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Reading resistances in Ralph Waldo Emerson and José Martí

Abstract:

This essay takes as its starting point a consideration of the ways in which the ideological methodology “New Americanist” criticism has closed off possibilities of reading that might choose to value ambiguity, contradiction, and excess – elements which militate against the discursive neatness of critique. In readings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and José Martí, I argue that resolutely politicised interpretations of Emerson fail to do justice to the unstable texture of his prose. In turn, Martí’s writing about the United States is more uneven, surreal and excessive than a straightforward account of postcolonial resistance allows. Both Emerson and Martí exhibit a discursive flexibility that puts pressure on readings driven by inflexible ideological parameters seeking to position both men within frameworks of political quietism and postcolonial revolution respectively. I explore how the idea of revolution is imagined by Emerson in ways that run counter to our more conventional understanding of political transformation. To be sure, Martí’s revolutionary actions in the cause of Cuban independence were tangible in ways that Emerson could never have countenanced for himself; nevertheless Emerson’s understanding of resistance as differently located and performed provoked in Martí a high, and consistent, degree of sympathy.

“[Y]ou lose yourself in the wonder of what becomes, as it were, of the obstinate, the unconverted residuum” – Henry James, *The American Scene* (1907)

“Sus libros son sumas, no demostraciones” – José Martí, “Emerson” (1882)

“There is always a residuum unknown, unanalyzable” – Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Circles” (1841)

When Henry James visited “fantastic Florida” in 1905, as part of his travels around the United States that would come to be recorded in *The American Scene* (1907), he was struck by the sheer diversity of what he observed. The “rank vegetation” and “warm, heroic, amorous air”¹ seemed to encourage a concentration of human habitation that paid scant respect for the principles of order and proportion that he had noted, and remembered from his childhood, in New England. Palm Beach, he judged, was “as nowhere else, in America”, for here “one would find Vanity Fair in full blast – and Vanity Fair not scattered, not discriminated and parcelled out, as among the comparative practices and ancients of Newport, but compressed under one vast cover, enclosed in a single huge *vitrine*, which there would be nothing to prevent one’s flattening one’s nose against for days of delight” (330). The feeling of fascination and exclusion that is articulated here is built around its author’s sense of estrangement from an American geography that fails to conform to a topographic imagination of clear divisions and boundaries. Florida’s investment in a commercial scene, a hotel culture in which, for James, enclosure had failed to generate a sense of discrimination, stands in marked contrast to an earlier moment of imaginative mapping during his American travels. While visiting the College Yard at Harvard, somewhere very familiar to James from his childhood living in Cambridge and his aborted studies at the university, the returning expatriate drew attention to the ways in which topography might work to create interpretative stability and the articulation of codes. The “drawing of the belt at Harvard”, he writes, “is an admirably interesting example of the way in which the formal enclosure of objects at all interesting immediately refines upon their interest, immediately establishes values” (49). The vocabulary here is characteristically Jamesian, of course, in its

insistence on refinement as a practice of social reading, where the resulting precision of “interest” allows for the establishment of criteria for judgement, of “values”.

What is intriguing about this moment of stability in James’s visit is precisely its precariousness in the larger narrative of which it is a part, for *The American Scene* is preoccupied with moments of resistance to enclosure, in which the imperative to contain and describe is continually thwarted by a visual scene that eludes coherence and a language that struggles to represent. Harvard offers respite from a re-encountered space that seems to exceed the organising structures of observation and grammar, for elsewhere the discursive ambition to describe and represent finds itself continually outflanked by uncanny traces or incursions that unsettle authorial control. *The American Scene* is a performance of creative tension, in which the impulse to define finds itself thwarted by the failure to contain experience. As Paul Giles has noted, the text “throws an extended question mark over [the] historical dimensions of the American scene, representing as it does a fluid, inchoate world that cannot readily be subsumed into any preexisting American ‘type’”.² Florida’s modernity, its participation in the establishment of a national character “all yet to be made”, is at the same time haunted by ghosts of its Spanish past. At the coastal city of St. Augustine James marvels at the imitation Ponce de Leon Hotel, built in 1888 in Spanish Colonial Revival style by the co-founder of Standard Oil Henry Flagler. The building, he writes, “comes as near producing, all by itself, the illusion of romance as a highly modern, a most cleverly-constructed and smoothly-administered great modern caravansery can come”. “[I]t breaks out on every pretext, into circular arches and embroidered screens, into courts and cloisters, arcades and fountains, fantastic projections and lordly towers”. If this example of simulated colonial history caters to James’s leisured observer status, his visit to “the old Spanish fort”, a “mild, time-silvered quadrilateral”, “preserves alone ... the memory of the Spanish occupation” (338), a ghostly American past that sits alongside its *faux* present (and future). If the United States was, for James, a “vast uncomfortable subject”,³ part of that discomfort could be found in its palimpsestic layering of different chronologies and histories, such that the observing consciousness fails to maintain a satisfactory epistemological mastery.⁴

Elsewhere in *The American Scene* James notes that “the further one wandered the more the suggestion spoke”:

The sense of the size of the Margin, that was the name of it – the Margin by which the total of American life, huge as it already appears, is still so surrounded as to represent, for the mind's eye on a general view, but a scant flotilla huddled as for very fear of the fathomless depth of water, the too formidable future, on the so much vaster lake of the materially possible. Once that torch is at all vividly lighted it flares, for any pair of open eyes, over every scene, and with a presence that helps to explain the owner's veritable failure to conclude. (295)

The known United States, already acute in its epistemological challenges, is depicted as being surrounded by spatial excess (a “fathomless depth”, a “so much vaster lake”) and temporal exaggeration (a “too formidable future”), such that orderly mapping is impossible. The “torch” of observation confirms James's inability to control the representational task, for “the owner's veritable failure to conclude” marks the illusoriness of definitive statement. The “Margin” of the American scene, then, is characterised by accompanying, and potentially overwhelming, aporia, in which apparent stabilities are traversed by omissions, elaborations or absences. Textual surfaces, under these conditions, become spaces of striving and contestation, where definition is felt to be elusive, in turn generating further efforts to approach precision. As Ross Posnock has suggested, “By refusing to resolve paradoxes or dissolve difference into identity, Henry James avoids submitting to an ideology of harmonious totality, be it organic form or what he calls progressivism's ‘American identity’”.⁵

Henry James's awareness of the layered complexities of the national space, and the kinds of epistemological dispersals that these might generate, challenges readings of American literature that seek to root out either ideological complicity or consistency within literary texts. This essay seeks to explore the limitations of such readings for two writers for whom the Jamesian “gap” is a feature of their aesthetic and political projects, Ralph Waldo Emerson and the expatriate Cuban writer and revolutionary José Martí. Martí was an avid reader of Emerson, writing a powerful encomium for him in 1882. Like James, he occupied a tense, unresolvable position in relation to the United States, despite living in exile in New York from 1881 to 1895. Maria del Pilar Blanco, one of the few critics to consider James and Martí together, has noted how both writers stand “at a crossroads or on boundaries between national territories, genres, literary movements, and aesthetic tendencies”.⁶ In “Our America” (“Nuestra América”, 1891),

Martí's most famous articulation of Latin American identity and its complex relationship to North America, he writes against the notion of "America" as something organic and inevitably progressive. Instead it is disjointed and fragmentary, composed of the collision of apparently incompatible elements: "We were a phenomenon with the chest of an athlete, the hands of a dandy, and the brain of a child. We were a masquerader in English breeches, Parisian vest, North American jacket, and a Spanish cap."⁷ This American body is, as Julio Ramos has noted, "[c]onstructed with the remains of codes, incongruent fragments of conflicting traditions, ... the product of historical violence"⁸ Far from ideologically harmonious, the condition of American identity cannot be embodied, or textually represented, without an awareness of these divergences in which meaning is dispersed across paragraphs where a rhetoric of excess is fundamental to their structuring. For del Pilar Blanco, "Martí and James comment on the U.S. landscapes before them, neither of them feeling as insiders would within the spaces that they represent on the page."⁹

In contrast Emerson's New England heritage marks him, geographically, as central to a dominant strand of the national imaginary. Yet both Emerson and Martí exhibit a discursive flexibility that puts pressure on readings driven by inflexible ideological parameters seeking to position them within frameworks of political quietism and postcolonial revolution respectively. A provocation for my argument has been the work of Laura Lomas, whose account of Martí and, in turn, of Martí's reading of Emerson, has sought to position the Cuban writer as offering an insistent critique of Emerson's usefulness as a political model. Lomas argues that, "[a]gainst a common misreading of Martí as an uncritical celebrant of Euro-American modernity and technique",¹⁰ the Cuban writer is located within a postcolonial *in-betweenness*, in which he "adopted tactics of subterfuge in his criticism and translation because of his formative experiences as a deportee, a political prisoner, and a migrant in an emergent empire" (41). The critical assumptions at work here depend upon an acceptance of Lomas's characterisation of the "common misreading" that is her originating premise. In fact, Martí's work has most usefully been understood as an often complex dialectic of imperial celebration and critique, an unsettled and unsettling discursive style that underscores the in-betweenness of Lomas's formulation. Her reading of Martí's Emerson is designed to support a view of the Cuban's increasing political activism in the 1880s, one in which "the emerging canon of North American writing lacked the perspective that would permit

understanding of postcolonial conditions in his [Martí's] America" (132). To do this, Lomas holds Emerson to account for his interpellation of US imperialist culture and proposes that Martí is able to see through the political limitations of such a position to a point at which Emerson's intellectual legacy can be rejected. Essentially Martí is asked to perform a New Americanist reading of Emerson *avant la lettre*, one in which a practice of ideological critique is deployed to shore up a progressive politics. The difficulty with such an approach, I want to suggest, is that it has the effect of simplifying the complex radicalism of Emerson's career at the same time as it wants to insist on that complexity for Martí.¹¹ My intention is to explore how the idea of revolution is imagined by Emerson in ways that, at times, seemingly run counter to our more conventional understanding of political upheaval and transformation. To be sure, Martí's revolutionary actions in the cause of Cuban independence were tangible in ways that Emerson could never have countenanced for himself; yet Emerson's understanding of resistance as differently located and exhibited provoked in Martí a high, and consistent, degree of sympathy. Through readings of, amongst other texts, his tribute to Emerson and his impressions of a US leisure class at play on Coney Island, I show how a principle of discursive openness creates narrative complexity, a restless "residuum," that militates against the neat positioning of ideological critique.

A method of misreading

Donald Pease, a key voice in revisionary readings of American literature under the banner of "New Americanism", has argued for a literary criticism that pays closer attention to the ideological complicity of texts, their (maybe hidden) investment in structures of power that masquerade as shibboleths of New World exceptionalism. For the New Americanists, transforming the field of American Studies entailed sceptically redescribing the critical founding figures of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s (F.O. Matthiessen, Leo Marx, Henry Nash Smith, Richard Poirier and others) so as to mark a decisive break that would enable the field to constitute itself, politically, anew. The failure of these earlier writers, according to the new scholarship, lay in their abandonment of the social or the political in favour of the aesthetic, an aesthetic specifically defined by its interest in subjective interiority, so that an idea of consciousness replaced

economic and political systems as the most meaningful reality. As such, these earlier writers upheld a tradition of the American romance: the literary text as a transcendent “world elsewhere” in which the desire for organic wholeness might be fulfilled.

This critical paradigm shift was, in many ways, a necessary one, and one whose effects continue to guide the discipline today. The exceptionalist criteria of the “myth and symbol” school – its adherence to the rhetorical shorthand of the American Adam, of manifest destiny, of the virgin land – were exposed usefully as a “disciplinary unconscious” blind to the political repressions that had enabled their aesthetic coherence. Pease’s vocabulary, as Johannes Voelz has noted, is drawn from psychoanalysis and Marxist readings of Freud, asserting the inevitability of a work’s location in a “field-Imaginary” and its articulation of a “disciplinary unconscious”. Pease writes:

By the term field-Imaginary I mean to designate a location for the disciplinary unconscious... Here abides the field’s fundamental syntax – its tacit assumptions, convictions, primal words, and the charged relations binding them together... Once constructed out of this syntax, the primal identity can neither reflect upon its terms nor subject them to critical scrutiny. The syntactic elements of the field-Imaginary subsist instead as self-evident principles.¹²

Voelz points out that Pease’s position is built on the premise that belonging to a field-Imaginary “requires the practitioner’s identification with an established representation of the field” along with “the repression of all that contradicts the identification”.¹³ It became a feature of this critical approach that canonical authors were deemed to have fallen short, politically, of the liberal, progressive standards against which they were judged. The risk with this kind of reading was that it appeared to shore up a self-congratulatory narrative of progress towards our own present moment of apparently enlightened politics; it was difficult to conceptualise how writers who were inevitably drenched in ideology could nevertheless formulate positions that allowed for dissent or resistance, however precariously or fleetingly. At times, New Americanist criticism tended to flatten or homogenise authors, in the service of demonstrating a political advocacy, so that tensions and contradictions that might be intrinsic to their textual worlds were often overlooked.

Emerson has found himself the focus of this kind of politicised approach, most polemically perhaps in a strong reading by John Carlos Rowe in his 1997 study *At Emerson's Tomb*. Writing against a tradition that had elevated Emerson as the archetypal figure of nineteenth-century exceptionalism, as an avatar of non-conformity, Rowe argues that Emerson's abolitionist credentials are undermined through a transcendentalist aesthetic that is unable to commit to tangible politics. Emerson's shifting perspectives and claims are reduced to instances of ideological obfuscation that end up endorsing the political conditions he is ostensibly attacking, a state of affairs that is contagious for an entire tradition of American writing. "In short," Rowe writes, "the classic American literature founded on Emersonian values would be an explicit instance of an 'aesthetic ideology' working to support the very social forces it overtly criticizes".¹⁴ As Voelz notes, interpellation of this kind "seems almost entirely to predetermine the ideological import of a given author's or tradition's texts",¹⁵ thereby closing down the possibility of a text's value beyond the instrumentally political. Althusserian interpellation "does not let him [Rowe] look at what else these texts – and, in fact, representation in general – may be doing".¹⁶ It is the "what else" that also interests Rita Felski, who, in a sophisticated dissection of our critical impulse that insists on its ability and authority to read through the apparent surface assertions of texts, laments the current imperative within the discipline to resort to what Paul Ricoeur calls a "hermeneutics of suspicion". Why, she asks, are critics so motivated "to interrogate, unmask, expose, subvert, unravel, demystify, destabilize, take issue, and take umbrage"?¹⁷ Critique of this kind generates a state of affairs in which "scholars in the humanities are far more fluent in nay-saying than in yay-saying, and that eternal vigilance, unchecked by alternatives, can easily lapse into the complacent cadences of autopilot argument".¹⁸ While acknowledging the importance of uncovering the often occluded ideological premises that may structure a text, I'm more interested here in exploring how Emerson's writing pushes against the efforts of analysis to locate him within a too narrowly-defined discursive position. Ideological critique can only go so far in taking the measure of Emerson's meaning without distorting the inherent mobility of his words. Sharon Cameron, whose work on Emerson has paid close attention to his shifting moods, offers an understanding of Henry James's writing that speaks to the kind of restless particularisation that is at stake here, and which characterises Emerson's response to revolution and, in turn, José Martí's reading of Emerson and of America's revolutionary history. "Conflicts", Cameron writes, "become occasions for consciousness to

proliferate, as in a dialogue which would keep going, or keep exchanging, not so much viewpoints held by consciousness as, more simply still, diverse manifestations of it”.¹⁹ Rather than flattening difference into false unity, this kind of discursive consciousness proliferates endlessly, testing ideas, allowing viewpoints to jostle against each other, expanding, revising and moderating as thought is given textual shape.

In “The Method of Nature”, a lecture first delivered in 1841 before the Society of the Adelpi in Waterville College, Maine, Emerson asserted the “perpetual inchoation” of nature, to the extent that it posed real challenges to our attempts at hermeneutic containment. “[W]ho could ever analyse it?” he asks. “That rushing stream will not stop to be observed. We can never surprise nature in a corner; never find the end of a thread...Every natural fact is an emanation, and that from which it emanates is an emanation also, and from every emanation is a new emanation”. In the face of such proliferation, fixity becomes dangerously self-defeating, as Emerson draws an analogy with a mind unbalanced by rigidity: “If anything could stand still, it would be crushed and dissipated by the torrent it resisted, and it if it were a mind, would be crazed; as insane persons are those who hold fast to one thought, and do not flow with the course of nature”.²⁰ Entrapment by institutional and discursive frameworks, those “dead forms of our forefathers,”²¹ posed challenges for Emerson from as early as his first employment (between 1829 and 1832) as a Unitarian minister, in which theological doctrine and the formal constraints of preaching increasingly came to be experienced as impediments to transformative thought, what Posnock describes as “finding ways to write and speak sentences that approximate the volatility that marks nature and human being”.²² “Preaching is a pledge”, Emerson confides to his journal in 1838 after attending an uninspiring convention of New England educators, “& I wish to say what I think & feel today with the proviso that tomorrow perhaps I shall contradict it all. Freedom boundless I wish” (*JMN* 7:239). “We are shut up in schools & college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years & come out at last with a bellyful of words & do not know a thing”, he laments (*JMN* 7:238). Instead Emerson’s writing seeks to perform a self-reflexive embodiment of the oscillations of thought, of the ways in which words might be deployed in the service of approaching the often complex contortions of life. This idea is perhaps seen in its most acute form in “Nominalist and Realist”, a largely neglected essay published in 1844 in *Essays: Second Series* which grapples with the competing demands of abstract knowledge and actual experience, as Emerson weighs up the relationship between these different epistemological vantage points:

Nature will not be Buddhist: she resents generalizing, and insults the philosopher in every moment with a million fresh particulars. It is all idle talking: as much as a man is a whole, so is he also a part; and it were partial not to see it. What you say in your pompous distribution only distributes you into your class and section. You have not got rid of parts by denying them, but are the more partial. You are one thing, but Nature is *one thing and the other thing*, in the same moment. (CWE 3:236)

The oscillation between the individual and the universal, between actual and theoretical perspectives, is indicative of the often tense and unresolved shape of the essay as the whole. As David Robinson has noted, it is a dilemma that “prevents any definitive – and static – conception of the human estate”,²³ with the check on generalisation offered through the maintenance of opposite and diverse particularities that unravel our desire for a transcendent, unified view. Emerson’s prose, then, performs the difficult task of holding oppositions in play. “No sentence will hold the whole truth,” he insists, “and the only way in which we can be just, is by giving ourselves the lie; Speech is better than silence; silence is better than speech; – All things are in contact; every atom as a sphere of repulsion; – Things are, and are not, at the same time; – and the like” (CWE 3:245). Syntactically these lines refuse the assurances of a settled view, propelled through the choice of their punctuation to assert alternative and contradictory statements that undermine resolution: “– and the like” keeps things deliberately open, as Posnock notes, “[a] stubborn testimony of the inextinguishable remainder” that cannot be contained linguistically or discursively.²⁴

Our need for explanation, for the identification of origins and final destinations as conceptual frameworks of reassurance, is nevertheless strong. In “Experience”, the most celebrated essay in the *Second Series* volume, Emerson is prepared to acknowledge the possibility that, despite a belief that life is a “flux of moods”, there is “that in us which changes not and which ranks all sensations and states of mind”, a “First Cause” which organises and structures experience. He goes on to rehearse some of the names that are attached to this stabilising force – “Fortune, Minerva, Muse, Holy Ghost” – before deciding that “these are quaint names, too narrow to cover this unbounded substance” (CWE 3:72). By exalting “Chance into a divinity”, Emerson insists, we “stay too long at the spark” (CWE 3:70). The

spontaneity and evanescence of a spark – an image to which I will return shortly – is transformed into something causal and reductive. Indeed causality and “casual” are established in “Experience” as homophonic opposites, with the explanatory structure of the former countered by Emerson’s embrace of uncertainty: “We thrive by casualties. Our chief experiences have been casual”, for “In the thought of genius there is always a surprise” (*CWE* 3:68). By recognising the “evanescence and lubricity of all objects” (*CWE* 3:49), Emerson rejects the requirement to lay claim to an organising principle or a foundational position, one which, he suggests, is overwhelmed by the “uncalculated and uncalculable” (*CWE* 3:69) unpredictability of experience. In a daring move that threatens to undermine his (self-) image as public thinker, he turns away from the usefulness of theorisation as a discursive practice altogether:

But what help from these fineries or pedantries? What help from thought? Life is not dialectics. We, I think, in these times, have had lessons enough of the futility of criticism. Our young people have thought and written much on labor and reform, and for all that they have written, neither the world nor themselves have got on a step. Intellectual tasting of life will not supersede muscular activity ... Objections and criticism we have had our fill of. There are objections to every course of life and action, and the practical wisdom infers an indifferency, from the omnipresence of objection... Life is not intellectual or critical, but sturdy. (*CWE* 3:58, 59)

Intellectual work, by this reckoning, solidifies into ineffective rhetoric in which theorisations about the issues of the moment can make no tangible impact upon them. “Muscular activity”, the specificity of *doing*, with all its risks of divergence and of failure acknowledged, is pitted against the dilettantish “[i]ntellectual tasting”. Emerson’s preference lies in the particulars of action, in an engagement with complex shapes of experience rather than the neat “dialectics” of theory. Only in this way can we be reconciled to a world in which, as he claims in “Circles” (1841), “[e]very ultimate fact is only the first of a new series. Every general law only a particular fact of some general law presently to disclose itself” (*CWE* 2:304); “All that we reckoned settled shakes and rattles; and literature, cities, climates, religions, leave their foundations and dance before our eyes” (*CWE* 2:311).

What Emerson describes here is nothing less than a method of reading, one which proposes a stance of radical openness and provisionality that, while not relinquishing the responsibility of ethical or political response, is alive to the dangers of allowing these to ossify into what William James would later characterise (in “Pragmatism”) as a “refined object of contemplation” that overlooks the “colossal universe of concrete facts, ... their awful bewilderingments, their surprises and cruelties, ... the wildness which they show”.²⁵ Emerson’s political credentials need to be read then in the context of this calibration, in which revolution might be understood as a series of eruptions or surprises which provoke possibilities of transformation that disrupt our categories of classification. Instead of what, in “Circles”, he characterises as “rest, conservatism, appropriation, inertia; not newness, not the way onward” (*CWE* 2:319), Emerson’s hermeneutical theory depends upon an anti-theoretical commitment to what Jeffrey Insko describes as “the joys of unknowing” which routinely exert pressure upon our conventional desire to enact neat causal and conceptual structures.²⁶ If Emerson’s understanding of how we interact with the world about us is indeed characterised through moments of such singular intensity, our view of his revolutionary credentials needs to acknowledge the potential political effectiveness of this strategy.

Reading revolutions

Despite Emerson’s later rejection of the heroic as model for revolutionary change, an earlier lecture series on Biography (delivered in 1835) saw him grappling with the usefulness of the Great Man as a subject of scrutiny. In the lecture on Martin Luther, he charts in part a genealogy of antinomian resistance, what Kenyon Gradert calls “an historical logic of Protestant dissent running from the Reformation through the English Civil War into the present”, “a common antinomian militancy”.²⁷ Emerson declares of Luther: “He achieved a spiritual revolution by spiritual arms alone. ... He had such an unbounded confidence in the might of spiritual weapons that he would not degrade his cause by calling in the aid of flesh and blood. He believed a single truth was of strength to put to flight all the armies, all the kingdoms of the world”.²⁸ The military lexicon continues for Luther “was summoned by God to set up a standard for Reform, and to do battle with the infernal hosts” (136); he “was a fountain of strength, and resembled the

torpedo which from the inexhaustible electricity within it affords an unceasing artillery of new shocks, each more violent than the last” (141). Clearly Emerson’s thought at this early point in his career was still wedded to the allure of the powerful, transformative figure, yet the reliance here on the force of “new shocks”, of revolutionary activity likened electrical charges, is, as we will see, something that will recur in a much later iteration.

By the 1840s, and Emerson’s increasing rhetorical and textual engagement with the politics of abolition, there is a marked shift in focus. His first anti-slavery speech, an “Address on the Emancipation of the Negroes in the British West Indies”, delivered at the Concord courthouse on August 1 1844, sets out a very precise understanding of the kind of revolutionary impulse that had resulted in the abolition of West Indian slavery. He declares that William Wilberforce’s introduction of a parliamentary bill in April 1791 to outlaw the slave trade provoked an eruption of affective force, “a moral revolution” through which “the nation was aroused to enthusiasm”. But instead of such collective feeling regarded as a spur to positive political action, Emerson’s revolutionary transformation is defined instead through acts of renunciation: “In 1791, three hundred thousand persons in Britain pledged themselves to abstain from all articles of island produce” (*CWE* 11:109). Indeed, Britain’s moral character is not defined through Carlylean heroism but by rejection of the heroic act itself:

Here was no prodigy, no fabulous hero, no Trojan horse, no bloody war, but all was achieved by plain means of plain men, working not under a leader, but under a sentiment. Other revolutions have been the insurrection of the oppressed; this was the repentance of the tyrant. It was the masters revolting from their mastery. The slave-holder said, “I will not hold slaves.” The end was noble and the means were pure. (*CWE* 11:135)

Abolitionist feeling in Britain, Emerson suggests, is determined by the rejection of an idea of singular leadership as the source for generating political action. Instead, the “plain means of plain men” produce a revolution achieved not through conflict between slaveholders and the enslaved, but through an act of internal moral transformation. The phrase “under a sentiment” reveals the trigger for change, and points to the realm in which change occurs. As Martha Schoolman has pointed out, “As a historical description

... it verges on the illegible”, for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies was not achieved simply through a collective act of slaveholder renunciation, but in the face of concerted resistance.²⁹ Emerson’s focus, though, remains firmly on the revolutions of sympathy experienced by slaveholders and British public alike, for whom “[c]onscience rolled on its pillow, and could not sleep” (*CWE* 11:103). The democratic ideal is renovated by public opinion, such that revolution can entail a return to a condition of restored newness, prior to the immoral accretions of a slaveholding polity. Michael North’s study of the genealogy of revolution is useful here, with for its reminder that, as early as St. Augustine, *revolutio* meant “the same kind of providential return otherwise designated as *reformatio* or *renascita*”. The renovation brought about by abolition “returns a system to its starting point not to regain the old but to revive the new”.³⁰

Revolution, for Emerson, is neither defined by nor excludes the work of political change that might overturn a government or initiate the constitution of a new one. Reading across his writing it is apparent that revolution can occur in every aspect of human life: in “Self-Reliance” he asserts that “It is easy to see that a greater self-reliance must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their association; in their property; in their speculative views” (*CWE* 2:77). Elsewhere, in “History”, Emerson would offer a model of revolutionary change, in which “private experience flashes a light” on the actions of collective bodies, so that “the crises of [an individual] life refer to national crises”: “Every revolution was first a thought in one man’s mind, and when the same thought occurs to another man, it is the key to that era” (*CWE* 2:5). The flashes of light are moments of transformation, or at least they signal the potential for it, and it is the transmission of these pulses, the transition that they inaugurate from one state to another, that generates the inevitability of revolution. Jonathan Levin notes that “a moment of transition may ultimately have what will eventually come to be defined as politically progressive consequences, but as it unfolds it remains undetermined in ways obscured by such retrospective characterizations”.³¹ In other words, the effects of Emerson’s revolutionary force might not be immediately apparent *as politics*, but its potential to be such, or to be read as such, is everywhere. In “The Divinity School Address” he declares that “Wherever a man comes, there comes revolution” (*CWE* 1:144), and it requires the cultivation of an ability to recognise and channel those transitional shifts to bring this about. The “revolution” that “Self-

Reliance” predicts is a call for lives that manifest self-direction and moral fearlessness. As Mark Button has recently noted, Emerson “pushed relentlessly for a life lived from the inside out, for himself and others”,³² with the aim of encouraging a process of self-generation that would transform our conception of how democratic society might function as well as our place in it. To be sure, Emerson’s privileging of an inviolable, revolutionary self against a culture of conformity might present problems when one tries to map it on to any planned political programme. Yet his understanding of the relationship between thought and action is structured around an idiom and lexicon of “surprise” – “Life is a series of surprises” (*CWE* 3:67), as “Experience” reminds us, a process of continual reinvention that makes available the possibility of wider transformation.

A relatively neglected Emerson text, initially from the Civil War period, “Resources”, allows us to see most clearly how he envisages the singularly affective quality of the energies that might bring about revolution. As the editors of the *Later Lectures* note, “Resources” has a complicated textual genealogy. It began life as a lecture in 1864 as part of Emerson’s series on *American Life*; subsequently he delivered a version of it with regularity until 1872, as well as cannibalising it for other lectures during this period. It is clear from the frequency of its appearance in Emerson’s repertoire that, of the later lectures, “Resources” was one of his most popular pieces.³³ And one can see why. Its celebration of America’s potential for energetic transformation, a paean to the adaptability of the nation and its settlers to create a world of exceptionalist promise (“The world is all gates, - all opportunities, - strings of tension waiting to be struck”), conforms to the most romantic, optative strains in Emerson’s writing. The country’s energies are generated by, and perpetuate, a fantasy of benevolent capitalism, in which the United States presents itself as a resource through which its citizens have the opportunity to express their “potences” (340). Indeed the lecture returns often to ideas of power and energy, to the harnessing of these forces in the refashioning of character and nation. “Life is always rapid here”, Emerson declares (343), with “American energy...overriding every venerable rule of political economy”.

America is “a magazine of power”, a country in which “[t]he creation of power had never any parallel” (344). “The world belongs to the energetic man”, whose “will gives him new eyes” (348). The Civil War is described as “the most healthful revolution in the politics of the nation” (344), and Emerson assures his listeners that “the resources of America and its future will be immense...to wise and virtuous

men” (354). The lecture nevertheless adds a note of caution by suggesting that the control of such energy needs to be carefully managed in the service of its wider potential. Power “speedily arrives at its limits, and requires to be husbanded” (350), so that the transition from one charged impulse to the next can be controlled. Dominic Mastroianni’s reading of this passage is helpful, for he suggests that “[t]he means of conducting power is a sort of secret spring...without which Emersonian citizenship would be unthinkable”.³⁴ Putting ourselves in a position to channel this power – “If we knew how to draw the electricity!”, Emerson opines – would make available the “divine energies”³⁵ for radical change. In an untitled lecture delivered in November 1860, which Bosco and Myerson call “Reform”, Emerson makes this connection explicit: “the force of moments”, singular instances of inspiration, “revolutionizes a long life of plausibilities; and these dangerous moments cannot be guarded against” (155).

Martí's revolutionary reconstructions

In 1882, while living in New York, José Martí was asked to compose a “Prologue” to “Poem of Niagara” by the Venezuelan writer Juan Antonio Pérez Bonalde. Long a source of poetic inspiration as a model for the American sublime, the Falls themselves barely feature in Martí’s introduction. Instead he uses the opportunity afforded him to construct an elaborate response to Anglo-American modernity, in terms that are reminiscent of Emersonian preoccupations. The certainties of earlier eras are no more, he asserts, with doubt and uncertainty personified as a spectre haunting every house:

An immense, pale man, dressed in black, with gaunt face, weeping eyes, and dry lips, is walking gravely across the earth without rest or sleep – and he has taken a seat in every home and has put his trembling hand on every bedstead. Such a pounding in the brain! Such fear in the breast! Such demanding of things that do not come! Such unawareness of what one wants! And in the spirit, such a sense of mingled nausea and delight: nausea for the day that is dying, delight for the dawn!³⁶

This striking image of incursion, with its accumulation of apostrophes, culminates in a turn towards, if not redemption, then reorientation, a revolution in how ideas are experienced and transmitted. The edifices of previous thought, solid, stable, inflexible, must now give way to a new intellectual arena, in which modalities of change and mobility are central. “All is expansion, communication, florescence, contagion, diffusion”, Martí asserts. Instead of thought resting in complacent stasis, everywhere confirmed in its legitimacy, ideas are charged with energy – “They go at a gallop, mounted on lightning, winged” (46),³⁷ in an echo of Emerson. Indeed Emerson’s emphasis on thought as “vehicular and transitive” (*CWE* 3:34) finds a later, more uncertain iteration in Martí’s sense that “Ideas are lost in each other in the sea of our minds, as when a stone strikes blue water and the circles in the water lose themselves in each other”. The central conceit of Emerson’s essay “Circles” is here reimagined into something precious, beautiful in its fragility: “[T]hey dissolve into glowing sparks; they crumble. And hence the small, shimmering works of our time”.³⁸

As Aníbal González has observed, the prologue offers “a poetics concerned not with technicalities of verse and form... but with the philosophical basis for a new literature”, one that must struggle against conformity and convention.³⁹ At the heart of this project is a very Emersonian idea of revolution, one in which “literary originality” and “political freedom” become synonymous. “Man’s first task is to reconquer himself”, Martí writes. “[M]en [need to] be returned to themselves”, for “It is up to each man to reconstruct life, and no sooner does he look inside himself than he reconstructs it”.⁴⁰ Reconquering, returning, reconstructing – all active verbs indicative not of a nostalgic coming back, but instead of starting again differently. Martí looks to Emerson as providing a model of aversion to rigid thought, as making available thought as a political act. In turn, Martí’s politics, as these are revealed in his role as observer of the United States, are resistant to easy definition. They perform “a chameleonic construction that remains largely inimical to positivistic analysis”, as Paul Giles has noted, in which “a dynamic structural contradiction” intimates “how every situation and social organization could be looked at from a different point of view”.⁴¹ If for Emerson “[a] foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines” (*CWE* 2:57), Martí’s own engagement with the United States, and with Emerson in particular, shares an unwillingness to settle easily into positions of reductive political judgement.

Martí's lengthy 1882 eulogy for Emerson, published in the Caracas-based *La Opinión Nacional*, shortly after the Concord philosopher's death, is his most extended engagement with its subject. Anne Fountain's research has uncovered the range of references, allusions, and paraphrases that Martí deploys to inhabit Emerson's poetics and politics.⁴² My interest here lies not in revisiting this useful detective work, but rather in drawing attention to the ways in which Martí offers a reading of Emerson that pays careful attention to mobility of his thought. More widely, Martí resists conforming to the kinds of theoretically politicised accounts that seek to locate his postcolonial credentials in opposition to Emerson's apparent imperialist ones. "His books are compendiums, not demonstrations", Martí declares,⁴³ an astute observation that describes a textual space in which the deliberate flaunting of programmatic, discursive logic is practised: "He followed no system, for that struck him as the act of a blind man or a servant; he believed in no system, for that struck him as the act of a weak, low, and envious mind" (119).⁴⁴ "[A]t times", Martí writes, "he seems to leap from one thing to another and at first the relationship between two adjacent ideas remains unclear".⁴⁵ Preferable to the rigidities of causal structure. Martí insists on the animated movement of Emerson's self and text, his life "an endless soaring through the heights" (120),⁴⁶ his writing "stimulates, arouses, inflames, and is like a gust of wind on a covered fire". Emerson, in his persona and in his work, generates an energy that, for Martí, makes available the possibility of revolutionary transformation, one that "leaves the flames exposed to the air" (121).⁴⁷

Henry James's encounter with a US leisure class in Florida, with which I began this essay, indexed his sensitivity both to the brash commercialism of tourist spaces and to their haunting by traces of an Hispanic past. As I have suggested, such a palimpsest signals James's acquiescence to excess, the "residuum" that disrupts hermeneutic coherence. In José Martí's 1881 chronicle of Coney Island, another location for Americans at play, excess is marked from the outset. "Nothing in the history of mankind", Martí begins, "has ever equalled the marvelous prosperity of the United States".⁴⁸ In a Whitmanian cataloguing of the scene, formally reproducing Martí's sense of the US's insatiable culture of consumption, the sheer dynamism of a constantly formulating and reformulating culture amazes him:

The surprising thing there is the size, the quantity, the sudden outburst of human activity, that immense valve of pleasure open to an immense people, ... that mobility, that change of form, that fighting spirit, ... that swelling tide, that dumbfounding, overwhelming, steady, frenzied expansiveness, and that simplicity in the marvellous; *that* is the surprising thing. (168)⁴⁹

The self in transition that, for Emerson, enacts the potential for revolutionary change, is here scaled up to an entire culture, one in which unpredictable divergences and intensities both challenge and entice Martí's recording eye. Yet he is also careful to remind his readers that behind, below or aslant from this vision of capitalist energy lie alternative presences: "children's cadaverous faces" suffering from cholera (167);⁵⁰ and Black minstrelsy put on for the entertainment of white America ("a poor Negro who, for a miserable wage, sticks his head out of a hole in a cloth and is busied day and night eluding with grotesque movements the balls pitched at him" [169-70]).⁵¹ These are the ghosts of Anglo-American modernity, barely visible or ignored identities registering a troubling sense of disaffection from Coney Island's consumerist spectacle. In a key paragraph Martí claims Emerson's romantic energies for himself – and for Latin America – as a marker of cultural and political resistance. Instead of the seductions of Coney Island capital, he proposes a transcendental revolution pitched in the vocabulary of transition and transformation:

Other peoples – we among them – live devoured by a sublime inner demon who pushes us tirelessly on in search of an ideal of love or glory. When we hold the measure of the ideal we were after, delighted as though we were holding an eagle, a new quest makes us restless, a new ambition spurs us, a new aspiration heads us toward a new vehement desire, and out of the captive eagle emerges a rebel, free butterfly, daring us to follow it, chaining us to her circuitous flight. (168)⁵²

The ideal ambiguously embodied in the symbol of the caged eagle (the bird, of course, the emblem of the United States) finds itself supplanted by further energies of political desire in which freedom and rebelliousness are the enticing principles now in play. The "circuitous flight" of the butterfly, reminiscent

again perhaps of Emerson's "Circles" essay, compels us to new possibilities of emancipation, to an enactment of Emerson's striving for a "new yet unapproachable America" (*CWE* 3:72).

It is curious, then, that the very clear affinity – rhetorical and intellectual – that Martí feels for Emerson has been the subject of a rigorous postcolonial reading that seeks both to expose Emerson's retrograde politics, through a methodology of ideological critique, and to argue for Martí's increasing distance from him (and them) as his own political agenda took shape. This discursive flattening of both writers negates the restless, curious nature of their prose in the interests of theoretical framing. Emerson remains for Martí a figure who represents an inextricably conjoined aesthetic and political sense of possibility. Transcendentalism's rejection of forms of inherited European thinking and its constellation as a Victorian American avant-garde keen to reorient New World culture and politics appealed to Martí; his project for an independent and progressive Latin American political and cultural imaginary explicitly refuted Europe as the progenitor of value, celebrating instead "those who spring from Nature strong and genuine, active and solitary".⁵³ Martí allows his writing to follow different, sometimes contradictory, discursive pathways, such that what Jeffrey Lawrence has characterised as the "two versions of the relationship between the United States and Spanish-speaking America" at the end of the nineteenth century, namely "the hemispheric liberal republican emphasis on shared cultural values and the pan-Latinist insistence on deep-seated and irreconcilable cultural traditions". These co-exist across and within Martí's prose, generating a prismatic perspective in which celebration and critique can co-exist.⁵⁴

Reading for ideological critique has tended to downplay the often experimental shape of Emerson's and Martí's prose, so that an approach that chooses to regard Emerson as a figure complicit in retrograde US politics and Martí as a reader able to see through such complicity overlooks the degree to which both writers imagine similar possibilities of resistance. The canonisation of Martí as a hero of Cuban independence and scourge of North American imperialism is central to George Lipsitz's articulation of his continuing availability in the fight against US political and economic dominance under the guise of hemispheric agreements and treaties, with their attendant "cultural uniformity and univocality engendered by the pervasive growth of mass-media monopolies, market-driven education, and neo-conservative cultural repression".⁵⁵ While Martí's anti-colonialism is indeed strongly articulated in much of his writing, for all that an important text like "Our America" advocates Latin American solidarity in the

face of US hegemony, his relationship to the country in which he was exiled for so many years is more complex and prismatic than a straightforward narrative of political resistance would suggest. His declaration in an 1882 letter to the editor of the Buenos Aires newspaper *La Nación* that “As for me, I contribute nothing more than my love for expansion – and my horror at the incarceration of the human spirit” points to both Martí’s political and rhetorical strategies.⁵⁶ The materiality of injustice often finds its strongest opposition in the language of mobility and transcendence, in what Paul Giles has called “a triumph of the imagination, an emancipation of the spirit ... [a] sense of hybridity and counterbalance”.⁵⁷ The aspiration to Emersonian flights, with its accompanying celebration of natural man in the face of an instrumental culture, is held in creative tension with an admission that, as an exile in the US, “There is something of the ship in every house in a foreign land. A certain sensation of indefinable unease persists. We feel the earth oscillating, and our feet are unsteady upon it. At times, we clutch the walls – and where others find solid footing, we lurch. The spirit is off balance”.⁵⁸ With its echoes of Emerson’s scepticism in his essay “Experience” (“Where do we find ourselves?”), Martí’s hermeneutical strategies, like Emerson’s, revolve around patterns of attraction and alienation, moving between the two as the United States is encountered in all its unrealised potential.*

¹ Henry James, *The American Scene* (1907) (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 322.

² Paul Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 193.

³ Henry James to H.G. Wells, 8 Nov. 1906 in Philip Horne (ed.), *Henry James: A Life in Letters* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), 442.

⁴ Gregory Helmick has noted that Florida can usefully be configured as “a poetic terrain and amphibious space, where the Caribbean, Atlantic, and Gulf constitute fluid zones of contact” (“North Florida in the Cuban Literary Canon: Contact Zone, Chronotype and Liminal Space”, *The Southern Literary Journal* Volume 46, No 2 [2014], 45-66 [46]).

⁵ Ross Posnock, *The Trial of Curiosity: Henry James, William James, and the Challenge of Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 74.

⁶ Maria del Pilar Blanco, *Ghost-Watching American Modernity: Haunting, Landscape, and the Hemispheric Imagination* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 17

⁷ José Martí, “Our America” (1891) in *Our America: Writings on Latin America and the Struggle for Cuban Independence*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977), 91. [“Éramos una vision, con el pecho de atleta, las manos de petimetre y la frente de niño. Éramos una mascara, con los calzones de Inglaterra, el chaleco parisiense, el chaquetón de Norteamérica y la montera de España” (José Martí, *Obras Completas*, 27 Volumes [Havana: Editorial Nacional de Cuba, 1963-73], 6:20). Hereafter *OC*.]

⁸ Julio Ramos, *Divergent Modernities: Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 254.

⁹ del Pilar Blanco, *Ghost-Watching American Modernity*, 17.

¹⁰ Laura Lomas, *Translating Empire: José Martí, Migrant Latino Subjects, and American Modernities* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 9.

* Andrew Taylor is Professor of American Literature at the University of Edinburgh.

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- ¹¹ For a critique of Lomas's reading, see Alfred J. López, "Translating Interdisciplinarity: Reading Martí Reading Whitman", *The Comparatist* Volume 35 (2011), 5-18.
- ¹² Donald Pease, "New Americanists: Revisionist Interventions into the Canon", *boundary 2* Volume 33, No 3 (1990), 1-37 (11-12).
- ¹³ Johannes Voelz, *Transcendental Resistance: The New Americanists & Emerson's Challenge* (Hanover, NH.: Dartmouth College Press, 2010), 35.
- ¹⁴ John Carlos Rowe, *At Emerson's Tomb: The Politics of Classic American Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 22-23.
- ¹⁵ Voelz, *Transcendental Resistance*, 50.
- ¹⁶ Voelz, *Transcendental Resistance*, 51.
- ¹⁷ Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), 9, 5. See also Christopher Castiglia, "Twists and Turns", in Hester Blum (ed.), *Turns of Event: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies in Motion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 61-78. Castiglia argues that a hermeneutics of critique needs to be accompanied by one of hope: "Shaken loose from the stranglehold of precedent and convention, an unanticipated moment can rearrange the social landscape, generating possibilities that seem impossible under the regime of fact, nature, or truth" (69).
- ¹⁸ Felski, *Limits of Critique*, 9.
- ¹⁹ Sharon Cameron, *Thinking in Henry James* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 5.
- ²⁰ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Edward Waldo Emerson, 12 Volumes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1903), 1:199. Hereafter *CWE*.
- ²¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, ed. William H. Gilman et al., 16 Volumes (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960-82), 4:27. Hereafter *JMN*.
- ²² Ross Posnock, *Renunciation* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2016), 290.
- ²³ David M. Robinson, *Emerson and the Conduct of Life: Pragmatism and Ethical Purpose in the Later Work* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 73.
- ²⁴ Posnock, *Renunciation*, 296.
- ²⁵ William James, *Writings 1902-1910* (New York: Library of America, 1987), 496.
- ²⁶ Jeffrey Insko, *History, Abolition, and the Ever-Present Now in Antebellum American Writing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 111.
- ²⁷ Kenyon Gradert, "Swept into Puritanism: Emerson, Wendell Phillips, and the Roots of Radicalism", *New England Quarterly* Volume 90, No 1 (March 2017), 103-29 (107, 109).
- ²⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson: Volume I 1833-1836*, ed. Stephen E. Whicher and Robert E. Spiller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 127.
- ²⁹ Martha Schoolman, *Abolitionist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 88.
- ³⁰ Michael North, *Novelty: A History of the New* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 43, 44-45. North cites Stanley Cavell, an important interlocutor of Emerson, who argues that our usual "sense of revolution" suggests the idea "of the past escaped and our problems solved", but in fact genuine revolution brings us back to "a world lost" (183). See Stanley Cavell, *Must We Mean What We Say?* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 73-96.
- ³¹ Jonathan Levin, *The Poetics of Transition: Emerson, Pragmatism, and American Literary Modernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), xii.
- ³² Mark E. Button, "Reading Emerson in Neoliberal Times: Contesting the Abandonment of Authority", *Political Theory* Volume 43, No 3 (2015), 312-33 (314).
- ³³ For the history of the lecture's delivery, see Ronald A. Bosco and Joel Myerson (eds.), *The Later Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson 1843-1871*, 2 Volumes (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 2:336-39.
- ³⁴ Dominic Mastroianni, *Politics and Skepticism in Antebellum American Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 40.
- ³⁵ Bosco and Myerson (eds.), *Later Lectures*, 2:354.
- ³⁶ José Martí, *Selected Writings*, ed. and tr. Esther Allen (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 44. ["Un inmenso hombre pálido, de rostro enjuto, ojos llorosos y boca seca, vestido de negro, anda con pasos graves, sin reposar ni dormir, por toda la tierra, - y se ha sentado en todos los hogares, y ha puesto su mano trémula en todas las cabeceras! Qué golpeo en el cerebro! qué susto en el pecho! qué demsnda lo que no viene! qué no saber lo que se desea! qué sentir a la par deleite y nausea en el espíritu, nausea del día que muere, deleite del alba!" (OC 7:225).]
- ³⁷ ["Todo es expansión, comunicación, florecencia, contagio, esparcimiento ... Nacen a caballo, montadas en relámpago, con alas" (OC 7:227).]

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- ³⁸ Martí, *Selected Writings*, 46. ["se deshacen en chispas encendidas; se desmigajan. De aquí pequeñas obras fúlgidas" (OC 7:227).]
- ³⁹ Aníbal González, *A Companion to Spanish American Modernismo* (Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2007), 74. See also Ericka Beckman, "Man on the Market: José Martí and the Poetics of Commerce", *Revista Hispánica Moderna* Volume 61, No 1 (June 2008), 19-35.
- ⁴⁰ Martí, *Selected Writings*, 49. ["El primer trabajo del hombre es reconquistarse. Urge devolver los hombres a sí mismos ... Toca a cada hombre reconstruir la vida: a poco que mire en sí, la reconstruye" (OC 7:230).]
- ⁴¹ Giles, *Global Remapping*, 195, 194, 196.
- ⁴² See Anne Fountain, *José Martí and U.S. Writers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).
- ⁴³ Martí, *Selected Writings*, 121. ["Sus libros son sumas, no demostraciones" (OC 13:22).]
- ⁴⁴ ["No obedeció a ningún sistema, lo que le parecía acto de ciego y de siervo; ni creó ninguno, lo que le parecía acto de mente flaca, baja y envidiosa" (OC 13:20).]
- ⁴⁵ ["A veces, parece que salta de una cosa a otra, y no se halla a primera vista la relación entre dos ideas inmediatas" (OC 13:22).]
- ⁴⁶ ["en permanente vuelo a lo alto" (OC 13:20).]
- ⁴⁷ ["La lectura estimula, enciende, aviva, y es como soplo de aire fresco la hoguera resguardada, que se lleva las cenizas, y deja al aire el fuego" (OC 13:21).]
- ⁴⁸ José Martí, "Coney Island" (1881) in *Inside the Monster*, 165. ["En los fastos humanos, nada iguala a la prosperidad maravillosa de los Estados Unidos del Norte" (OC 9:123).]
- ⁴⁹ ["lo que asombra allí es, el tamaño, la cantidad, el resultado súbito de la actividad humana, esa inmensa válvula de placer abierta a un pueblo inmenso, ... esa movilidad, ese don de avance, ese acometimiento, ese cambio de forma, ... esa marea creciente, esa expansividad anonadora e incontrastable, firme y frenética, y esa naturalidad en lo maravilloso; eso es lo que asombra allí" (OC 9:125).]
- ⁵⁰ ["los rostros cadavéricos de las criaturitas" (OC 9:125).]
- ⁵¹ ["un desventurado hombre de color que, a cambio de un jornal miserable, se está día y noche con la cabeza asomada por un agujero hecho en un lienzo esquivando con movimientos ridículos y extravagantes muecas los golpes de los tiradores" (OC 9:127).]
- ⁵² ["Otros pueblos – y nosotros entre ellos – vivimos devorados por un sublime demonio interior, que nos empuja a la persecución infatigable de un ideal de amor o Gloria; y cuando asimos, con el placer con que se ase un águila, el grado del ideal que perseguíamos, nuevo afán nos inquieta, nueva ambición nos espolea, nueva aspiración nos lanza a nuevo vehemente anhelo, y sale del águila presa una rebelde mariposa libre, como desafiándonos a seguirla y encadenándonos a su revuelto vuelo" (OC 9:126).]
- ⁵³ José Martí, "General Grant" (1885) in *Inside the Monster: Writings on the United States and American Imperialism*, ed. Philip S. Foner (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 80. ["los que arrancan de la Naturaleza, pujantes y genuinos, activos y solitarios" (OC 13:89).]
- ⁵⁴ Jeffrey Lawrence, *Anxieties of Experience: The Literatures of the Americas from Whitman to Bolaño* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 58.
- ⁵⁵ George Lipsitz, "Their America and Ours: Intercultural Communication in the Context of 'Our America'", in Jeffery Belknap and Raúl Fernández (eds.), *José Martí's "Our America": From National to Hemispheric Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 293-316 (294).
- ⁵⁶ José Martí, "Carta a Bartolomé Mitre y Vedia", my translation. [De mí, no pongo más que mi amor a la expansion – y mi horror al encarcelamiento del espíritu humano" (OC 9: 17).]
- ⁵⁷ Giles, *Global Remapping*, 195, 197.
- ⁵⁸ Martí, "From Notebook 8", *Selected Writings*, 76. ["Hay algo de buque en toda casa en tierra extranjea. Dura aquella sensación de indefinable disgust. Se siente oscilar la tierra, y vacilar sobre ella nuestros pies. A veces, se sujeta uno de las paredes, - y por donde otros van firmes, camina uno tambalando. El espíritu está fuera de equilibrio" (OC 21:242).].