


1987

Readers, Writers, and Interpreters in Cabrera Infante's Texts

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Recommended Citation

Alvarez-Borland, Isabel. "Readers, Writers, and Interpreters in Cabrera Infante's Texts." *World Literature Today* 61. 4 (1987) : 553-558

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of the names are real (like Rine Leal, René Jordan, Jesse Fernández), but a pithy lie, since names (particularly Infante, which means “speechless”) are linguistic conventions: even when “real,” do they *really* signify? (But let’s leave Derrida in peace.) The third sentence makes quite clear that GCI is questioning Hemingway’s privileging of the real over the imaginary, and the fourth mocks not only Hemingway’s machismo but also Marxist social realism. GCI takes Hemingway’s text (and cinematic and sociological clichés) and—as in dream speeches—repeats the words but gives them a different meaning, revealing language’s elusiveness despite all intentions to the contrary.

The epigraph “got lost” in translation; neither GCI nor his editor considered it funny enough to clutter up the front of the book, perhaps. Also perhaps, *View of Dawn in the Tropics* carries over what GCI is saying (despite language’s nonsense) in *TTT*, but this time the joke is dead serious.

Both GCI and I were fairly content—and I suppose relieved—with the translation when it finally came out. Among his comments toward the end of the

translation process: “What is coming out very well is the tone, between ironic and factual and often deadpan *écriture*—how do you like the polyglotism?”

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¹ Emir Rodríguez Monegal, review of *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*, in *Plural*, Mexico City, May 1975, p. 66. See also *WLT* 50:1 (Winter 1976), p. 123.

² Danubio Torres Fierro, “Guillermo Cabrera Infante,” in *Memoria plural: Entrevistas a escritores latinoamericanos*, Buenos Aires, Sudamericana, 1986, p. 87.

³ William Kennedy, “Island of Luminous Artifact,” *Review*, 25-26 (1979), p. 136.

⁴ Guillermo Cabrera Infante, *View of Dawn in the Tropics*, New York, Harper & Row, 1984, pp. 42, 86. Subsequent references use the abbreviation *VDT*.

⁵ Italo Calvino, “Statement on Translation,” *Translation*, special issue on the Italian book in America, Columbia University, 1986, pp. 109-10.

⁶ *Noticias secretas y públicas de América*, Emir Rodríguez Monegal, ed., Barcelona, Tusquets, 1984, p. 32.

⁷ *New Yorker*, 29 January 1972, p. 91.

⁸ Ernest Hemingway, *The Green Hills of Africa*, New York, Scribner’s, 1935.

Readers, Writers, and Interpreters in Cabrera Infante’s Texts



By ISABEL ÁLVAREZ-BORLAND In recent months literary and popular journals such as the *New York Times Book Review* and *Vanidades* have commented on the latest theory surrounding the *Mona Lisa*. It is said now that the model for Leonardo da Vinci’s masterpiece was himself: “Leonardo without his beard the smile, a transvestite’s joke; five centuries of pulling the wool over everyone’s eyes.”² If this were true, it would mean Leonardo has fooled many generations, who marveled at the subject’s femininity and charm. This new finding would also change our former perception of this famous painting. Above all, however, it would

The way we see is the way we choose and the way we choose is the way we are free.

Carlos Fuentes¹

remind us that we must take into account the observer’s or the reader’s perception when speaking of any work of art; for not only does perception vary from age to age, from generation to generation, but it also depends on the information and previous experience possessed by an interpreter.

The *Mona Lisa* findings remind us that the interpretive act involves a rather complex set of relationships and responses between subject and object, viewer and painting, reader and text. Moreover, there is a dimension of interpretation that occurs within the work of art, a kind of interpretation *en abîme*³ that represents and reflects upon the production of meaning as performance.

The importance of inscribed or embedded interpreters, readers, and writers in fiction has been a viable area of investigation of reader-oriented theorists, from Booth to Genette,⁴ and more recently through the writings of Gerald Prince. Prince's studies on the "narratee"—the person to whom the narrator addresses the discourse—have helped make manifest the complex circuit of communication within a given work and have enabled theorists to arrive at a typology of narratives.⁵

These theorists have established that inscribed readers, writers, and interpreters are crucial elements in the meaning-producing structures of a fictional work. A recent article by Naomi Schor entitled "Fiction as Interpretation/Interpretation as Fiction" takes the work of theorists like Prince a bit further, examining what she calls "fictions of interpretation."⁶ These fictions constitute a body of contemporary works that views the act of interpretation not as something that is done to fiction, but rather as something done within the confines of the fictional world. Schor indicates the need for our attention to such texts, for they are insistently concerned with the act of making meaning: its scope, its limits, its necessity, and, finally, its frustrations. Schor emphasizes the concept of the *interpretant*, a term which she acknowledges was originally coined under a different context by phenomenologist Charles Peirce. Schor defines *interpretants* as "the fictional characters that make sense of meaning within the fictional world" (168). These interpretants, she warns us, do not merely exist as specular images of us, the readers outside the text; rather, they function to inform us about the various notions regarding the acts of perception and interpretation. Interpretants can thus assume a variety of roles: they can be "creative" by filling in the gaps linked to the production of the tale; they can be "destructive" by failing at the act of interpretation either by overinterpreting or misinterpreting; and, finally, they can simply be reluctant to assume their role.

The works of Guillermo Cabrera Infante, especially those texts published between 1964 and 1974—*Tres tristes tigres* (Eng. *Three Trapped Tigers*), *Vista del amanecer en el trópico* (Eng. *View of Dawn in the Tropics*), and *Exorcismos de esti(l)lo* (Exorcisms of Style)⁷—can be studied under the rubric of "fictions of interpretation," for they exhibit an intense preoccupation with esthetic phenomena, emphasizing the multiple possibilities involved in the act of perception. My study, while not espousing any specific critical dogma, is developed within the tenets of reader-oriented theories, hoping to draw attention to the manner in which Cabrera Infante's narratives produce their own readers, creators, and listeners and how the presence of such entities affects the coexistence of esthetics and politics in those narratives. Cabrera Infante's evident mistrust of language, his desire to experiment with it and to change it, has been documented by critics, who have rightly been concerned with the word at the level of syntax and sign system and as it appears in *Tres*

tristes tigres in its oral, visual, and aural connotations. My concern here is a bit different, for it has to do with how the language of interpretation and creation is addressed by character/interpretants—that is, by the readers and writers we find inscribed within these works. It is my hope that by examining this aspect in Cabrera Infante's oeuvre, I can highlight a dimension of his writing that has only been understood intuitively by critics and has remained shadowy and undefined.

TTT is composed of a series of narratives told by five main narrators: Códac, Laura, Eribó, Cué, and Silvestre. Their narratives do not develop a central unifying action; rather, they are connected by parallel themes, certain linguistic processes, and recurrent words and expressions. Although the presence of interpretants is evident in the narratives of all five characters, for reasons of scope I have chosen to limit myself to "Bachata," specifically to those narratives which concern Silvestre. These are important, first, as a locus which presents this text as a story of readers and writers and, second, as a reflection on the problematics of literary perception and mimetic representation.

"Bachata" is a long conversation between Silvestre, its main narrator, and his narratee, Arsenio Cué. It is composed of twenty-two numbered segments that do not necessarily follow one another causally; rather, the linking mechanisms that unite these twenty-two segments are those of association, or, as Silvestre puts it, "Viajar con Cué es hablar, pensar, y asociar" (293). The time is the Havana night, the place Cué's fast convertible, the subject a long conversation/meditation between Silvestre and Cué in which time and space are annulled or fused into the instance of language: "Cué tenía esa obsesión del tiempo . . . buscaba el tiempo en el espacio y no otra cosa que una búsqueda eran nuestros viajes continuos, interminables, un solo viaje infinito por el Malecón" (296; "Cué had this obsession with time. What I mean is that he would search for time in space, and they were nothing but a search, our continual interminable journeys along the Malecón" [310]).

Although Silvestre narrates more than three stories embedded in *Tres tristes tigres*, I have chosen to concentrate on three segments that best illustrate the phenomenon of literary representation: "Los visitantes," Cué's story, and the fictional re-creation by Silvestre of the monologue of the woman in the park. By insisting from the outset on the problems of translating experience into writing, these three narratives direct the reader's attention toward the crucial role of the narratees and interpretants in fiction and how their narrative roles help define the parameters of reading.

"Los visitantes" is, above all, a generator of readings. It is a peculiar section, since it appears as two versions of the same story outside "Bachata." The first version is entitled "Historia de un bastón y algunos reparos de Mrs. Campbell" (170–84), the second "El cuento de un bastón seguido de, vaya que, correcciones de la Sra. de Campbell" (185–203). These two

stories elicit a variety of interpretations, since our impressions will change depending on whether we perceive them as short stories independent of the text, or in relation to “Bachata,” where reasons for the existence of two versions of the same story are given to the reader.

The story concerns an American couple who come to Havana to spend the weekend. Among the souvenirs acquired by the couple is a cane which seems to fascinate Mr. Campbell. One day, while touring the city, Campbell realizes that he has lost his cane; at the same time, he discovers a beggar with a cane identical to the one he has lost. Campbell reclaims his cane from the beggar, who fights back. Suddenly, a crowd gathers around them. A policeman tries to solve the problem by making the beggar return the cane to Mr. and Mrs. Campbell. Upon their return to the hotel, the Campbells are surprised to find that the real cane is still in the room and that they now own *two* canes.

“Los visitantes” illustrates the complex nature of human perception by dramatizing the variety of ways in which reality may be perceived. The story itself is divided into two parts: the first segment is narrated by Mr. Campbell, the second by his wife. A conflicting perspective ensues as Mrs. Campbell corrects Mr. Campbell’s account, giving us her version of the situation. A good example of the differences between the couple’s impressions occurs in their perception of the master of ceremonies, a character presented in the opening pages of the text. First, the words of Mr. Campbell:

Sino es porque a un estúpido emcee maricón del cabaret, que presentaba no solamente el show al público, sino el público a la gente del show, si a este hombre no se le ocurre preguntar nuestros nombres . . . y empieza a presentarnos en un inglés increíble. No solamente me confundió con la gente de las sopas, que es un error frecuente y pasajero, también me presentó como un playboy internacional. (176)

(This stupid *maricón* of an emcee of the cabaret, not content with introducing the show to the public, started introducing the public to the show, and it even occurred to this fellow to ask our names . . . and he started introducing us in some godawful travesty of the English language. Not only did he mix me up with the soup people, which is a common enough mistake and one that doesn’t bother me anymore, but he also introduced me as an international playboy. [176])

Mrs. Campbell, on the other hand, does not share her husband’s aversion to this character, giving us her own vision of the events.

Le encantó, como siempre, que lo confundieran con los Campbell millonarios, que él insiste todavía que son sus parientes. No me reí por lo de playboy internacional, sino por su falso disgusto al oír que lo llamaban el “millonario de las sopas.” (183)

(He was enchanted, as he always is, that they mixed him up with the Campbells who are multimillionaires and he still insists that they are relatives of his. It wasn’t the bit

about the international playboy that made me laugh but his phony disgust when they called him “the millionaire of the soup industry.” [182–83])

I must note that Mrs. Campbell gives her interpretation of the facts after she has read the story written by her husband. Thus she becomes the first interpretant of Mr. Campbell’s account. Mrs. Campbell, a reader within this story, brings forth a plural perspective and the inherent problems of assessing what really happened. Thus we have in “Los visitantes” an emblem for the problematics of representation, an important *mise en abîme* for the entire novel.

“Los visitantes,” in keeping with the structure of echoes and resonances which characterizes *TTT*, appears again in “Bachata,” this time as a story retranslated from English into Spanish by both Silvestre and Rine Leal. We are told this text was first translated by Rine and subsequently revised and sent back to Silvestre by a character whose initials were GCI. The story then suffers some additional changes as it is finally edited and corrected by Silvestre. GCI’s note, disclosed by Silvestre, clarifies much of the confusion.

Silvestre, la traducción de Rine es pésima por no decir otra cosa mayor, que sería una mala palabra. Te ruego que me hagas una versión usando el texto de Rine como materia prima. Te envío también el original en inglés para que veas cómo Rine construyó su metáfrasis, como dirías tú. (438)

(Silvestre, Rine’s translation is terrible to put it mildly. If I said it less mildly it would be wildly. Please could you make another version for me using Rine’s text as source material. I also enclose the English original so you can see how Rine constructs his metaphrase, as you’d call it. [460–61])

Silvestre becomes a critic or editor of the story which Rine has translated; he selects and discards segments at will and ends up producing a version which is different from the one originally written by its first author, Mr. Campbell. In “Bachata” the re-creation of reality in words is literal, since the story comes to us as the translation from one language into another. Outside “Bachata” Mrs. Campbell’s addenda or corrections to her husband’s tale serve to illustrate the problematics of perception and mimetic representation. Silvestre and Rine, translators of Mr. Campbell, illustrate the arbitrary nature of language. As the last words of the text indicate, the two men are both *traduttori* and *traditori*, translators and traitors, readers and interpreters of the written word.

The second tale, also framed within Silvestre’s main narration, is Cué’s story. Here we can observe Silvestre as narratee or recipient of Cué’s narration, and see how Cué exercises authorial power by providing Silvestre with alternative endings for his account.

Cué’s story tells of a young man from the provinces who goes to seek work and guidance from a prominent television personality in order to survive in Havana. The story appears twice in *TTT*: as part of the section titled “Los debutantes,” and in “Bachata,” where the

outside reader is presented with yet a different ending for it. Cué's intense hunger becomes central to the story's development, a motif which functions on two levels. Mimetically, Cué's hunger is typical of the hordes of poor aspiring actors and the vicissitudes they suffer as they move from the provinces to the capital in order to find work. However, hunger also operates on a deeper level here, for it serves to alter Cué's perceptions of reality.

Levantó la pistola y apuntó para mí. Estaba a menos de dos metros. Disparó. Sentí un golpe en el pecho y un empujón en el hombro y una patada salvaje en la boca del estómago. Luego oí los tres disparos que me parecieron llamadas a la puerta. Me aflojé todo y caí para delante, sin ver ya, mi cabeza golpeando, duro, el brocal de un pozo que había en el suelo y caía dentro. (60)

(Good, I'm going to give you one, he said, raising his pistol and leveling it at me. He fired from a distance of less than two yards. I felt a blow in my chest, a violent jolt in my shoulder and a savage kick in the pit of my stomach. Then I heard the three shots, which sounded like someone banging on the door. My body went limp and I fell forward, already blinded, my head hitting hard the hard shoulder, the mouth of a well instantly dug in the floor. I fell into. [53])

This last paragraph is followed by a black page, which serves as the conclusion to the segment. As readers, we don't know whether Cué dies a victim of the magnate's bullets or whether he faints as a result of his hunger. In fact, either the original story can be interpreted literally—i.e., Cué fainted, a victim of his hunger, and therefore the black page is the visual representation of his physical weakness—or, conversely, the black page could represent the physical and spiritual death of the protagonist, giving the story added significance and linking it to the other stories in the text. Once again interpretation is dramatized, as these characters experience its plurality and inherent ambiguity.

In "Bachata" Silvestre questions Cué about the meaning of the black page as Silvestre assumes the role of narratee: "Pero ¿las balas? ¿Por qué no moriste? ¿Cómo te salvaste de las heridas?" (424). In response to Silvestre's questions, Cué creates a second ending to his tale, explaining that, in reality, he had never been shot; instead, he had "blacked out" and fainted from the hunger and weakness he had been suffering at the time. Cué's story, as it appears in "Bachata," not only modifies the original product, but also gives us a perspective into the hermeneutic act by allowing Silvestre to function as a reader of Cué's creation. Silvestre's questions about the story's closure and his awareness of the story as text rather than as the reality of TTT are of important significance as we analyze the role of Silvestre as interpretant within the novel. Cué's new conclusion or addendum, like Mrs. Campbell's, provides yet another perspective, which significantly modifies our earlier perception of the story's plot.

Finally, the third narrative, the crazy woman's monologue, presents an excellent example of Silvestre as a creative interpretant, since the protagonist ex-

ercises his authorial power by rectifying mimetic reality. This monologue, once again, has a double existence in the text: it appears as an epilogue on the last page of the book, and it also shows up within "Bachata," as Silvestre transforms it into the printed word.

Hace unos años la vi por primera vez . . . y siguió hablando porque no me veía, no veía nada de nada y me pareció tan extraordinario, simbólico, lo que decía que fui a casa de un amigo . . . y le pedí lápiz y papel, sin decirle nada, porque él también escribía o quería escribir entonces, regresé y alcancé un pedazo del discurso, que de todas maneras era idéntico al que yo había oído, porque llegado a un punto, como un rollo de pianola sinfín, ella repetía lo mismo, siempre. A la tercera vez que lo oí y lo copié bien, asegurándome de que no me faltaba nada, excepto los signos, me levanté y me fui. (299–300)

(I saw her for the first time some years ago and she was talking and talking and talking. I sat down close to her and she went on talking, because she didn't see me, she didn't see anything at all and I thought it was so special, symbolic, what she was saying that I went to a friend's house . . . and I asked him for a pencil and paper, without saying a word about it because he was also writing or wanted to write at the time, I returned and picked up a fragment of the speech, which was exactly what I heard before, because when she got to a certain point, like the roll on a pianola, she repeated the whole thing over again. The third time around, I had copied down what she said, convincing myself nothing was missing except the punctuation, and then I got up and left. [314])

Because this segment is discussed and related to the work of Silvestre as author, and since the woman's speech is transformed into writing, a dependence is established between "Bachata" and this vignette. The epilogue is written with a sense of urgency, as the woman expresses her desire to change her desperate situation. Hers is the plaintive cry of a woman driven mad by the moral corruption of her environment. Now for the first time, the lack of political freedom—"Que viene el mono con un cuchillo y me registra" (A cop with a knife is coming to search me; 451)—is united with a sense of existential chaos. Like the other narrators, this woman represents the despair and the suffocation which we have seen in the other characters. She also represents victimization by a regime whose corruption has given birth to a state in which political repression and decadence are the natural order of things. Her life, as Cabrera Infante described it to me in an interview, is one "trapped between politics and history—a life which kept getting more sordid and difficult."⁸

The content of the epilogue is incoherent, its language filled with eschatological imagery. *La loca* sits in the park and talks to herself, running through the same monologue each time, endlessly, "like the roll on a pianola." Silvestre reconstructs mimetic reality and records her oral monologue on the printed page, transforming language into writing right before our eyes. This embedded tale of "Bachata" presents Silvestre as a writer and author who has the power to select and modify his fictional material. Silvestre as an in-

terpretant exerts authorial power, for his written version is made available to us at his discretion, and after his own editing has taken place.

The embedded narratives of “Bachata” have an important hermeneutic function, for they explore the subject of literary creation by dramatizing it and by involving its characters in the process of reading, writing, and interpreting. Because “Bachata” illuminates and adds new perspectives to the multiple narratives found in *TTT*, we are led to surmise that interpretation in these tales is clearly not a revelation of essences but rather “the presenting again of artifacts formed and informed by cultural representation.”⁹ As outside readers of *TTT*, we are not free to impose our own meaning, although we retain the responsibility to choose and also to suggest.

The narratives analyzed here fulfill an important function in enhancing our understanding of *TTT*. Texts such as the Campbells’ stories invite us to see the dramatization of the interpretive act, whereas Cué’s tale illustrates how the act of interpreting becomes an activity occurring simultaneously inside and outside fiction. Finally, with the monologue of the crazy woman, we are able to see the power and force of interpretants as they select, rectify, and transform historical reality into fictional reality. In *TTT* interpretants go much further than offering us a specular image of the outside reader, presenting us instead with an array of interpretive possibilities. The interplay of narrative roles in *TTT* serves not to resolve but to reinforce the questions raised by the text and suggests the ultimate effect of the novel on the reader: a beneficial questioning of his or her own models of judgment.¹⁰

However, the embedded narratives of *TTT* are not the sole instances within Cabrera Infante’s works in which he problematizes the esthetics of interpretation. Before the publication of *TTT*, Caín, the fictional alter ego who unites the movie reviews contained in *Un oficio del siglo XX*, had been instrumental in demonstrating that interpretation as performance also had social and historical implications. Cabrera Infante, when speaking of his first fictional interpretant, justifies the creation of Caín in the following manner: “La única forma en que un crítico puede sobrevivir en el comunismo es como ente de ficción.”¹¹

Later on, after the publication of *TTT* in 1967, readers, writers, and interpreters reassume that same social dimension perceived in Caín as they grapple with the dilemma of communication under repressive regimes. *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*, published in 1974, illustrates the importance attached by the author to the role of the interpretant in presenting issues of language, ambiguity, and indeterminacy.

Vista is a collage of 101 vignettes told by a single narrator. One of Cabrera Infante’s most political books, its snapshots or vignettes are sketches of individuals. However, if we pay attention to the narrator or chronicler of these vignettes, we notice that he has a peculiar way of introducing his material, creating un-

certainty in the reader as he introduces vignettes with disclaimers such as “dice la historia,” “cuenta la leyenda,” or “hay un rumor.”¹² In addition, the chronicler-narrator uses the device of the photo album, playing with the concept of image versus representation and thus giving the reader a more penetrating subtext of the subject depicted.

In *Vista* there is a volition on the narrator’s part to maintain his narrative objective while, at the same time, his own subjective commentary overpowers and invalidates the concept of historical writing. The narrator of *Vista* is at once a reader of written and visual events (for example, he uses written sources such as historical accounts and journalistic clips, as well as photographs and lithographs). Above all, this narrator-chronicler is an interpreter of the events he reads. He is a reader inside and outside the text, and thus he dramatizes the issues of perspective and mimetic representation in a much more direct but subtle manner than what we had witnessed in *TTT*. Fictional interpretants provide the necessary vehicle for the expression of the author’s anxieties, as *Vista* concentrates the role of the reader, writer, and creator within the person of a single narrator.

A vignette titled “Lo único vivo es la mano” clearly illustrates the descriptive technique of *Vista*’s interpretant. This vignette describes a photograph of five dead soldiers. Words such as *parece*, *quizás*, and *tal vez* fill the short piece with uncertainty and subjectivity. The hand, which is the center of the description, is separated from the rest of the dead bodies, emphasizing the horrors of war.

Lo único vivo es la mano. Al menos, la mano parece viva apoyada en el muro. No se ve el brazo y quizá la mano esté también muerta. Tal vez sea la mano de un testigo y la mancha en el muro es su sombra y otras sombras más. (135)

(The only thing alive is the hand. In any case, the hand seems alive leaning on the wall. One can’t see the arm and perhaps the hand is dead too. Perhaps it’s the hand of an eyewitness and the spot on the wall is its shadow and other shadows as well. [73])

The narrator-interpretant describes the effects of light on the photograph, as the trees and the wall, which are part of the photo, produce shadows that affect our deciphering of the scene.

Ahora los senderos aparecen blanqueados, fulgurantes por la luz. Un objeto que está cerca—una granada, el casquillo de una bala de cañón de alto calibre, ¿una cámara de cine?—se ve negro como un hueco en la foto. En el sendero sobre el césped, hay cuatro, no: cinco féretros, que son cinco simples cajas de madera de pino. (Parece que hay seis, pero ese último ataúd es la sombra del muro.) (135)

(Now the paths seem bleached, shiny, from the sunlight. A nearby object—a grenade, the shell of a high-caliber cannon, a movie camera?—looks black, like a hole in the photograph. On the path, all over the lawn, there are

four—no: five—plain pinewood boxes. [There seem to be six, but that last coffin is the shadow of the wall.] [73])

The language of *Vista*'s narrator is born of apprehension and uncertainty, as a hesitant voice tries to chronicle the various dictatorships in Cuba's tragic history. An in-depth analysis of the subject of interpretants in *Vista* is wholly outside the scope of this study; still, it should be clear that, more than any other text, in *Vista* esthetics and politics coexist side by side. The recreation and fictionalization of Cuban history forces our writer to create and bestow new functions upon his fictional interpretants.

The interpretant's hesitation becomes the truth of *Vista*, as the esthetic concept of a reader within the fiction helps Cabrera Infante set out his search toward a new language. The interpretant fulfills a need as he rectifies the tumultuous history of Cuba and makes evident from the outset the paradoxical role of the author. *Vista* decries the totalizing gap of historical language because it offers no assurance of truth. The kernel of subversion which is at the heart of *Vista* is there because of the text's esthetic qualities.

Rather than a body of facts about Guillermo Cabrera Infante's oeuvre, I have sought a way looking at it in order to account for features that have recently emerged in critical discussion. Perhaps I can best conclude by acknowledging an open question: how useful is the distinction of interpretants and narratees in Cabrera Infante's works? It is evident that the act of reading, its implications, and the responses of readers both within and outside the fiction are issues of esthetic and social concern for our author. Cabrera Infante's writings force the outside reader to meditate on the subject of perception and to acknowledge the full implications of its subjectivity as well as the differences between perceived and conceived reality.

Clearly, in order to ascertain the true significance of readers, writers, and interpretants in Cabrera Infante's texts, a much more detailed analysis of *Vista* is needed, as is an analysis of *Exorcismos*, a text diametrically opposed to *Vista* in style and intention, a forgotten text that seeks to deconstruct itself by giving us a simultaneous homage to and critique of literature and literary representation. Together, *Vista* and *Exorcismos*, published only two years apart and seven years after *TTT*, provide a fascinating picture of a writer grappling with a discourse of contradiction and negation in which fictional readers and writers take on crucial roles as they help develop Cabrera Infante's voice in exile.

Cabrera Infante's reader must distance himself from the fictional world while at the same time he is re-

quired to be an intimate part of it. The many adventures of "Bachata," like the vignettes of *Vista* and *Exorcismos*, are sometimes lessons on how *not* to perceive or listen. The Nietzschean message is clear: "There are only facts . . . I would say: No, facts is precisely what there's not, only interpretations."¹³ By encountering disillusion as formulated by these interpretants, the critical reader can endure it by means of his creative response and his judgment of the textual reality. Possessing an effect similar to that of the latest findings on the *Mona Lisa*, the interpretants in Cabrera Infante's texts invoke in us a special investment, "a self-challenging, and self-implicating response of understanding and judgment."¹⁴

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¹ Carlos Fuentes, "When Narration Is a Visual Art," *New York Times Book Review*, 15 March 1987, pp. 37-38.

² Cynthia Ozick, "Good Novelists, Bad Citizens," *New York Times Book Review*, 15 February 1987, p. 13.

³ Lucien Dällenbach, *Le récit spéculaire: Essai sur la mise en abîme*, Paris, Seuil, 1977. Dällenbach's study of this reflexive modality explains the role of the text as emblem in relation to the concept of the *mise en abîme*.

⁴ Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1961. Gerard Genette, "Discours du récit," in his *Figures III*, Paris, Seuil, 1972.

⁵ Gerald Prince, "Introduction à l'étude du narrataire," *Poétique*, 14, 1973.

⁶ Naomi Schor, "Fiction as Interpretation/Interpretation as Fiction," in *The Reader in the Text*, S. Suleiman and I. Crossman, eds., Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1980, pp. 165-83. Subsequent page references are cited parenthetically.

⁷ All quotes from Cabrera Infante's texts are taken from the following editions and translations: *Tres tristes tigres*, 2d ed., Barcelona, Seix Barral, 1967; *Three Trapped Tigers*, Donald Gardner and Suzanne Jill Levine, trs., New York, Avon, 1985; *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*, Barcelona, Seix Barral, 1974; *View of Dawn in the Tropics*, Suzanne Jill Levine, tr., New York, Harper & Row, 1978.

⁸ "Viaje verbal a La Habana," interview compiled by Isabel Álvarez-Borland, *Hispanamérica*, 31 (1982), pp. 51-68. For an earlier, more formalistic reading of *TTT*, see my book *Discontinuidad y ruptura en Guillermo Cabrera Infante*, Gaithersburg, Md., Hispanamerica, 1982. See also Stephanie Merrim, *Logos and the Word*, New York, Peter Lang, 1983; Ardis Nelson, *Cabrera Infante and the Menippean Satire*, Newark, Delaware, Juan de la Cuesta, 1983.

⁹ Vincent Pecora, "The Dead and the Generosity of the Word," *PMLA*, 101:2 (March 1986), p. 235.

¹⁰ Vicki Mistacco, "Reading *The Immoralist*," *Bucknell Review*, 26:1, p. 72.

¹¹ Guillermo Cabrera Infante, "Orígenes," in *Guillermo Cabrera Infante*, Madrid, Fundamentos, 1974, p. 16.

¹² David W. Foster, "Hacia una caracterización de la escritura en *Vista del amanecer en el trópico*," *Caribe*, 2 (1977), pp. 5-13.

¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, trs., New York, Vintage, 1967, sec. 481.

¹⁴ Daniel Melnick, "Fullness of Dissonance: Music and the Reader's Experience of Modern Fiction," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 25:2 (1979), p. 212.