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The Trans-American Literature of Conquest and Exile, 1823–1885

When José María Heredia arrived off the coast of Cape Cod in 1823, his first impression was desolation. “I did not see one man, not one animal, not one insect,” he wrote in a letter to his beloved Emilia, who had remained behind in Cuba as Heredia escaped from authorities pursuing him for plotting to overthrow the Spanish colonial government.¹ Off the coast of Massachusetts, a ferocious December wind tormented the thin Heredia as he made his way to a lighthouse. The scene reminded him of Miltonic verses: the “immense solitude” leading to Satan’s throne. “They passed, and many a region dolorous, / O’er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp, / Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death, A universe of death,” Milton writes in *Paradise Lost*, as if he also knew about having to escape from a tropical island in fear for his life.² Heredia had probably read Milton in French from the 1805 translation by Jacques (L’Abbé) Delille. At the lighthouse, Heredia encountered a veteran of the War of 1812 who took pity on the shivering poet. As Heredia told it, the veteran, who was missing a leg, took the exile’s cold hand and whispered something that sounded like consolation. But the English language was incomprehensible to Heredia. And thus Heredia’s initial impression of the United States was one of “total isolation.”

Movement and migration are defining characteristics of this figure whose life and work exemplify the trans-American dimensions of nineteenth-century Latina/o literature. As Heredia traveled throughout the northeastern United States and other parts of the Americas, he developed a body of work that spoke to hemispheric perspectives, politics in his home country, and the pain of exile. As such, his poems and other writings were marked by dislocation even as they spoke about specific contexts. Heredia’s trajectory differs in important ways with the situated lives of many contemporary Latina/o subjects, who are either born in the United States or immigrated to U.S. sites. Heredia, who went to Mexico in 1825, did not remain long in the United States and cannot be tied to one location. Although he published and wrote

important work in the United States, including some of his best-known poems, Heredia has been most commonly situated in Cuban literary history for expressing the exilic spirit of many important intellectuals from that country. As Kirsten Silva Gruesz has noted, many of the U.S. writers involved in nineteenth-century trans-American encounters defy easy categorization. “Many were exiles, expatriates, im-/emigrants, or determined cosmopolites,” she writes. “Others seem, in a way, hypernational: iconic figures rendered representative of a country, celebrated in patriotic engravings and statues now superannuated, both aesthetically and ideologically.”³ The national histories of Latin American countries have offered a conceptual home for some of these writers, although at times in their lives they moved in and out of various nations and even across the Americas. That movement complicates national classification.

Heredia’s feeling of “total isolation” on the shores of Massachusetts is the product of social, geographic, and even linguistic dislocation. Rather than view his trans-American journey as creating a new geographic space of the Americas, I want to emphasize the force of dislocation. “Trans-American” movement calls for crossings and changes that create the discomfort of feeling out of place; it is at once across America and beyond the United States, so that even as Heredia stops in U.S. sites, he is never integrated or integrates himself into the United States. Rather than invoke a hemispheric geographic space that stands in as a map for a field of writing from North to South, “trans-American” emphasizes disruption, which is in part created by sociopolitical conditions.

For those nineteenth-century figures that we claim retroactively as part of Latina/o literature, writing became a nexus for the consideration of political upheaval, governmental reorganization, economic transformations, and personal separation. Their writing, which included literary genres but just as often pamphlets and newspapers, encode disruption and tumult both at the subjective level of the speaker and in the subject matter. Most of the intellectuals who made their way to the United States from Spain and Latin America in the 1810s and early 1820s published political tracts primarily. For example, the texts published in Philadelphia by Vicente Rocafuerte, José Alvarez de Toledo, and Manuel Torres show how intellectuals deployed essays and translations to further their cause.⁴ As the nineteenth century continued, the sites of publication became more varied, and so did the socio-political upheavals affecting their communities. Some writers continued to emphasize political writing and journalistic work, and periodicals became one of the most important venues for publication. Another trajectory also emerged: the politically minded writer who turned to literary forms in the United States without extricating him or herself from the trans-American revolutionary

changes of the time. In some cases, literary forms were imbedded in the political content of newspapers and other forms of publication.

Nineteenth-century trans-American writing is intricately bound with (and sometimes the result of) political and military conflicts, including the Latin American wars of independence, the U.S.-Mexico War, and U.S. expansionist designs in the Caribbean. From the novels of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton to the essays of José Martí, texts engage with and sometimes explicate trans-American connections and dislocations. Early in the century, some writers expressed admiration for U.S. republican forms of government and saw the potential for alliance. A notion of a hemispheric Americanism that would stand in anticolonial opposition to Europe influenced some writers; this perspective was intertwined with constitutional readings of social organization and often de-emphasized class and racial hierarchies affecting Latin American societies. As the century went on, it became clear that the United States, despite the proclamations of equality in its founding documents, would not prove an easy ally to the nation-states of Latin America. After the U.S.-Mexico War, writers increasingly saw that U.S. expansionist ideology was intertwined with depictions of populations south of the border as undemocratic and racially inferior. Filibustering expeditions to take over Cuba and Central America in the 1850s were supported not only by economic interests but also by ideological arguments.⁵ After the U.S. Civil War, projects for territorial acquisition were driven by industrial capitalism's hunger for new commodities and markets. By the time Martí was publishing his essays in the 1880s, it was clear that the aspirations for hemispheric American republican solidarity had given way to realpolitik driven by the ascendancy of the U.S. empire. Trans-American writers recognized that U.S. nationalist agendas inspired by white supremacy were at odds with notions of equality beyond U.S. borders.

These historical conditions remind us that approaching nineteenth-century writing demands putting contemporary notions of Latina/o subjectivity in dialogue with conditions encountered by writers at the level of print culture and in the sociopolitical arena. Contemporary debates about *latinidades* bring forward difference rather than point to a monolithic subjectivity, and those differences cut across national affiliations (Cuban American versus Chicana/o), racial formations, immigration and citizenship status, gender, and sexuality. Given the complex proliferation of identities in Latino America today, the hermeneutic challenge is not how to reconcile a bounded notion of identity with a historical condition in which such a notion did not circulate. Rather, the challenge is how to bring forward the textual remains of the past in a way that recognizes its contexts and considers the ways those texts generate a multiplicity of meanings. Difference emerges both in the

past and the present. This involves working across languages, genres, print culture formations, and literary histories.

At times the desire of writers and publishers to reach readers beyond the United States meant that much of the literature appeared in periodicals. Because of their size and thinness, newspapers and other serial publications were easier to transport on ships and circulate, if necessary, clandestinely. Newspapers and other periodicals appeared from East to West in very different contexts, and they provide a view into the heterogeneity of concerns among writers and their communities. While publications put out by Cubans and Puerto Ricans provided news of importance to the Caribbean, periodicals in the West grappled with the effects of U.S. expansion on populations that had previously been part of Mexico. The periodical press supported local communities and kept an eye on events in the homeland of origin. This dual vision crossing the Americas spreads not only from the content of the articles in periodicals but also onto the language of literary texts. Newspaper pages often included poems, stories, and serialized novels, often as supplementary material to the main news and concerns. Newspapers such as *El Mensajero Semanal* (Philadelphia and New York, 1828–29), *La Verdad* (New York, 1848–60), *La Patria* (New Orleans, 1846–50), *La Voz de la América* (New York, 1865–67), and *La República* (San Francisco, 1885) were established to connect U.S. readers with Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other places.⁶ The conditions of periodical print culture may be the most important consideration in the analysis of trans-American nineteenth-century writing.

The archival conditions of such material lead to a state of fragmentation. To work in the nineteenth-century Spanish press is to confront an incomplete archive. In some cases, repositories of those documents do not have a complete run of a newspaper and researchers may even have to settle for a single issue. A researcher may come across a reference to a writer's participation in a particular periodical only to find that the periodical is available only in a fragmentary form. The result is that nineteenth-century Latina/o writing is as much about discrete pieces and incomplete information – indeed, about epistemological stopping points – as it is about the recovery and reconstitution of print culture conditions. Given these conditions, reading may involve focus on an isolated text that raises more questions than answers.

An effect of the periodical press for readers today is that it creates sites of analysis rather than a body of literature that we can connect to particular writers. While books and collections of writing emphasize an individual author, newspapers and journals are at times difficult to place. Because many articles and poems went unsigned in the nineteenth-century periodical press, it is not always possible to connect the published material with a

specific writer. The result for literary historical work is a tension between the production of a writing subject (the emergence of a notable writer) and the more collective production of a periodical press that sometimes speaks not only to but also for a community. The periodical press emphasizes the “collective” value of minor textual production, which in extreme case shows that “there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that ‘master’ and that could be separated from a collective enunciation.”⁷

A handful of the writers in nineteenth-century United States, including Ruiz de Burton and Martí, have been elevated to the status of prominent literary figures. But to think of them in relation to literary distinction emphasizes the individual attainment of mastery and thus elides the lack of mastery (and the discomfort) that was created by exile and conquest at the level of entire populations. The tension between an individual writer and larger social context was a concern for Edward Said, writing about the twentieth century: “It is apparent that, to concentrate on exile as a contemporary political punishment, you must therefore map territories of experience beyond those mapped by the literature of exile itself. You must first set aside Joyce and Nabokov and think instead of the uncountable masses for whom UN agencies have been created.”⁸ This tension between, on one hand, a humanistic emphasis on individuation and, on the other hand, conditions that sought to deny identity to populations have an analogy in the historical reading of Latina/o literature in that we must simultaneously recover and contextualize the writers themselves even as the historical record shows a more collective scene of dispersal and textual fragmentation.

Part of that recovery and contextualization calls for working in at least two languages. With the exception of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s novels and a few sporadic publications, the majority of the poems, novels, and stories that appeared were published in Spanish and sometimes aimed at readers outside of the United States. These include the anonymous novel *Jicoténcal* (1826) as well as the collection of poems *El laúd del desterrado* (1858). The importance of Spanish means that scholars working on this nineteenth-century material must translate as a practice of reading. That is to say, translation itself becomes a form of interpretation. Because most of the materials, sometimes in bits and pieces, are not available in English, a critic must provide snapshots of the original. The choice of which texts, passages, or even sentences to bring forward in an article is a result of critical emphasis but also a reminder that the original materials are not easily accessible.

The Spanish language positions this literature and print culture between the expansion of one empire (Spain) and that of another (United States). As a language, Spanish is colonial in that it was used by the Spanish empire

to dominate vast territories (one of the initial colonial languages of the Americas and in use in Florida, New Mexico, and California prior to the founding of the United States). But Spanish is also marginalized in that it becomes a minority language in the nineteenth-century United States. As a language of exiles, migrants, and conquered people, Spanish takes on the characteristics of what Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari have associated with the “minor,” at once deterritorialized and displaced (even excluded) but also full of revolutionary potential because of its alterity. “We might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature.”⁹ As such, the Spanish-language periodical press in nineteenth-century America can be considered a minor remain of a period that is often read in U.S. literary studies as belonging to the writers of the so-called American Renaissance (Whitman, Emerson) and their late-century counterparts (Twain, James). Spanish challenges English-only conceptions of U.S. literary history. The revolutionary conditions, to pick up on Deleuze and Guattari’s words, are not so much in the content of the language itself but in the materiality of the Hispanophone press, the fragmentation of its remains.

One periodical, which remains today only in partial run, provides insight into the role of literature in the periodical press. On October 3, 1829, *El Mensajero Semanal* out of Philadelphia published a front-page letter focusing on a polemic debate about the literary merits of Heredia as poet. The writer of the letter attacked the editors of *El Mensajero* for being “extremely cautious, considering that as Spanish journalists and compatriots and colleagues of the poet, it was your duty to tell us something of his merit.”¹⁰ The editorial team at *El Mensajero* included Cubans, and thus the references to Heredia’s compatriots. In response to the call to evaluate Heredia’s poetry, the editors *El Mensajero* noted that their paper did not focus primarily on literature. They continued:

El Mensajero no es otra cosa que una gaceta destinada á dar noticia de los acaecimientos políticos, y á hacer mas variada su lectura, si las circunstancias lo permiten, con los progresos mas notables de algunas artes y ciencias, ó con algunos articulos de util aplicacion á la isla de Cuba, ó finalmente con los chistes y agudezas del ingenio.”¹¹

[“The Messenger” is nothing more than a gazette intended to give accounts of political events, and we aim to reach a broader readership, if possible, by relaying the most notable accomplishments in arts and sciences, or with articles of relevance to the island of Cuba, or in the last instance with a few jokes and sharpness of wit.]

Although it promoted Heredia's poetry, the newspaper did not position itself as a site for literary criticism, in part because of limited print space. Here the use of the Spanish *gaceta* (gazette) is important because it implied a periodical that covered commercial and governmental topics. And yet *El Mensajero's* support of the poet displayed an implicit understanding of Heredia as a writer of the Americas in contra-distinction to the European and particularly Spanish domains of literature.

The newspaper's reluctance to get involved in that type of a dispute (despite publishing Heredia's poems) shows its commitment to a cosmopolitan tenor in which political events and commercial news took precedence over artistic concerns and proto-nationalist considerations. To the assumption that they should evaluate Heredia's poetry because they share a homeland (Cuba) with the poet, the editors wrote that *El Mensajero* did not have the space to provide a thorough and informed critique of literature. Without negating a Cuban affiliation, they also resented the belief that they would praise Heredia simply because of their common island home. "Who has said that because we are Spanish journalists and compatriots and companions of the poet, we are obliged to critique his poems?"¹² The use of the term "Spanish journalists" shows the broader Hispanicism informing the way writers referred to one another. The nineteenth century had no common ethnic label such as Latino or Hispanic; regular usage in English-language publications was "Spanish" or "Spanish American."

The appearance of *El Mensajero* as part of a Hispanophone print culture context, and the fight for Latin America's future raging behind it, cannot be divorced from the publication of Heredia's collection of poems, *Poesías*, published in New York in 1825, which featured some of his best-known verses. In some selections, we see a desire for a repetition of U.S. events in other countries. In his poem "A Washington," written during a visit to Mount Vernon, Heredia connects his Romantic longing for immortality with the U.S. president:

Viva imagen de Dios sobre la tierra,
libertador, legislador y justo,
Washington inmortal, oye benigno
el débil canto de tu gloria indigno,
con que voy a ensalzar tu nombre augusto.

[Vivid image of God on earth,
liberator, legislator just,
immortal Washington, listen benevolently
to the faint, indignant song that exalts
your glory and your majestic name.]

These lines from the opening stanza to this paean are driven by Heredia's desire for the repetition of the verses in the future. The invocation of a god-like Washington positions the president-general as a figure that carries Heredia's poetry into the future while also connecting the poetic voice to the president's "indignant" position against tyranny. Ultimately, Washington is deployed as inspiration for the countries of the southern Americas struggling to form governments after colonial rule. That type of exchange – Spanish-language poet at Mount Vernon sending verses about a U.S. president in a southern direction – showed the intricate dialogues that emerged in nineteenth-century trans-American writing.

My discussion of the important role of Hispanophone print culture to literary productions, which creates a panorama of the minor, shows the unusual place of the novels by Ruiz de Burton within Latina/o literature. The publication of *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885) in English is an anomaly among U.S.-based nineteenth-century writers of Latin American descent. Although she was fluent in her native Spanish, Ruiz de Burton's decision to publish novels in English and her engagement with U.S. culture and politics help us situate her in several other critical frameworks, among them sentimental novels, historical romance, and fictions of Reconstruction. One effect of this commitment to the English language is that she has become almost canonical in Anglophone U.S. literary study, if by canonical we mean a frequency of inclusion in syllabi and the number of articles published about an author. Scholars who might not otherwise be inclined (or be able) to read Spanish trans-American literature can turn their attention to Ruiz de Burton.

Like Hispanophone writers from Mexico and Cuba, Ruiz de Burton contended with the role of empire in the Americas, particularly the conquest of the southwestern United States. In response to the U.S.-Mexico War, *The Squatter and the Don* offers a portrait of the challenges faced by an elite California family at risk of losing their land and calls attention to the illegal U.S. appropriation of territory previously owned by Mexicans. Together with the satirical *Who Would Have Thought It?*, the two novels raise questions about race and ethnicity in the United States and Mexico. Scholars have noted the contradictory positions of Ruiz de Burton, whose fiction and life at times reflect her upper-class status.¹³ Ruiz de Burton also adopts certain racial hierarchies and is consumed with drawing a distinction between elite white Mexicans and the indigenous populations at the periphery of societies in California and Mexico, even if she is not always successful.¹⁴

While Ruiz de Burton's fiction differs in important ways from other trans-American nineteenth-century writing, she herself does share a social position with many of the figures. Like certain light-skinned Latin American

Creoles who move through an elite trans-American circuit, Ruiz de Burton criticizes certain aspects of empire-building (on the part of Spain and the United States), but she is unwilling to overturn certain racial and social hierarchies.¹⁵ The political positions of Ruiz de Burton and Cuban Creole exiles, for example, are not commensurate. Ruiz de Burton would have bristled at the support of expansionism expressed by Cuban exiles that allied themselves with the likes of John L. O'Sullivan, whose writings named the ideology and practice of "Manifest Destiny." And yet despite her skepticism about the role of the United States in relation to its southern neighbors, Ruiz de Burton does share with many others a transnational vision that continuously places the United States in dialogue with another country. This is apparent, for example, at the end of *Who Would Have Thought It?* when Julian and Lola end up together in Mexico. The marriage plot eventually brings together a Mexican woman and a U.S. man, but it is in Mexico that they decide to make their home. In turn, a novel concerned about corruption in the U.S. political system ends with a scenario in which the two protagonists decide to depart. That is not to say that Mexico becomes a panacea. At one point that country is criticized for "being an independent government" that "lets its Indians live as they please, and its more civilized citizens take care of themselves as best they may."¹⁶ Rather, my point is that even after decades in the United States, Ruiz de Burton's gaze remains fixed at least in part on the country of her birth. That is also apparent in the letters she writes, particularly those to Mariano Vallejo, in which she discusses the future of Mexico and its need to remain united rather than hang itself with the rope knitted by its "sister Republic," a rope by the name of Manifest Destiny.¹⁷

In her letters, available in a collection edited by Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, we see Ruiz de Burton's fragmented and dislocated self at work. Born in 1832 in Baja California, Ruiz de Burton was a teenage girl when U.S. troops invaded her hometown of La Paz. It was as a result of this conflict that she met her future husband, U.S. Army Captain Henry S. Burton. After the war, Capt. Burton helped Ruiz and her family move to Monterey, California, where they became U.S. citizens. For almost twenty years of marriage, the couple traveled around the United States as Capt. Burton was posted to different cities. After his death in 1869, Ruiz de Burton returned to the family's ranch near San Diego, where she spent the rest of her life fighting for a rightful title to the land. While Ruiz de Burton is an example of someone crossed by the U.S. border rather than crossing the border herself, she does share with Heredia and many other trans-American writers a penchant for movement.¹⁸ The letters show her moving around U.S. cities, even as she kept her eyes on Mexico. Like some of the impoverished Cuban

exiles, Ruiz de Burton in later life was constantly fighting debt and looking for sources of money. And yet, as Sánchez and Pita note, at various points in her life “[s]he moved in the social circles of the politically and economically powerful, both in the United States and Mexico, on the basis of her personal charisma, her attractive demeanor, her status as the wife of a West Point officer, and her capacity to construct herself as a landowner in both California and Baja California” (550).¹⁹

One letter that captures Ruiz de Burton’s relentless engagement with trans-American political conditions – including the future of Mexico, U.S. expansionism, and transatlantic influences – was composed in Staten Island, New York, in 1869 and sent to Mariano G. Vallejo. In it, Ruiz de Burton jokes with Vallejo about various matters and then releases a stream of invective against Benito Juárez, the United States, and French Revolutionary leaders (Robespierre, Marat, and Danton), only to confess that she still hurts from the execution of Maximilian, the French-installed emperor of Mexico, calling that event “the assassination of our nationality” [el asesinato de *nuestra nacionalidad*]. The letter is a tour de force of convoluted politics, at once critical of the U.S. empire and embracing of the French invasion, all of it finally supported by her defense of “la raza Latina,” with France as the ultimate example of the race’s accomplishment. She writes, “History does not lie and history tells us how glorious has been the course of the Latin race” [La historia no miente y la historia nos dice cuan gloriosa ha sido la Carrera de la raza Latina].²⁰ Here Ruiz de Burton provides an entry into an intellectual shift toward a notion of *Latin America* in the nineteenth century, driven in part by efforts to turn away from a Spanish genealogy by drawing together France and “Latin” countries.²¹ Ruiz de Burton buys a French imperialist position that valorizes that country not only above Anglo-Saxon and Germanic countries but also Spain itself. In the end, however, she finds that the deposing of Maximilian will turn Mexico into one of the “miserable Hispano American Republics of this continent” [las miserable Repúblicas Hispano Americanas de este continente].

The conditions created by imperial powers and the attempts to establish new governments in the Americas often pushed writers to place political concerns alongside forays into literary form. Responding to colonialism and conquest, whether on the part of Spain or the United States, was one of the important elements in *El laúd del desterrado*. This 1858 poetry collection, culled from U.S.-based newspapers that had published many of the poems, was produced by exiled Cuban writers caught in that island’s colonial predicament: Cuba was simultaneously a territory of Spain and an island desired for annexation by expansionists in the United States. *El laúd del desterrado* featured selections by seven Cuban poets, including Heredia, who

had been exiled or migrated to the United States. At least half the poems had been previously published in Spanish-language periodicals in New York and New Orleans. As a product of U.S.-Cuba print culture connections, the book wove a transnational versification that responded to the colonial scene in Cuba even as it grappled with U.S. conditions.²²

The collection is filled with exilic longing for the home country and vituperative lines against Spain's administration of its colony. The opening lines to Miguel Teurbe Tolón's Petrarchan sonnet "Resolución" capture both:

Yo sin patria ni hogar, en tierra extraña,
 Errante marcharé por senda oscura:
 Yo apuraré mi cáliz de amargura,
 Brindis letal de la opresora España.²³
 [Lacking country and home, in a strange land,
 I will wander through a dark path,
 Exhausting my bitter chalice,
 A lethal salute to Spain.]

Without claiming the United States as a new home, the speaker prefers the chill and strangeness of the exile land to the challenge of returning to Cuba to witness the island as a "slave" to Spain. The double implication of slavery, both colonial and economic, would seem to point to that as an important dimension of his work. But for Tolón and most of his comrades in exile, slavery in the 1850s took a back seat to their insistence that Cuba be dislodged from Spanish control. For writers in Tolón's circle, slavery was a convenient metaphor as well as an actual condition, despite its presence in Cuba until the 1880s. Cuban exiles are in large part curiously silent on slavery in the United States, in part because of their attempt to avoid abolitionist debates and draw support in the United States for their cause. Because Tolón and others supported the annexation of Cuba to the United States in the 1840s and 1850s, they were willing to forego the discussion of abolition. These types of negotiations and even some of the alliances made point to the contradictory positions that writers often adopted.

One of the writers who integrated himself into this trans-American circuit was Juan Clemente Zenea, whose life and work are connected to periodical print culture in the United States and various revolutionary movements in Cuba. Until recently, literary history had regarded him largely as one of Cuba's foremost romantic poets.²⁴ But the separation inherent in exile, what Said calls the "unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place," manifested itself in the tortured relationship of Zenea's publications to the island home. His essays and poems appeared in the New York-based papers *El Filibustero* and *El Mulato* in the 1850s, and Zenea went on to become heavily involved in U.S.-based exile politics. While on a mission to

communicate with rebels during Cuba's Ten Years' War (1868–78), Zenea was captured and executed by Spanish authorities. His "Diary of a Martyr," a cycle of sixteen poems written on scraps with a pencil while imprisoned prior to his execution, was published first in the New York newspaper *El Mundo Nuevo* in 1871. A chronicle of impending death, the martyr cycle offers verses without references to specific Cuban landmarks or to locations in New York. The following stanza captures the contradictory effects of exilic literature, at once invoking terminal loss and the enriching effects of composition: "Yo canto como los pájaros, / yo entonces lanzo a los aires / en la voz de la alegría / la expression de hondos pesares" [I sing like the birds / and thus hurl into the clouds / in the voice of happiness / an expression of deep grief].²⁵ Unlike his poems in *El laúd del desterrado*, the martyr verses do not refer to the political context that has led Zenea to a military execution. But how does imprisonment affect what Zenea chooses to include in his final verses? Are the turns toward abstraction precisely one of the effects of the real political conditions under which he composes his poems? These questions, not easily answered, point us to the immediate context of literary production.

Zenea's situation points us toward a set of conditions important to this nineteenth-century literature of exile and conquest. Zenea's poems and essays are tied to a periodical print culture. His work is in dialogue with a transnational community. And his language, both the Spanish language but also his working in various politically inflected registers, provides a context for which an Anglophone literary history cannot account. The minor in Zenea's poetry is itself part of the U.S. context of Latina/o literary history. As Zenea's work shows, the periodical press was deployed to address issues not only in the United States but also in other countries. The result is a body of work that cannot be contained within a nation. I have considered texts here that point to a trans-American spatial configuration for the field of Latina/o literary and cultural history. Exile and conquest are dominant conditions – and thus dominant themes – in this literature. Writers attempted to respond to the colonial predicaments created by competing empires in the Americas, and the result was a fragmented literary production that indicates a historical alterity rather than continuity in Latina/o literary history.

Notes

- 1 Emilia was the name Heredia used in his writing for Pepilla Arango Manzano. "Carta Sobre los Estados Unidos," in *Niagara y Otros Textos*, ed. Angel Augier (Caracas, Venezuela: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1990), 249.
- 2 *The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Douglas Bush (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 246.

- 3 Kirsten Silva Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001):14.
- 4 For an excellent article on Toledo, see Nicolás Kanellos, “José Alvarez de Toledo y Dubois and the Origins of Hispanic Publishing in the Early American Republic,” *Early American Literature* 43.1 (2008), 83–100. See also Lazo, “La Famosa Filadelfia: The Hemispheric American City and Constitutional Debates,” in *Hemispheric American Studies*, ed. Caroline F. Levander and Robert S. Levine. Recent work by Raúl Coronado and Emily Garcia continue to recover the publications and contexts for intellectuals in the early nineteenth-century United States. See Coronado’s *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013) and Emily García, “On the Borders of Independence: Manuel Torres and Spanish American Independence in Philadelphia” (forthcoming).
- 5 Ideological notions of Anglo/Spanish hierarchy appeared in various Anglophone texts, such as Richard Henry Dana Jr. in *To Cuba and Back: A Vacation Voyage* arguing that “Creoles” could not govern themselves.
- 6 For a bibliography of periodicals, see Nicolás Kanellos with Helvetia Martell, *Hispanic Periodicals in the United States, Origins to 1960* (Houston, TX: Arte Público, 2000), 137–277. Studies of the nineteenth-century U.S. Hispanophone press include A. Gabriel Meléndez, *Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico, 1834–1958* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005) and Doris Meyer, *Speaking for Themselves: Neomexicano Cultural Identity and the Spanish Language Press (1880–1920)* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
- 7 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 17.
- 8 Edward Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 175.
- 9 Deleuze and Guattari, 18.
- 10 The original Spanish: “estremadamente cautos, pues aun cuando les tocaba como á periodistas españoles y compatriotas y camaradas del poeta, decirnos algo de su mérito.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Spanish-language texts are mine. “De los anales de ciencias, etc.” *El Mensajero Semanal*, October 3, 1829.
- 11 “De los Anales de Ciencias, Etc.,” *El Mensajero Semanal*, October 3, 1829, 50.
- 12 “¿Quie le ha dicho que por que séamos poeriodistas españoles, y compatriotas y camaradas del poeta, ya estamos en la obligacion de criticar sus poesias?” “De los Anales de Ciencias, Etc.,” *El Mensajero Semanal*, October 3, 1829, 50.
- 13 The bibliography on Ruiz de Burton has grown considerably in the last two decades. An exemplary set of essays can be found Amelia María de la Luz Montes and Anne E. Goldman, *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).
- 14 John Morán González has characterized *The Squatter and the Don*’s failure to transfer white upper-class privilege from the California family to the U.S. nation in relation to “new cultural logistics of nationalism modeled not by the family but by the corporation.” See “The Whiteness of the Blush: The Cultural Politics of Racial Formation in *The Squatter and the Don*,” in Montes and Goldman, *Ruiz de Burton*, 155.
- 15 *The Squatter and the Don*, for example, is brutal in its attack on monopoly capitalism and corruption in the U.S. court system as well as its depiction of

- squatters who attempted to take lands previously belonging to Californios. But it is also concerned with distinguishing white land-owning Californios from lower-class Anglo Americans and indigenous populations.
- 16 María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1995), 194.
 - 17 Ruiz de Burton to Mariano Vallejo, September 14, 1869, in *Conflicts of Interest: The Letters of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton*, ed. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 2001), 301.
 - 18 In one of her letters, Ruiz de Burton invokes the phrase “*alma atravesada*” to speak about herself. *Conflicts of Interest*, 301.
 - 19 Sánchez and Pita, *Conflicts*, 550.
 - 20 Ruiz de Burton to Mariano Vallejo, September 14, 1869.
 - 21 For an insightful discussion of France and the invention of “Latin America,” see Mónica Quijada, “Sobre el Origen y Difusión del Nombre América Latina,” *Revista de Indias* No. 214 (1998).
 - 22 For a longer discussion of *El laúd del desterrado*, see my book, *Writing to Cuba: Filibustering and Cuban Exiles in the United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 53–56.
 - 23 *El laúd del desterrado*, ed. Matías Montes-Huidobro (Houston, TX: Arte Público, 1995), 41.
 - 24 Cintio Vitier, *Lo cubano en la poesía*, (La Habana: Instituto del Libro, 1970, 2nd ed.): 177.
 - 25 Quoted in Angel Aparicio Laurencio, *Diario de un mártir y otros poemas* (Miami, FL: Ediciones Universal, 1972), 13.