformation from the first to the second part is underlined by an *Intermezzo* that verbalizes Hammerschmidt's meditation retrospectively – the eternal self-(re)presentation shown in the first part – and prospectively – the eternal self-mortification shown in the second part – as a method of the continuous rebirth of the phoenix named Cabrera Infante.

One gets to understand the title better on reaching the end of the study: the impossibility of exorcizing the inevitable abyss created by the expanse between the text and author because it circles back to the language itself, the disobedient genie Walter Ego. The ensuing distance between enunciation and enunciated throughout the work of Guillermo Cabrera Infante feeds Hammerschmidt's endeavors to locate a congruency between them. The spilled ink on the cover page can symbolize the sand

that language is, which will always flow out of a closed palm, and Hammerschmidt's efforts to prevent this ink from spreading to inaccessible corners is not in vain.

References

- Genette, Gerard. 1972. "Discours du récit." In *Figures III*, 71–73. Paris: Editions du Seuil, coll. "Poétique".
- Guilbert, R. 1974. *Guillermo Cabrera Infante*, 19–46 [p. 839]. Madrid: Editorial Fundamentos.
- Siemens, William L. 1975. "Heilsgeschichte and the Structure of *Tres Tristes Tigres*." *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 21 (1): 77–90.
- Tittler, Jonanthan. 1978. "Intratextual Distance in *Tres Tristes Tigres*." *MLN* 93 (2): 285–296.

Karuna Warriar
 McGill University
 karuna.warrier@mail.mcgill.ca

© 2015, Karuna Warriar

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08263663.2015.1090094>

The Grenada revolution in the Caribbean present: operation urgent memory, by Shalini Puri, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, 341 pp., US\$83.33 (hbk), ISBN 978-0-230-12032-7

Three syllables: Grenada. An island. A word. Nearly four decades after The People's Revolutionary Government (PRG) overthrew the regime of Eric Gairy, and just over 30 years after the implosion that left a Prime Minister and so many others dead and paved the way for the US invasion, Grenada remains a country to be reckoned with. Attempts to explain what happened falter and fail (as this monograph persuasively argues, 25 October 1983, the day of the US invasion, is where memory goes to first, since 19 October, the fatal day on which the revolution consumed itself, is still too painful, unthinkable even).

What happened? What went wrong? These are questions that may be worth asking, but they cannot be answered definitively or in the same way. How to attend to the interpretive fissures? How to grapple with the fact that Grenada refuses to lend itself to straightforward Right or Left re-tellings? What to do when memory comes most loudly as silence?

Taking the humanities as its point of departure, this meticulously researched and crafted monograph by Shalini Puri offers a "critique, tribute and memorial". Puri's stakes are clear: not a history of the Grenadian revolution but a "meditation on memory", hopefully contributing to "[mobilizing] memory for egalitarian politics in the present" (p. 8). She accomplishes this not in a didactic way, and here the humanities is perfectly suited to the project at hand, finely attuned to contradiction, able to bring imaginative resources to bear on the range of ways in which memorialisation occurs.

Confronted with the destruction of records (including calypsos of the period that were lost when US forces bombed Radio Free Grenada), a studied silence in the Grenadian curriculum on the 1979–1983 years, the proliferation of official US state-sponsored narratives of what happened, the still disappeared remains of the 16 killed at Fort Rupert (and the unknown number of all who died), and the silences prompted by familial entanglements on different sides of the "Revo", Puri turns away from the