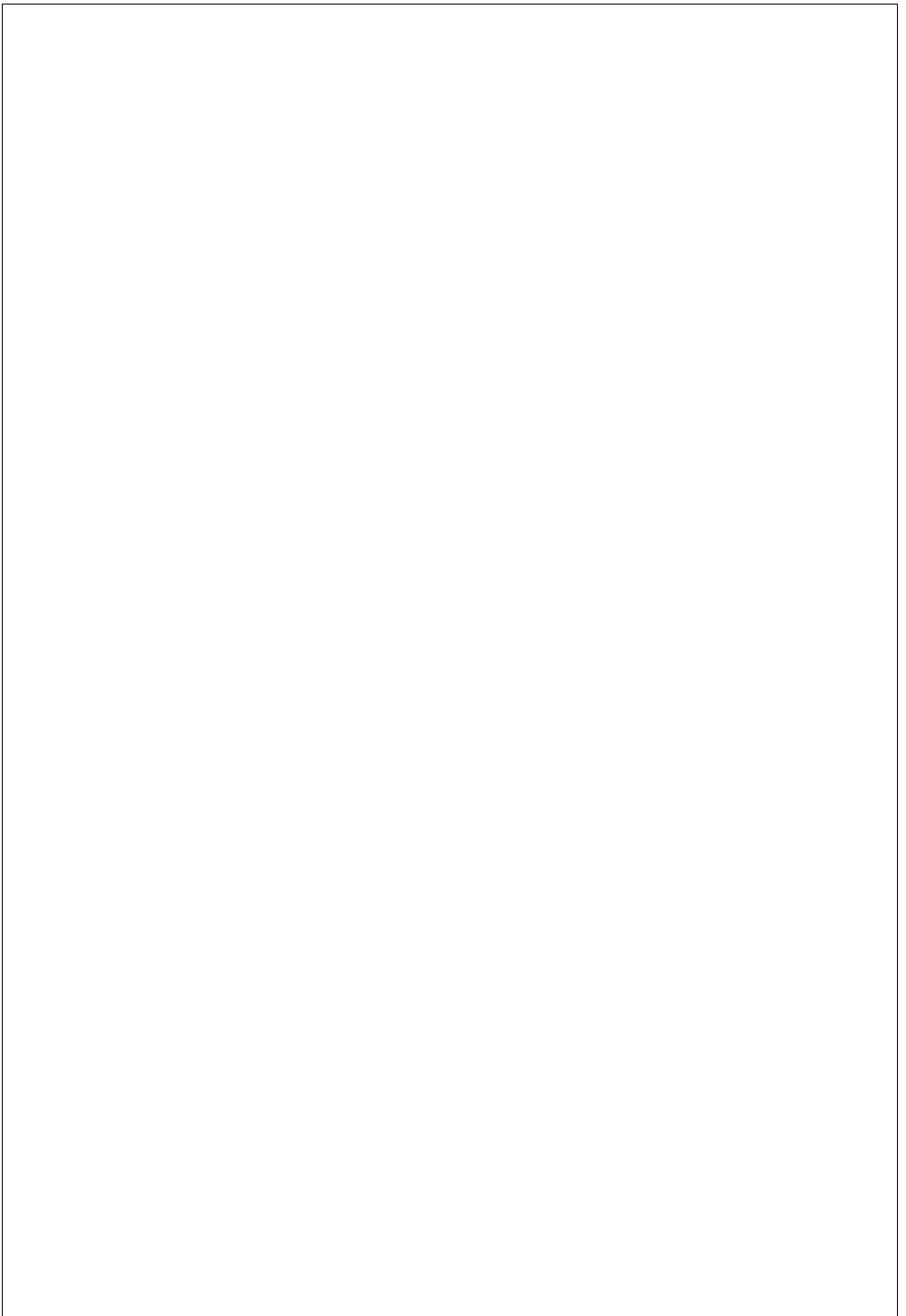




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ABOUT

PLVS VLTRA endeavours to publish exceptional papers that promote research and scholarship in all areas of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria.

SUBMISSIONS

A maximum page length of 12 double-spaced pages is preferred by the Journal. Papers may be written in English, Italian, or Spanish. After each issue's submission deadline, *PLVS VLTRA* will submit the papers to an intensive selection process, including peer-review by undergraduates from both the Hispanic and Italian sections of the Department.

Each paper will be reviewed by at least two undergraduate students. Reviewers will address areas including clarity of writing, presentation, relevance to the theme of Hispanic and Italian Studies, originality, interdisciplinary relevance, and contribution to research in the area.

Should a number of submissions pertain to the same topic, the selection process may become competitive. Papers not selected for publication may be considered for a following issue, as declared by the Editorial Team, and with permission from the author at the time of submission.

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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CARYS PINCHES

NOTES ON *PLVS VLTRA*

Today, Spain's coat of arms is flanked by two pillars, which together read *PLVS VLTRA*. This motto can be directly traced to the year 1516. Holy Roman Emperor Charles V adopted the Pillars of Hercules and the inscription "*PLVS VLTRA*" as his emblem. However, this motto was not created by Charles himself—it was his Italian physician, Luigi Marliano, who suggested it. *PLVS VLTRA*, meaning "further beyond" in Latin, was in reference to the Age of Exploration—going beyond the Pillars of Hercules, expanding the empire both westward and eastward. Going "further beyond" is very much an objective of the Hispanic and Italian Studies undergraduate journal, *PLVS VLTRA*. Both Italian and Hispanic cultures were immensely shaped by those who dared to go beyond the known world. In a similar sense, students here are encouraged to explore new things, make discoveries, and advance the state of knowledge.

Kyle McCreanor

ACTING CHAIR'S MESSAGE

The Latin motto *plus ultra*, “further beyond,” was suggested by the Milanese humanist, Luigi Marliano, to Charles V of Castile as his personal motto, who adopted it as an expression of the dynamism of the Spanish Monarchy’s imperial project as its presence expanded beyond Europe to the Americas; much later, the left-leaning Second Spanish Republic chose the phrase as its official slogan.

Plus ultra aptly captures the aspirations of the editorial team and authors of this research journal founded by the students of the Department of Hispanic and Italian Studies at the University of Victoria. These young scholars have indeed gone beyond what is expected of them at an institution of higher education. The members of the Department are delighted to see this first issue of *PLVS VLTRA*, an annual, peer-reviewed showcase of extraordinary research papers. We are proud of this demonstration of the linguistic skills and cultural competencies of our students. The journal accepts papers written in English, Italian, or Spanish on any topic pertaining to the Hispanic and Italian world and from a wide range of interpretative perspectives, including literature, history, politics, and cultural studies. The contributions to this first number testify to this breadth of vision, comprising studies of Italian emigration to Argentina, gender in contemporary Cuban fiction, sexual orientation and tourism in Cuba, and the depiction of nature in the short stories of the Uruguayan writer Horacio Quiroga.

Many persons have been involved in this project. The editor-in-chief, Meghan Casey, is to be commended for her vision, as are the team of editors for their commitment to this endeavor. I would also like to acknowledge the guidance and support that Professors Silvia Colás Cardona, Matthew Koch, and Dan Russek provided to their students whose research appear in these pages.

Beatriz de Alba-Koch, Acting Chair

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S INTRODUCTION

I am very proud to introduce the first issue of *PLVS VLTRA*. Compiling this journal was an exceptional challenge and was only made possible by the camaraderie of my fellow classmates. It has been a great privilege to work alongside so many talented individuals.

Our thanks for this journal go first and foremost to Dr. Beatriz de Alba-Koch and Dr. Lloyd Howard, our faculty advisors. Thank you for your guidance, expertise, and patience throughout all stages of production. We truly appreciate everything you have done for us. Thank you also to Inba Kehoe for the many meetings and continued assistance, without which this journal would not have been a success. To all submitting authors, thank you for entrusting us with your year's best work. We strive to represent you in the best possible way. Our Editorial Team should also be recognized at this time for their exceptional dedication to peer reviewing and editing. Thank you for all of your hard work and for seeing the journal through to the end. I would also like to thank the Hispanic and Italian Studies Course Union and the University of Victoria Students' Society for their support and funding.

I was amazed by the support *PLVS VLTRA* received from the Department, not only from students ready to participate but also from professors offering their assistance and expertise. Despite our chaos, Donna Fleming, the Department's secretary, never skipped a beat and was a great help in always ensuring we had posters to hang and a place to congregate.

I hope that *PLVS VLTRA* continues to receive the same overwhelming support for its future issues. This journal is an excellent opportunity for students from the department to celebrate our diverse research interests. Together we have created something wonderful which future students will continue to build on.

Meghan Casey, Editor-in-Chief

The Great Migration: An Overview of Italian Immigration to Argentina (1882 to 1911)

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Argentina is well known for its large Italian immigrant population. This paper provides a survey of the first significant movement of Italian immigrants to Argentina, from 1882 to 1911. A push-and-pull mechanism of emigration is outlined, providing an analysis of causes for emigration from Italy and factors that encouraged immigration in Argentina. Poor economic conditions in Italy and the newly implemented conscription encouraged Italians to look elsewhere for better opportunities. Argentina was an attractive destination, having recently seen massive infrastructural development and economic improvement. The cost of travel had become significantly more affordable, which proved useful to both permanent or long-term settlers and seasonal workers. Contrary to the notion of the resolutely assimilationist Argentine state, this paper argues that the success of assimilationist policies was limited with regard to Italian immigrants. Due to a very concentrated and well-established community, Italians were able to resist assimilation into the twentieth century. Because of their conspicuous presence, Italian influence played a crucial role in the evolution of the Argentine nation.

Keywords: Argentina; Italian diaspora; Italo-Argentine; age of mass migration; Argentine immigration

Why are Argentine phone books filled with Italian names? How did Buenos Aires become a world-class opera destination? How did Argentine Spanish come to incorporate so many Italianisms? To address questions such as these one must go back to the late nineteenth century. A salient feature of the Atlantic world in this era was massive European immigration to the Americas. Among the largest of these movements was the Italian immigration to Argentina, which in 1882 reached unprecedented levels. The number of Italian arrivals plummeted abruptly with the temporary proscription of immigration to Argentina under Italian Prime Minister Giovanni Giolitti in 1911 (Snowden 342). Shortly thereafter, the First World War began, and facism came to power in Italy. Both developments drastically reduced immigration. This paper will explore why Argentina received such a large influx of Italians, the experiences of the early Italo-Argentines, and how these Italian immigrants helped to shape the Argentine nation.

There were several key factors promoting migration, both in Italy and Argentina. A European economic depression began in 1873 and lasted for approximately two decades (Toniolo 73); this slump included an agricultural crisis in Italy in the 1880s, largely due to overseas competition. The effects were felt most intensely in Northern Italy because one of its principal crops, soft wheat, was significantly devalued (Toniolo 74). Furthermore, the return to the gold standard in 1883, which “happened to take place during the worst years of the agrarian crisis, [...] led to a worsening of the balance of payments, to the immobilization of the banks, and to the reappearance of imbalances in public finance” (Zamagni 179).

Agriculture had already been problematic in preceding years in the three areas of highest emigration in Northern Italy: Piedmont, Lombardy, and Veneto. Much of the northern farmland was owned by wealthy absentee

proprietors who exploited workers or left lots vacant while farmers struggled on tiny plots (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 111-117). Rural Northern Italians faced further economic problems due to the spread of the power loom, which produced cloth much more rapidly and inexpensively than their traditional hand looms (Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, “El estado y la inmigración”).

Southern Italy also struggled with absentee proprietors, but to an even greater degree. The Sicilian land reform of 1862 was ultimately a failure because the land largely ended up back in the hands of the wealthy landlords (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 65-68). Furthermore, the south also faced the problem of meagre plots “too small to support a family in food or work” (Dickinson 159). Italian economist Vera Zamagni describes the living conditions of the time as “intolerable” and states Italy “was in no position to guarantee [people] an acceptable standard of living” (203). Clearly, emigration had become a viable alternative due to the economic depression, decreasing costs of transatlantic travel, and the promise of a better life in South America (Rock 152).

However, these were not the only causes of Italian emigration, and agricultural problems were certainly not new to Italy. While the numbers remain uncertain, some evidence suggests that clandestine emigration from Italy skyrocketed in 1875 (Foerster, “A Statistical Survey of Italian Emigration” 69). This increase can mostly be attributed to Italians fleeing to avoid conscription, which also came into effect in 1875 (Bodio 6). That the Argentine Constitution of 1853 exempted recent immigrants from military service almost certainly factored into the decisions of many to leave Italy in favour of Argentina (Sanchez-Alonso 381). Exemption from military service in Argentina also attracted many Spanish immigrants hoping to avoid the mandatory five-year term in the Spanish army (Baily and Míguez 140-141; Solberg 152).

Establishment of railway and telegraph infrastructure in Argentina during the 1860s and 1870s united the nation and paved the way for a period of unprecedented economic and demographic growth (Scobie 47-49). In the 1880s, Argentina experienced a huge economic upturn and rapid development (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 255; Scobie 46-47). This development created so many jobs that “the supply of labour lagged behind the demand” (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 255). Previously, Argentina had been discouraging to immigrants due to a weak demand for labour, the length and cost of the transatlantic voyage, and political instability (Sanchez-Alonso 380-381). The conclusion of the Paraguayan War in 1870 brought further safety to the border provinces in the north, and in the south the “Conquista del Desierto” [Conquest of the Desert] had largely removed the threat of conflict with Indigenous peoples from the southern Pampas region and Patagonia by 1879 (Baily and Míguez 139). The conclusion of the Conquista del Desierto also allowed for the rapid expansion of the nascent railway network into southern Argentina (Nugent 115). The process of national stabilization and economic development may not have been possible without the establishment of Argentina as a liberal democratic republic in 1861; the foundation of a strong central government allowed for the economic development of the underdeveloped Argentine interior (Snowden 268).

Argentina, then, had become a very attractive destination for immigrants by the early 1880s. It was among the largest nations on the planet yet still very sparsely populated, with only 1.4 inhabitants per square kilometre (*Segundo censo de la República Argentina* Vol. 2 CLXXXII). In this transformational period, the agenda of the famous Argentine political theorist Juan Bautista Alberdi, “gobernar es poblar” [to govern is to populate] was realized (Sanhueza 5). The Argentine government actively promoted European

immigration and developed policies that proved to be highly effective in attracting immigrants.

The Argentine stance on immigration has been deemed “a textbook case of liberal immigration policy after the 1853 constitution and the legislation passed in 1876” (Sanchez-Alonso 396). This legislation, the *Ley de Inmigración y Colonización* [Immigration and Colonization Law], outlined many policies that actively promoted and facilitated immigration. It mandated services for immigrants, such as free food, accommodation, and job placement (*Ley de Inmigración y Colonización*). While the *de jure* regulation was that such services were only free for the first five days of an immigrant’s arrival, this was frequently extended (Dirección Nacional de Migraciones, “El Hotel de los Inmigrantes”). The legislation also granted the executive power to hire immigration agents to travel abroad and spread “a continuous propaganda in favour of immigration to Argentina,” which highlights the fervent desire to populate Argentina with European immigrants (*Ley de Inmigración y Colonización*).

Increased safety, economic development, and beneficial governmental policies were not the only reasons for Italians to immigrate to Argentina. The Argentine growing season coincided with the Italian off season, so Italian agriculturists, nicknamed *golondrinas* [swallows], would cycle between Argentina and Italy for a year-round harvest (Rosselli 169; Sanchez-Alonso 386). The agrarian migration between Northern Italy and the Pampas likely constituted a significant portion of returning Italian immigrants, the numbers of which indicate that approximately half of Italians who arrived in countries of the Plata region returned to Italy at least once (Foerster, “A Statistical Survey of Italian Emigration” 98-99).

A comparison of the immigration experiences of Italians in Argentina to Italians who chose to immigrate to Brazil or the United States (which rank with Argentina among

the top three destinations for Italian immigration) highlights certain characteristics which made Argentina an often more desirable destination (Preziosi 370). In Brazil, Italians had little problem with cultural integration: Italians were well received in Brazil and regarded highly (Nugent 126). However, the working conditions on the infamous *fazendas* [plantations] were brutal, and Brazilian wages were inferior to those in Argentina (Sanchez-Alonso 401). Rumours of uncompensated work, financial crises, and abuse of immigrant labourers reached Italy (Foerster, "A Statistical Survey of Italian Emigration" 89). "Literary sources, official propaganda in Italy, and even immigrants' letters stressed the miserable conditions of work on the Brazilian plantations," which led to the Prinetti Decree of 1902, banning all subsidized transport from Italy to Brazil (Sanchez-Alonso 402; Nugent 125). By the early twentieth century, when "diffusion of information about opportunities in the destination countries was widespread," negative reports about Brazil strongly discouraged immigration (Sanchez-Alonso 407).

The experience of Italian immigrants differed in the United States where they were often stigmatized as ethnic minorities and occasionally targets of violence (Vellon 45-57). The United States, dominated by Protestants of British origin, posed more integrational challenges than did the more familiar world of Latinate, Catholic Argentina. Also, Italians were proportionately over tenfold more numerous in Argentina than they were in the United States; this numerical advantage allowed Italians to be more influential in Argentina and facilitated the development of an Italian community (Baily and Míguez 78-79). The extent of the Italian presence in Argentina is suggested by Table 1

Table 1. Annual Italian Immigration to Argentina

Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total	Year	Total
1882	29,587	1890	39,122	1898	39,135	1906	127,348
1883	37,043	1891	15,511 ^a	1899	53,295	1907	73,360 ^c
1884	31,983	1892	14,730 ^b	1900	52,143	1908	73,360 ^c
1885	63,501	1893	14,730 ^b	1901	58,314	1909	73,360 ^c
1886	43,328	1894	14,730 ^b	1902	32,314	1910	104,718
1887	67,139	1895	41,029	1903	42,358	1911	32,719 ^d
1888	75,029	1896	75,204	1904	67,598	-----	-----
1889	88,647	1897	44,678	1905	88,950	-----	-----

^aIn 1891 the Baring Crisis caused a slump in emigration to Argentina which lasted for approximately four years (Sanchez-Alonso 383).

^bStatistically derived average from annual immigration of 1886-1895 (Hatton and Williamson, 101).

^cStatistically derived average from Devoto, Hatton and Williamson (101).

^dEmigration from Italy to Argentina was suspended from July 1911 to August 1912.

Additional Sources: Foerster, "A Statistical Survey of Italian Emigration" 88.

Bodio 8.

Snowden 343.

Devoto, *Historia de los italianos en la Argentina* 317.

To put this data into perspective, the Argentine census of 1895 records 492,638 Italians living in Argentina (*Segundo censo de la Republica Argentina* Vol. 2 CXV). All other European

immigrants in Argentina combined totalled 440,131 (*Segundo censo de la República Argentina* Vol. 2 CLXIII). The total population of Argentina in 1895 was 3,954,911, so Italians constituted a sizable fraction of the total, at over twelve percent (*Segundo censo de la República Argentina* Vol. 2 CXV). It is also worth noting that any child born in Argentina was counted as Argentine, not as the nationality of the parents, causing government statistics to seriously undercount the population of Italian origin (Foerster, "The Italian Factor in the Race Stock of Argentina" 349-360). The most credible estimate posits that Italian immigrants and their children accounted for at least twenty-eight percent of the total Argentine population by 1910 (Foerster, "The Italian Factor in the Race Stock of Argentina" 360).

The first large group of Italians to emigrate to Argentina were the Genoese, who arrived earlier in the nineteenth century and dominated the coastal navigation of Argentina (Devoto 52; Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 253). They were extremely successful, having monopolized the navigation of the Plata and established settlements along the coast (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 253). Decades later, the Italians still dominated the waters of Argentina (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 254). In the harbour districts, the Genoese dialect had become the lingua franca, rather than Spanish (Rosselli 158). Among the Italians, the Genoese were described as "the characteristic and chief urban immigrants" (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 267).

However, from 1879 to 1890, Ligurians only constituted eight percent of the total Italian immigration to Argentina, whereas twenty-two percent were Piedmontese (Devoto, *Historia de los italianos en la Argentina* 106). The Piedmontese were the most numerous of Italian agriculturists, followed by the Lombards and Venetians (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 266). From 1876 to 1896, seventy-three

percent of Italian immigrants in Argentina declared themselves agriculturists (Devoto, *Programs and Politics of the First Italian Elite of Buenos Aires: 1952-80* 52). During this period, seventy percent of all immigrant agriculturists in Argentina were Italian, totalling at least 564,000 (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 230). In the outlying provinces, agriculturists could save half of their earnings, which would often be used to invest in land or sent back to Italy to encourage friends and family to emigrate to Argentina (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 248). However, the rapid success enjoyed by agriculturists in the early years was short-lived. “[T]he quick fortunes of 1888 were no longer possible” because the acquisition of good farmland had become increasingly difficult for new immigrants (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 250-251). Many Italians became share-croppers, which was sufficient to make a living, but not to become prosperous (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 250). The early decades of this period were considered a golden age of agriculture from which there would be no return (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 251).

Italians who chose work other than agriculture were diverse and plentiful. The urban immigrants were largely concentrated in Buenos Aires, where from 1882 to 1911 they constituted more than twenty percent of the city’s population (Baily and Míguez 78). Many Italians filled the relatively socio-economically humble roles of shoemakers, vintners, butchers, and fruit vendors, but some rose to prominent positions in banking, the military, and politics (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 258-263; Baily, “The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914” 286). In the early 1880s, Italians in Buenos Aires outnumbered all non-Italians combined in the areas of food service, wine production, bread-making, milk delivery,

butchery, masonry, carpentry, shoemaking, hairdressing, smithing, and midwifery, among others (Parisi 339-342).

The urbanite middle-class Italians had a significant presence in the labour movement in the early twentieth century. In this period, about half of the executive committee of the *Federación Obrera Regional Argentina* [Argentine Regional Workers' Federation] and the *Unión General del Trabajo* [General Labour Union] was Italian (Baily, "The Italians and the Development of Organized Labor in Argentina, Brazil, and the United States 1880-1914" 123-134). Northern Italians held positions of leadership within labour movements more often than Southern Italians because they were "better educated than their Southern counterparts and had more experience with labor unions, political groups, and other organizations" (Baily, "The Italians and the Development of Organized Labor in Argentina, Brazil, and the United States 1880-1914" 125-128). Italians were able to play such a large role in the Argentine labour movement due to the high population of literate Northern Italians and the high concentration of Italians in Argentina. Conversely, in the United States there were more illiterate Southern Italians and proportionately fewer Italians than in Argentina, which meant less of an Italian presence in the American labour movement (Baily, "The Italians and the Development of Organized Labor in Argentina, Brazil, and the United States 1880-1914" 128-130).

Overall, Italian immigrants did very well in Argentina. The 1895 census reports that proportionately more Italians owned property than not only French and Spanish immigrants, but also native-born Argentines (*Segundo censo de la República Argentina* Vol. 2 CXV). One explanation for this is because they were among the first arrivals in the era of mass migration, much like other "early immigrants to Argentina, such as the Welsh or the Basques, [who] were also extremely successful in becoming landowners" (Sanchez-Alonso 410).

Immigrants, particularly the Spanish, who arrived in the early twentieth century entered a country much more populated and urbanized than it had been in the 1880s (Sanchez-Alonso 410). However, because the Italian community in Argentina was so well-established, and because of the many Italian mutual-aid societies, even in the early twentieth century newly arrived Italian immigrants still had an advantage over other immigrants (Baily, "The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914" 293).

The Italian presence was also evident in their numerous cultural contributions: they established Buenos Aires as one of the greatest opera cities of the world (Rosselli 158); they added Italian food to the national cuisine (Cara-Walker 38); and furthermore, the *Camera Italiana di Commercio* [Italian Chamber of Commerce] claimed that "[t]he greater part of the public structures of the Capital and of the other cities of the republic, almost all the churches, the schools, numerous hospitals were designed and erected by Italian architects, or by their sons trained in Italy" (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 258). One prominent landmark of Italian immigrant design is the *Monumento a Giuseppe Garibaldi* [Monument to Giuseppe Garibaldi], a giant equestrian sculpture featuring Garibaldi, inaugurated in 1904 in the neighbourhood of Palermo in Buenos Aires, in the appropriately named Plaza Italia (Plaza Italia, palermonline.com.ar). Such prominent displays of *italianità* demonstrate the cultural power of the Italian immigrants; their culture thrived in Argentina and was not limited to the private sphere.

Gino Germani, an Italian sociologist who immigrated to Argentina, described the relationship between Italian and Argentine cultures as "not [an] assimilation of immigrants into a preexistent Argentine culture, or of the latter into the more numerous foreign currents; it was, quite the opposite, an unquestionable synchresis" (Cara-Walker 62). The interaction

between Italian and Argentine cultures was shaped by compromise on both sides. The Argentine state was unable to fully assimilate the Italian immigrants and the Italians were unable to perpetuate the same culture they had brought with them into future generations. “[T]he nearly exclusive position of the Italians among immigrants enabled them to make a more forceful demand for influence in and compromise with the host culture,” Samuel Baily argues (“Italians and the Development of Organized Labor in Argentina, Brazil, and the United States 1880-1914” 131). Italian immigrants read Italian newspapers, lived in Italian communities, used Italian banks, celebrated Italian festivals, and were active members of the numerous Italian mutual-aid societies (Baily, “The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914” 292; Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 271-272). In the early years of this period, during the 1880s, most Italians refused to take Argentine citizenship; those who did were denounced in the local Italian press (Rosselli 158).

Italian agriculturists had a tendency to settle in colonies with others from their native region, creating colonies of one predominant regional background (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 247). In these communities, non-Italians would often have to learn the predominant local dialect, as these dialects frequently proved to be more useful than Spanish (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 247). The agriculturists retained the ceremonies, songs, and dances from home (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 247).

However, the culture of the first-generation Italian immigrants was not unsusceptible to change. Some of their children were able to attend Italian schools in Argentina, but by the early twentieth century these schools had run into serious financial trouble (Baily, “The Role of Two Newspapers in the Assimilation of Italians in Buenos Aires and São Paulo,

1893-1913” 335-336). The Argentine National Council of Education denounced foreign schools as disrespectful to Argentina—a point of contention between the local Italian press and the Argentine government for many years (Baily, “The Role of Two Newspapers in the Assimilation of Italians in Buenos Aires and São Paulo, 1893-1913” 335-336). In 1896 the Argentine senate considered forbidding schools to conduct lessons in any foreign language (Delaney 639). The children of Italian immigrants in Argentina were automatically granted Argentine citizenship and the majority attended public school, expediting the process of integration (Foerster, “The Italian Factor in the Race Stock of Argentina” 347; Hilton 68).

While the first generation had identified with the Italian demonym more than the Argentine, the future generations embraced both, not as Italian immigrants, but as Italo-Argentines. The children of the first generation immigrants learned Spanish in public school and were shamed for speaking Italian—the label *hijo de gringo* [son of a gringo] was not uncommon (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 274). Moreover, due to the diverse range of dialects among the italoophone community, Spanish served as a convenient lingua franca. One contemporary observation noted that the Italo-Argentine children were more patriotic to Argentina than anyone else (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 274). Public school education was highly nationalistic, making clear the objective of assimilation and cultivation of domestic patriotism amidst the massive foreign influx (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 272). Beginning in 1908, schoolchildren were required to make a daily pledge of allegiance, and foreign textbooks were systematically removed from the curriculum, replaced with those by Argentine authors (Delaney 640-641).

Nevertheless, the new generation of Italo-Argentines retained certain distinct characteristics. One particularly

disapproving perspective from the 1930s reports that the Italo-Argentine children “use Spanish rather unskillfully and exert a deformative influence on the spoken language, especially in Buenos Aires” (Hilton 68). While this account falls outside of the chronological scope of this paper, it suggests the survival of a distinct Italian identity even decades later. The Argentine upper class of the early twentieth century feared that Argentine Spanish was threatened by foreign linguistic influence (Delaney 639-640). Their concerns weren’t altogether unfounded, because modern Argentine (particularly Buenos Aires) Spanish shows evidence of extensive Italian influence. It is marked by a distinctly Italian intonation, particularly that of the Neapolitan dialect, and is rich in Italian lexical borrowings (Colantoni and Gurlekian 107-119).

Despite the ‘threat’ to Argentine culture constituted by Italians, Italian immigrants in Argentina faced less discrimination than their compatriots in the United States or Brazil. “The xenophobic ‘Argentinist’ nationalism which began to appear in the 1880s, and became important in the 1900s, was less directed against Italians than one might expect,” one reason being that by the early twentieth century, the Italo-Argentine children were becoming well-integrated and adopting the Spanish language (Rosselli 158). In the early period of immigration, Italians were “bearers of civilization” in the eyes of the Argentine elite, in contrast to the ‘inferior’ gauchos of the interior (Baily, “The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914” 298-299). Concern about Italian influence remained mostly passive throughout this era, and no notable action was taken against immigration until the 1930s (Baily, “The Adjustment of Italian Immigrants in Buenos Aires and New York, 1870-1914” 298-299).

The supposed threat posed by Italians encompassed the realm of politics. Some observers considered the

numerous Italian-led labour unions a hotbed of violent anarchists (Rosselli 157). After an assassination attempt on Argentine President Julio Roca (Sanhueza 8), the *Ley de Residencia* [Residence Law] was enacted, allowing the government to deport any foreigner suspected of anarchism or of posing a threat to national security (Baily, "The Role of Two Newspapers in the Assimilation of Italians in Buenos Aires and São Paulo, 1893-1913" 332). The contemporary Italian press in Argentina vehemently denounced this measure as unconstitutional and unfair (Baily, "The Role of Two Newspapers in the Assimilation of Italians in Buenos Aires and São Paulo, 1893-1913" 332). The *Ley de Residencia* has been described as a deliberate measure "to break the power of the growing labour movement" (Baily, "The Role of Two Newspapers in the Assimilation of Italians in Buenos Aires and São Paulo, 1893-1913" 332) and an "instrument of class oppression" by retrospective analyses (Foerster, *The Italian Emigration of Our Times* 277).

Literature and performance arts associated with the Italian immigration of this period were abundant, especially in Buenos Aires. A new genre of literature and theatre was born, which centred on mocking Italians for their purported ignorance and language. This genre, called *cocoliche*, was a medium of expression for xenophobic and elitist attitudes towards the Italian population (Cara-Walker 54). These works featured derogatory slurs, stereotypes, and mockery of Italians and the Cocoliche or Lunfardo dialect (Cara-Walker 44). Italians were represented as ridiculous foreigners desperately attempting to fit into Argentine society whilst unsuccessfully masking a thick Italian accent behind broken and poorly formulated Spanish. The *cocoliche* genre also marked an important shift in Argentine cultural identity; the once deprecated *gaucho* became more central to Argentine national identity in the face of growing discontent with immigration (Cara-Walker 40-41). The *cocoliche* phenomenon

did not last long however, because by the early twentieth century, many Italians had successfully integrated and already adopted creole customs (Cara-Walker 47).

Argentina attracted a large number of Italian immigrants from 1882 to 1911 through a variety of push and pull factors. In Italy, most emigrated due to poor economic conditions, and many young men left to avoid the newly implemented conscription. Argentina was a major destination for Italians because of its generous treatment of European immigrants, excellent economic conditions, familiar values, and the conveniently timed agricultural season which allowed temporary workers to cycle between Italy and Argentina to maximize earnings. The first Italian immigrants of this period arrived in a land of opportunity in agricultural and urban contexts. Later arrivals did not fare as well, but their lives in Argentina were generally better than the ones they had left behind in Italy.

The Italian immigrants preserved many facets of the cultural identities with which they arrived, but could not prevent their children from becoming proud Argentines. Nonetheless, Italian culture did not disappear. During this formative period for Argentine cultural identity, Italians formed a core part of the *mélange* of foreign and local cultures that blended to become the Argentine national identity. Urban architecture throughout Argentina, the national cuisine featuring a range of Italian foods, the distinctive Lunfardo dialect, and the widespread diffusion of Italian surnames all demonstrate the conspicuous legacy of Italian immigrants.

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MSM¹ Sex Play-Labour in Havana: Mutual Exchanges between *Pingueros*, Fidel, and Foreigners

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The Special Period in Cuba and the subsequent boom of the tourism industry opened a window of opportunity for young black men to engage in the sex trade, or more reflective of how these men view their work, sex play-labour. Many Canadians and Europeans travel to the island and share their goods, ideas, and money with MSM sex play-labourers in exchange for companionship, romance, and sex. During sex, generally white foreign men are penetrated anally by black MSM sex play-labourers who have identified themselves as “*pingueros*” (cocks to be ridden). The typology, “*pinguero*,” has been collectively constructed by the men involved with MSM sex play-labour to better eroticize and exoticize themselves in the eyes of the foreigner. As a result of this identity being understood locally as belonging to penetrators of foreign male bodies, Cuban officials have turned a blind eye to the MSM sex trade. This can be understood to be the result of *machista* beliefs by which the penetration of a male body results in the feminization and inherent relative inferiority to the dominator and by extension, becomes an ideologically charged act of anti-

¹ Although the medical idea to label people by their sex acts, such as MSM (man who has sex with men) or WSW (woman who has sex with women), has only been recently conceived, in this paper, when appropriate, any anachronisms involved with using these acronyms will be dismissed as a means of bypassing a myriad of complex identities that these men have had by focusing just on the sex acts. It should be noted that in using these acronyms, the possible variances in gender identities of the subjects at focus will unfortunately be disarticulated.

imperialism. The efficacy of paternalistic anti-imperial intentions may be multiplied by the fact that HIV is contracted eight times more easily by the receiver in anal sex than the penetrator, thus increasing the spread of the epidemic off the island. Negotiating with notions of blackness and white superiority, black MSM(O) sex play-labourers have ingeniously repositioned themselves in a Havana that is being reshaped by a tourism industry that penetrates the island with late capitalism and re-globalization.

Keywords: anti-imperialism; Cuba; identity formation; machismo; male homosex; masculinity; sex roles; sex trade; tourism

1 Introduction

MSM sex play-labour, or *pinguerismo*, in Cuba provides revelations on reversed colonizations as well as on processes that formulate and employ new erotic subjectivities.² Sex, play, and labour are all parts of what *pingueros* [men involved with *pinguerismo*] do *en la calle* (on the street). According to Jafari Allen, many *pingueros* believe that their work is mutually enjoyable for worker and client, is non-exploitative, and is based on interpersonal exchanges that allow them to have greater leisure (Allen, "Male Sex Labor in Cuba" 189). Allen argues that *pingueros* partake in a "'serious game' played by individuals with disparate relationships to social and political power and economic capital" (Allen, "Male Sex Labor in Cuba," 185). By engaging with *pinguerismo* as active agents within these disparate relationships, *pingueros* find freedom from material

² For Allen, the "erotic subjectivity" is a form of self-understanding that includes and extends beyond associations with sexual identity. For Audre Lorde, the erotic is "a lens through which we scrutinize all aspects of our existence, forcing us to evaluate those aspects honestly in terms of their relative meaning within our lives" (qtd. in Allen, *¡Venceremos?* 3).

scarcity and insularism in a late capitalist era of re-globalization³.

Focusing on black MSM(O)⁴ sex play-labourers in particular outlines a clear divide between the men from Havana “*luchando en la calle*” (Allen, *¡Venceremos?* 120) [struggling to make ends meet] (Fosado, Note 1, 75) and white foreigners, usually from Europe and Canada (Fosado 61), who are in Havana in hopes of fulfilling their erotic and exotic desires in exchange for their cash, ideas, and goods. This paper will argue that the differences of notions of race and the access to materials and freedom to travel that are inscribed on the lives of Cuban men are strategically negotiated with by *pingueros* to characterize *pinguismo* as being both based on disparity and mutual exchanges.

Through the process of disidentifying from labels such as “effeminate,” and identifying by labels such as “cock to be ridden” (Allen, *¡Venceremos?* 175), black MSM(O) sex play-labourers have created a collective identity that gains privilege from both Fidel, the figure⁵, and from foreigners.

³ Allen defines “re-globalization” as “the vexed homecoming of global capital to the shores of Cuba [...] [which] has brought material hardship and existential quandary to the country ... [The] (re)globalization of the island creates spaces [e.g. *en la calle*,] in which individuals may respond more centrally to market drives and globally-valued styles, attitudes, and personal and organized politics” (Allen, *¡Venceremos?* 4-5).

⁴ Unless an individual clearly indicates that they have sex with exclusively one gender, the letter “O” signifying “Other” will be indicated within parentheses to include the possibility that the individual has sex with any other gender, or anyone or anything else, preventing the exclusion and/or misrepresentation of other sex acts. This point is pertinent in Cuba where sexual versatility, independent of gender or sexual identity, among MSM(O) sex play-labourers is a prevalent phenomenon. For example, Alejandro, a *pinguero* with whom Jafari Allen is well acquainted, says that a sex play-labourer can be “heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual...macho or [effeminate].” See Allen, *¡Venceremos?* 176. It should be noted that it is likely that many sex play-labourers in Cuba construct and deconstruct their sexual identities to fulfill the desires of foreigners. It should also be noted that in this paper, “MSM” will be used to both signify the singular, “man who has sex with men,” and the plural, “men who have sex with men.”

⁵ Fidel, the figure, is used to represent the Cuban state apparatus that works to represent by extension Fidel the man. See Derrick G. Hodge and Nehanda

This paper will expand on the theories of various scholars to show that what may appear to be merely exchanges of sex between foreigners and MSM(O) sex play-labourers are actually exchanges charged with economic, ideological, psychological, and corporeal significations.

To begin with, it must be understood that MSM sex play-labour is a widespread phenomenon in Havana. A considerable number of the millions of tourists who travel to Cuba every year have sex with Cubans (Lumsden 171). There are a number of explanations for this phenomenon; compared to other hot spots for sex tourism such as Morocco and Eastern Europe, Cuba offers less violence and fewer sexually transmitted diseases (Fosado 72). It is also very inexpensive, with the average going rate for an encounter with a MSM sex play-labourer being the equivalent of twenty American dollars (Fosado 74). To better understand how present-day Havana has come to be a hub for sex tourism, a brief history of how the industry was negotiated with by those in power will be explored

2 Historical Background: The Three Phases of the Sex Trade

The term “sex trade” is used to describe the industry as it is negotiated by the Cuban state which, to the extent explored in this paper, focuses on money coming into the island and the ideological and public health concerns raised by the bodies of its citizens being used to attract foreign dollars with sex. Therefore, in this context in which only sex and the action of trading, along with the components being traded, are taken into consideration, “sex trade” is the most appropriate typology. When “sex trade” is not applied, “sex play-labour”

Abiodun, “Colonization of the Cuban Body: The Growth of Male Sex Work in Havana,” *NACLA Report on The Americas* 34. 5 (March 2001): 22.

is used to represent a different context in which the concentration is shifted to an individual-focused perspective in which three shifting and overlapping axioms of the phenomenon (sex, play, and labour) are employed in the process of subjectivity formation (Allen, "Male Sex Labor in Cuba" 189).

Furthermore, the sex trade in Havana has seen three phases from the second half of the twentieth century to the present day. Directly prior to the Cuban Revolution in 1959, under the regime of President Fulgencio Batista, thousands of MSM(O) across the country were encouraged by the black market to migrate to Havana for greater sexual freedom and job opportunities. Severe repression of same-sex desire in the United States at this time drove many Americans, among other foreigners, to find their sexual vices in Havana and the mafia provided the space for these interactions to take place (Arguelles and Rich 687-689).

At this time, Cuban bourgeois "*entendidos*," short for "*entendido pero no dicho*," ["understood [to be interested in men] but not declared as so"] (Lumsden 30) partook in the purchase of sex and companionship found in the Havana underground (Arguelles and Rich 684). This industry was very lucrative and attracted many would-be MSW to seek men for sex and perhaps even a night out (Arguelles and Rich 684).

Shortly after the "Triumph of the Revolution," the Federation of Cuban Women was founded, and subsequently the institution launched educational programs to help eliminate the sex trade from the island and integrate female sex workers into new vocations more appropriate for a society of socialist virtues (Hodge 24). In *The History of Sexuality: Volume 1: An Introduction*, Michel Foucault describes this type of paternalistic control as "repression operated as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, an affirmation of nonexistence, and, by implication, an admission

that there was nothing to say about such things, nothing to see, and nothing to know" (4). Fidel Castro sought to silence any remnants of what he believed to be bourgeois decadence. The effective near-elimination of the female sex trade in Cuba de-eroticized the island, and as a result the prevalence of the male sex trade was also drastically reduced.

As a result of the fall of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s and the consequential "Special Period" which left Cuba desperate for hard currency⁶, Fidel Castro announced a reopening of the tourism industry in Cuba.⁷ This transition resulted in a rampant return of the very profitable sex trade. Currently, part-time sex play-labourers, illegal pimping, and clandestine brothels are on the rise, changing the face of tourism in Cuba.⁸ Foucault describes the process of an economically driven reorganization of the sex trade which, by extension, can be applied to the Cuban context; Fidel (the figure): "let [sex workers] take their infernal mischief elsewhere: [into the purview of the blind eye] where they could be reintegrated, if not in the circuits of production, at least in those of profit" (4). Although economic gain was clearly the incentive for implicitly reintroducing the sex trade into Cuba, further inquiry into the MSM sex trade reveals

⁶ Hard currency in this context is foreign cash that is less prone to depreciations and fluctuations in value, to which Cuba was prone during this time of economic instability.

⁷ Sujatha Fernandes succinctly describes this series of events in the first note of her article, "Island Paradise, Revolutionary Utopia or Hustler's Haven? Consumerism and Socialism in Contemporary Cuban Rap," *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, 12. (2003): "The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 prompted the Cuban state to declare a 'special period in times of peace' in September 1990, in an attempt to rebuild the Cuban economy through policies promoting self-sufficiency in food, the reintroduction of wide-scale rationing, the earning of hard currency through tourism, and the re-entry of Cuba into a global economy."

⁸See Lumsden, *Machos, Maricones, and Gays*, 171. Although this statement was written by Lumsden in the 1990s, it still remains true today. For more contemporary discussions on sex play-labour in Havana see chapter six of Jafari S. Allen, *Venceremos?: The Erotics of Black Self-Making in Cuba*, Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2011.

how the ways in which the industry was renegotiated extend beyond the realm of economics and into the realm of ideology.

3 The Unofficial Acceptance of MSM Sex Play-Labour

Derrick G. Hodge argues that as the result of Cuban male sex play-labourers being understood to generally play the active role in sex with foreigners, they are now being reinterpreted by the Cuban law enforcement as less ideologically subversive than the sex trade that involves Cuban females and foreign males or even Cuban males and foreign females (23). Foreign males, generally between the ages of thirty-five and sixty (Allen, "Male Sex Labor in Cuba" 190), may be more interested in being penetrated in sex with *pingueros* than they are in penetrating because of the biological reality of erectile inferiority to the *pinguero* population which is largely composed of younger men, whose ages range from sixteen to thirty (Fosado 61). Apart from this biological explanation for foreign men generally choosing to be penetrated by Cuban men, Hodge suggests that the phenomenon is symptomatic of complex social significations put in place by Cuba's paternalistic state apparatus (23).

Hodge posits that the act of a male sex play-labourer penetrating the body of a foreign male can be understood to be an act of conquering the foreign body and, by extension, an act of anti-imperialism (23). It is as a result of this ideological concordance, Hodge argues, that MSM sex trade in Havana has received unofficial acceptance from police in recent years (Hodge 23). To better understand why Hodge would restrict his argument to the MSM sex trade and not include the MSW sex trade, we must look at the complex significations of anal sex in Cuba.

4 The Meanings of Anal Sex

What constitutes the efficacy of MSM sex play-labour as performed ideology may be contextualized with an exploration of popularly understood meanings attached to anal sex. The unofficial acceptance of the MSM sex trade in Havana is not mentioned to have been granted to any other type of sex trade, most notably the sex trade involving Cuban male sex play-labourers who penetrate female foreigners. This could be the result of male homosex being popularly perceived as concomitant with anal penetration more so than heterosex. Furthermore, anal sex can be understood to be a process which polarizes dominator and submitter, penetrator and penetrated. Most importantly, though, in a very machismo-influenced culture, they are perceived to be masculinized and effeminized.

How this dichotomy has been incorporated into Cuban popular culture is exemplified in the title of one of the most important movies in Cuban cinema, *Fresa y Chocolate* (1994), which is based on the concept of MSM(O) having to choose between being the penetrator, *chocolate*, or the penetrated, *fresa* [strawberry]. In the opening scene of the movie, MSM(O) use a creative means to find sexual partners, which involves eating ice cream outside of the famous Coppelia ice cream parlour. By choosing strawberry or chocolate ice cream, they communicate their sexual preferences to one another and form pairs of pre-established “tops” and “bottoms.”⁹

Within this paradigm, the process of a man being effeminized is solely dependent on foregoing the use of his penis and instead being anally penetrated by another man’s

⁹ “Tops” and “bottoms” are terms used in the present-day vernacular in the English-speaking world. In the context of male homosex, the former refers to a man who prefers to be the penetrator while the latter refers to a man who prefers to be penetrated. Adherence to one of these categories is not necessarily stable.

penis (only after having eaten strawberry ice cream). Females, however, absent of biological penises, are conceptually unqualifiable to become effeminized within *machista* ideology. Essentially, police treatment of a particular type of sex trade is determined by its position within a *machista* political ideology that understands the penetration of a body to signify superior masculinity. Therefore, it is understandable how it is exclusively the MSM sex trade, which counteracts what is understood to be both political and corporeal penetration and domination over Cuban male bodies, that has unofficial acceptance from police.

5 A Brief Analysis of HIV

Beyond the realms of economics and ideology, it is also fruitful to explore the possibility of an epidemic reality that characterizes *pinguismo* in Havana. MSM(O) sex play-labourers play a unique and perhaps strategic role in the transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). MSM(O) is the demographic with the highest prevalence of HIV in Cuba, making up eighty-four per cent of the island's infected population (Allen, *¡Venceremos?*, 146). HIV is more likely to be transmitted through anal sex than vaginal sex and the anal receiver is nearly eight times more likely to contract HIV than the penetrator. Therefore, given that Cuban MSM(O) sex play-labourers are generally penetrators, Cuban males are up to eight times (United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2012) more likely to pass on HIV to foreigners than they are to contract HIV from foreigners.¹⁰

¹⁰ In the CDC report, "HIV Transmission Risk" (<http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/law/pdf/HIVtransmission.pdf>), the chart, "Estimated Per-Act Probability of Acquiring HIV from an Infected Source, by Exposure Act" indicates that the risk of contracting HIV per 10,000 exposures through receptive anal intercourse is 50, and through insertive anal

Tourist/Cuban intercourse, along with a shortage of condoms in Cuba and *machista*-driven attitudes against the use of condoms, by which the woman or perhaps by extension the “effeminized” receptor in male/male sex feels a lack of power over the penetrating man (Allen, *¡Venceremos?*, 179), have all contributed to the spread of HIV in Cuba (Lumsden 171). From this brief investigation of HIV, we can see that the difference between “topping” and “bottoming” signifies much more than mere sexual preferences and can open up many insightful paths of inquiry.

6 Linguistic Re-identifications

Male sex play-labourers in Cuba have undertaken the task of linguistically redefining themselves since their proliferation into Cuban society in the 1990s. Many of these men have avoided calling themselves “*jineteros*” because they do not wish to be so closely associated with the connotation of hustling foreigners for their money.¹¹ Given that “*jinetero/a*” literally means “jockey,” the word is intended to signify the riding of men for their money (Allen, *¡Venceremos?* 174). Male

intercourse, 6.5. Therefore, it is approximately 7.7 times more likely to contract HIV through receptive anal intercourse than through insertive anal intercourse. It should be noted that the deduction that HIV is nearly eight times more likely to be transmitted from Cuban MSM(O) to foreign male than from foreign male to Cuban MSM(O) is simplistic due to variability in sexual behaviour.

¹¹ Although many Cubans may see “*jinetero(a)s*” simply as prostitutes or as people who hustle foreigners for their money, it is imperative to understand that this typology is one with many meanings depending on whose voice is being articulated by whom. As an example of the stark contrast from the simple pejorative connotations that *jineterismo* has for *pingueros*, see how Cuban scholar Armando Vallant presents us with two formulae to describe the processual formation of a *jinetero/a*: “individualism + intuition + tourist need/reality = knowledge by praxis = specialization” (Vallant 250); “need + motive + interest + reality + possibility x freedom = *jinetera* (active)” (Vallant 251). For more alternative representations of *jineterismo*, see Fernandes, “Island Paradise”; and Fosado, “Gay Sex Tourism.”

sex play-labourers also do not define themselves as prostitutes, perhaps because the words “*prostituta*” or “*puto*” are understood to signify a money-for-sex-specific type of exchange. Currently, Cuban men who offer companionship, friendship, and sex to foreigners call themselves “*pingueros*” (Allen, “Male Sex Labor in Cuba” 183).

Although the word “*pinguero*,” constituted of the root “*pinga*,” meaning “cock,” and the suffix “-ero,” meaning “one who works with,” implies that the profession is sex-specific, “cock working” is only part of the profession of these Cuban men (Allen, *¡Venceremos?*, 175). Given that *pingueros* are known to disassociate themselves from *jinetero(a)s*, it is likely that the word “*pinguero*” was conceived with the intention of juxtaposing the *jinetero/a*. That is to say, rather than being understood as “riders of cocks,” they want to be labelled as “cocks to be ridden.”

The way these men have created a new word to define themselves gives evidence to suggest the word “*pinguero*” has discursive intentions for a redefining of the collective self. In addition to an etymological analysis of the word, insight can be taken from how the word is used in modern day Havana: an identifier which differentiates male sex play-labourers from *jinetero(a)s* and *prostitutas* and consequently creates a third category into which they can be categorized by foreigners. Linguistically claiming the role of penetrator reifies a nationalist sensibility of maintaining autonomy over their own persons, manifest in physical bodies—perhaps the one entirely Cuban resource Cuba has left (Hodge 22). This reversal of explicit identities has worked to both construct unambiguous erotic significations intended for foreigners and to conceptually masculinize MSM(O) minds and bodies.

7 **The Effects of Tourism**

Although tourism has made and continues to make a huge impact on Cuban MSM(O) sex play-labourers' comportment and ideas of citizenry, it is important to inquire into how these men and their preconfigured and perhaps independently developed sense of self affects the type of work they do. Aaron Kamugisha explains that tourists occupy a space granted to them by "extra-territorial citizenship" (qtd. in Sheller 211, 2012), in which they use their monetary power to recreate their ideals and in the process alienate the locals. That being said, rather than being alienated by foreigners seeking sex play-labour, the Cubans who offer these services have the option to also step into this "extra-territorial citizenship." By inserting themselves into this profession after having created a simple identifier to work under, *pingueros* can better acquire access to foreign ideas, capital, and goods, and in doing so may also find upward class mobility and travelling opportunities (Sheller 211).

8 **The Uses of Blackness**

By analyzing MSM sex play-labour in Cuba from a race-focused perspective, often between white foreigners and black locals, we may simplify the exchanges as being largely based on the eroticization and the exoticization of preconceived notions of blackness. Mimi Sheller explains how racial categories are constructed first through a process of recognizing and signifying phenotypical differences (Sheller 211).

Explaining how racial constructs have been maintained, Frederik Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler argue, "the otherness of colonized persons was neither inherent nor stable; his or her difference had to be defined and maintained

... [To this extent,] a grammar of difference was continuously and vigilantly crafted as people in colonies refashioned and contested European claims to superiority” (qtd. in Sheller 211). Such claims of superiority have been reaffirmed in the eyes of whites through the process of travelling to Cuba and choosing with whom they would like to play, have sex, or build a relationship. On the other hand, in line with the refashioning and contestation of European superiority described by Cooper and Stoler, black men can rightfully claim that they use their ingenuity to construct and act out an image that attracts white men to their island whose bodies they can dominate and from whom they can acquire what they wish. In the same process that racism first developed, the subaltern agency of these black men, “which can be understood [to manifest] the bodily basis for citizenship from below” (Sheller 233), has worked to create new Cuban citizenships that extend beyond racism, classism, and the paternalistic grasp of Fidel, the figure, towards claiming global citizenships. The process of constructing a black identity by which they can be eroticized and exoticized by white foreigners has acted to bring in money, goods, and ideas from Canada and Europe, and in turn bring Cubans to the world that is off the island.

9 The Commodification of Bodies

Although the ingenious uses of collective and individual agency by *pingueros* has proven to gain them many freedoms, there are also serious disadvantages to being an MSM sex play-labourer. The frequent commodification of a *pinguero* is a process that can carry a psychological burden for the man who acts as a *pinguero*. For some, the process of having their body commodified extends to also having a deeper part of their entire persona commodified. For example, one

MSMW(O) (man who has sex with men and women, and possibly others) *pinguero* reports that he is upset that his heart cannot separate his sexuality from commodity exchange and therefore cannot have sex with a woman for reasons other than currency exchange. Consequently, he chooses to instead have sex with *jineteras* (Hodge 22). This process of developing one's sex-capital based identity reaffirms what a rich widow confides to her gay confidant in the Cuban telenovela *El Año Que Viene*: "There are three stages in one's life. In the first, others pay to be with you. In the second, you pay to be with them. In the third, you pay to get whomever you *really* want!" (qtd. in Lumsden 141, emphasis in original). This evolutionary process of sex-capital worth is very revealing of a deep-seeded reality in contemporary *pinguero* mentality.

Although the psychological ramifications of commodifying one's self can be far-reaching and long-standing, the process of conceptually converting persons into money is never really absolute or complete. For example, *pingueros* rarely ask for specific prices for sex acts. They believe that it would be horrible to do so and they do not want to be labeled by a cash value, which some *pingueros* believe to be attributable to *jineteras* (Lumsden 141). In addition to foreign capital, many *pingueros* are interested in acquiring little luxuries that reflect a global sensibility of wealth/worth, such as a new pair of Nikes (Hodge 21). This desire for Western goods can be understood to reflect the late capitalist mode of subject formation: "I consume, therefore I am" (Allen, "Male Sex Labor in Cuba" 191).

10 Conclusion

The erotic subjectivities of Cuban MSM(O) sex play-labourers have been created via the usage of two modes of agency; first, improvised day-to-day actions that make the life of the actor

easier, such as choosing ideal clients and maintaining the presumed masculine comportment; and secondly, organized, intentional resistance, such as the collective linguistic re-identification of self as *pingueros* (Allen, *¡Venceremos?* 84). MSM sex play-labour in Cuba is intended to provide mutually fair and beneficial experiences for both Cuban and foreign clients, yet it also facilitates the simultaneous processes of colonizations and reversed colonizations.

When considering the statements made by Barack Obama and Raúl Castro on December 17, 2014 on the plans to normalize relations between the United States and Cuba, it can only be wondered what effects the gradual and inevitably enormous influx of American tourists will have on what seems to currently be a *pinguismo* characterized by mutual exchanges. *Pinguismo* has been characterized by its relationship with Canada and Europe and has been effectively crafted in the past two decades in response to the “Special Period.” In this new era of Cuban history, it is likely that the way in which new waves of American tourists will shape MSM sex play-labour in Havana and the lives of the Cubans involved will, as it has in the past, be largely determined by both locals and foreigners. While foreigners making exchanges with *pingueros* in Havana inscribe notions of white superiority over black Cuban society with their money, ideas, and goods, black Cubans use their ingenuity to emerge as global cosmopolitan citizens ready *pa’ la calle* [for the street] and also *pa’ el yankee* [for the yankee].

Pingueros, through the use of their erotic subjectivities, have linguistically redefined themselves as masculine penetrators to better position themselves in a re-globalized Havana. By turning a blind eye to the phenomenon, *Fidel*, the figure has gained in a politico-ideological sense while also bringing in much-needed hard currency to the island. In the struggle to maintain a nationalist sensibility, the bodies and

minds of *pingueros* have and will continue to attract foreigners who shape a modernizing Cuba.

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Man vs. Nature: The Role of *la selva* in Horacio Quiroga's "*La insolación*" and "*La miel silvestre*"

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Uruguayan writer Horacio Quiroga is notorious for his literary explorations of man's relationship with the savage frontier, or *la selva*. His works embed a level of mystery and horror that are consistent with the gothic Latin American tradition. In the regionalist genre, Nature is a national symbol, a reflection of the socioeconomic situation, and a willful being of a story's narrative. For Quiroga, his portrayal of *la selva* has also been widely interpreted as a backdrop against which man's ability to survive and dominate Nature is questioned. Quiroga's *selva* alternatively manifests as an intermediary form that facilitates the actions of man. This paper explores the various representations of *la selva* in "*La insolación*" and "*La miel silvestre*," stories from his collection, *Cuentos de amor de locura y de muerte*.

Keywords: Horacio Quiroga; la selva; protagonist; Argentina; regionalism

Common critique of *la selva*, or Nature, in Horacio Quiroga's stories suggests its existence as a co-protagonist to man, but that its role as the setting is more pervasive to the overall comprehension of the story's underlying themes. Charles Param suggests Quiroga "used Nature only as a backdrop for the action and the action as a means for the revelation or development of the character of his personages" (438). In other words, Nature, as a stage, is the catalyst for the true protagonist, man, to reach his

potential, or not. Coester contrastingly posits that “Nature is really the chief personage in his stories. It is she who defeats man and beast in their struggle for survival” (qtd. in Param 428). This paper will argue for the representation of *la selva* as both man’s adversary as the stage on which Quiroga’s characters interact, and as a character manifested as an intermediary form in Quiroga’s “*La insolación*” and “*La miel silvestre*.”

“*La insolación*,” told by a third-person omniscient narrator, follows the placid farm lives of five talking fox terriers, who witness Death (a character in the story) following their owner, Míster Jones. It is not until the second day of the story that Míster Jones ventures out into the sweltering afternoon and succumbs to heatstroke and dies. This story, set in rural Argentina, encapsulates the heat and barbarity of the cultivated countryside. What is of particular interest in this story is the duality of Nature’s representation.

In the *Encyclopedia of Latin American and Caribbean Literature*, Balderston describes Quiroga as “fascinated by human beings living at extremes” (“Horacio Quiroga”). Though “*La insolación*” fixates on the struggle of man against Nature, a more elusive struggle also exists between the different factions that exist within Nature. Because the fox terriers are humanized in this story by various means, they represent an intermediary level of Nature—one that exists between the realm of humans and Nature. This is exemplified in the way the fox terriers are able to interact in Quiroga’s literary world.

The fox terriers are physical agents of the story, imposing their actions on and interacting with the setting. Their physical form allows them movement and to experience the senses. These characters exist as observers of Nature in the story. This observational role is exemplified in the discourse between Milk and Old in the first scene: “*La mañana es fresca*” (Quiroga, “*La insolación*” 67) [“It’s a cool morning”] (Quiroga,

"Sunstroke" 13) and "*En aquel árbol hay dos halcones*" (Quiroga, "*La insolación*" 67) ["There are two falcons in that tree"] (Quiroga, "Sunstroke" 13). They are not merely onlookers but rather players with sensory abilities. The fox terriers are affected by the heat of the sun and languid movements of the day, much the same as the *peones*, [labourers], and Míster Jones. This is supported when the fox terriers "*cambiaban a cada rato de planta, en procura de más fresca sombra*" (Quiroga, "*La insolación*" 69) ["changed position, choosing a new plant in an attempt to find cooler shade"] (Quiroga, "Sunstroke" 15). They are not fully exempt from the Nature that Mendoza believes to be ever enduring and combative, as they are not entirely a component of it (19). In contrast, when examining Nature's counterpart representation as the story's backdrop, a similar form of interaction does not exist.

Moreover, as physical agents of the story, the fox terriers notice and pass judgements about their surroundings and other characters. This humanization of sorts allows them to experience human emotions such as naïveté and loyalty.

The element of naïveté is best represented through the character of Old, *el cachorro*, [the puppy], with his introduction to Death:

Old se puso de pie meneando el rabo. Los otros levantáronse también, pero erizados.

—¡Es el patrón!— exclamó el cachorro, sorprendido de la actitud de aquéllos.

—No, no es él— replicó Dick.

Los cuatro perros estaban juntos gruñendo sordamente, sin apartar los ojos de míster Jones, que continuaba inmóvil, mirándolos. El cachorro, incrédulo, fue a avanzar, pero Prince le mostró los dientes:

—No es él, es la Muerte. (Quiroga, "La insolación" 69)

[Old stood up, wagging his tail. The others, too, rose to their feet, but with hair bristling.

"It's the *patrón*," exclaimed the puppy, surprised by the attitude of the others.

"No, that's not him," Dick replied.

The four dogs stood together growling quietly, their eyes glued on the figure of Míster Jones, who stood motionless, staring at them. The pup, incredulous, was about to move toward him, but Prince snarled at him, showing him his teeth.

"That isn't him, that's Death."] (Quiroga, "Sunstroke" 16)

Old's naïveté is reinforced throughout the story through various channels: his ignorance about Death, his physical form as a *cachorro* [puppy], and even the irony of his name. Loyalty, on the other hand, is expressed for Míster Jones by all of the dogs. Following the excerpt above, the dogs reflect on what their lives would be like if Míster Jones were taken by Death. Living on the ranch, the dogs are well fed and well cared for by their owner. The night after they see Death they howl at the sky, overcome with misery. This emotional strife the dogs feel over their owner's certain death exceeds the typical boundaries placed on *la selva* in many of Quiroga's other stories, thus encouraging an intermediary representation in "*La insolación*."

In his master's thesis, Carlos Mendoza discusses the presence of Nature and Death in Quiroga's stories. He suggests the existence of certain limits of death that can only be transcended by the power of Nature. The dogs' ability to see Death is dependent on their remaining as intermediaries between Nature and human. They have the power to surpass this supposed limit and observe it as a distinct entity because they belong somewhat to both the human realm and that of

Nature. The following quote from Mendoza's thesis describes this eloquently:

The very moment that man knows he is a transitory being on the eternal theatre of nature he is wounded by his fleetingness, by the limit that death imposes upon him in time and space: he will make his way to the great beyond, whereas nature, the stage upon which life is acted out, will remain in this world. (7)

In other words, the fact that the fox terriers are aware of and will ultimately succumb to death humanizes them. However, because they are part of Nature, from which death is derived, they are still privy to its inherent limitations; thus they can see Death.

Ultimately, it is the dogs' primitiveness that keeps them from becoming completely humanized, from becoming so far removed from Nature itself that they would no longer be able to see Death in its omniscient state. Though they are able to communicate with each other, their discourse is basic and unable to transcend the animal world. Their dialogue is repetitive, as their lexicon lacks the ability to produce complex speech. The characteristics, as typified above, of both primal nature and civilization, coalesce in this story to produce the intermediary level of Nature with which the fox terriers identify. The effectiveness of these intermediary actors relies heavily on Nature as a backdrop.

In "*La insolación*," Nature is also the stage on which the story unfolds. The setting in this story is characteristic of gothic fiction, as an air of desolation and abandonment is encouraged by the countryside. Quiroga describes *la selva* with stark, contrasting colours: "*la monótona llanura del Chaco, con sus alternativas de campo y monte, monte y campo sin más color que el crema del pasto y el negro del monte*" (Quiroga, "*La insolación*" 67) ["the monotonous plains of the Chaco with its

alternating bush and fields, fields and bush—its only colour the cream of the dried grass and the black of the bush”] (Quiroga, “Sunstroke” 13). The prevalent weight of the sun is also often referenced: “*La siesta pesaba, agobiada de luz y silencio. Todo el contorno estaba brumoso por las quemazones*” (Quiroga, “*La insolación*” 71) [“The siesta lay heavy upon them, weighted with sunlight and silence; everything was hazy in the burning rays”] (Quiroga, “Sunstroke” 18). While the fox terriers are given human actions and dialogue in “*La insolación*,” the setting remains somewhat removed and always observed or experienced. “*La miel silvestre*” exemplifies this same separation of Nature.

“*La miel silvestre*” follows the journey of Benincasa, “*un muchacho pacífico, gordinflón y de cara rosada*” (Quiroga, “*La miel silvestre*” 116) [a peaceful, chubby, and rosy-cheeked boy], as he struggles to survive the Argentinian jungle. Armed with a machete, Benincasa blazes his trail through the deep and dense underbrush of the subtropics. He eventually comes across a large store of honey, greedily consumes it, and becomes paralyzed. A storm of ants finds him and devours him, once again restoring *la selva* to its raw and natural state.

What distinguishes the role of Nature in “*La miel silvestre*” from “*La insolación*” is the unity with which it is presented. As explored earlier, Nature manifests in “*La insolación*” as both a personified intermediary form (fox terriers) and as an inanimate setting. In “*La miel silvestre*,” Benincasa naively understands *la selva* to be something he can tame. When he delves into the underbelly of the jungle, he becomes engrossed by the whole experience of it. Everything that exists is one imposing *selva*. His inability to grasp its magnitude ultimately leads to his demise.

Arguably, one might suggest that the presence of one united Nature provides a stronger backdrop for a test against man. When confronted with “real dangers, tangible wild animals that share the stage of nature with humans and can

decide human fate," the only outcomes are survival or death (Mendoza 20). This moment is paramount in Quiroga's stories. Delgado and Brignole write, "[E]n la historia de Quiroga," there exists "el punto transcendental en que un hombre se encuentra con su alma" (qtd. in Fraser-Molina 1-2) [In Quiroga's stories, there exists a transcendental point in which a man meets his soul].

In the case of "*La miel silvestre*," man meets his soul, but as a product of his own doing, he is defeated by Nature, thus revealing his true character. Benincasa represents man's ignorance of and arrogance towards *la selva*. Even with his first introduction to *la selva* he is unprepared, "evitándole arañazos[,] y sucios contactos" (Quiroga, "*La miel silvestre*" 117) [avoids getting scratched and dirty]. He romanticizes the idea of man as cultivator of Nature and thus does not prepare himself, mentally nor physically, for the trials of the subtropics. Mendoza critiques this passivity of man towards Nature: "*Si el hombre espera, pasivamente de ella el éxtasis o la sensación abismal del ser, sería devorado por las víboras, o por las hormigas gigantes[,] o por los bichos y los insectos*" (19) [If man waited passively for the ecstasy or abyssmal sense of being from [Nature], he would be eaten by snakes, giant ants, or by bugs and insects]. This passivity is present in the case of Benincasa's violent death.

What distinguishes man's struggle against Nature in "*La miel silvestre*" from "*La insolación*" is primarily the exclusion of the third party that allows the reader the duality of perspectives. Benincasa does not have the accompaniment of the fox terriers, which Param argues is no true advantage for man anyway (434). According to Param, Quiroga refuses "to permit his characters to form strong friendships, and by refusing to allow them to help one another in adversity, [he] forces them to depend on themselves and their own resources" (434). And so, in both stories, man is given "the opportunity to prove [his] own worth" (Param 434).

However, it is only in "*La miel silvestre*" that man is truly alone, and as such, he bears the weight of his own decisions.

In both "*La miel silvestre*" and "*La insolación*," death is what neutralizes Nature once again. In referencing Mendoza's thesis once more, we can apply his limits of death in Nature to "*La miel silvestre*," though here it is realized differently. In "*La insolación*," the dogs' ability to witness Death following their owner foreshadows the inevitability of his death. However, in "*La miel silvestre*," there is no certainty of Benincasa's death that can be confirmed by other characters, especially not by an intermediary form like the fox terriers. As Mendoza suggests, "[N]ature reveals a mystery, exposing a tiny crack through which what is past the limit can be seen" (2). This revelation could arguably be the meeting of one with one's soul, as mentioned by Fraser-Molina, and the exposure of one's true character (1-2). Ultimately, the role of Quiroga's *selva* leads the reader to witness man's certain ignorance about his ability to tame Nature.

What unifies the different manifestations of Nature, then, is the ubiquitous theme of colonialism that is present in many of Quiroga's stories, especially those studied in this paper. French refers to the focal point of colonialism as land itself. She states, "[A]t some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others" (French 82). French continues, "[L]and itself becomes the basis of the action and interaction of his characters in the colonial jungle" (82). The protagonists in both "*La insolación*" and "*La miel silvestre*" contend with the jungle in the hopes of domesticizing it. Mister Jones in "*La insolación*" tests his own ability to withstand the extremes of Nature by venturing out during the hottest time of day. Benincasa, on the other hand, forces his way through the jungle, thinking himself invincible to the mighty forces of Nature. As we have seen, the traditional representation of Nature as a catalyst for man's

battling with himself is present in both stories, though it manifests differently. It follows, then, that an aim of Quiroga's stories, in representing Nature as both a separate unity from man and one humanized by man, is to better highlight the universal frailties of mankind.

This brings to the forefront of discussion Param's belief that "Quiroga, in striving for perfection in his art, attempted to create a character that would justify his own creative effort" (Param 431). In other words, it can be surmised that Quiroga's different realizations of Nature in his stories inexplicably contribute to his many overall themes, but they also reflect his own creative endeavours. As a man of many intricacies, it is to be expected that Quiroga would endow his most renowned character, Nature, with a multitude of literary expressions and manifestations.

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Una reflexión sobre la mirada masculina frente a las nuevas versiones de lo femenino en *Hasta Cierta Punto* de Tomás Gutiérrez Alea

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Después de la Revolución Cubana, hubo muchos intentos en el sector del cine de representar una variedad de problemas sociales que la nueva sociedad post-revolucionaria tenía que enfrentar. Uno de los temas más representados fue la cuestión de la mujer y su papel después de la Revolución. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea es un director cubano que quería retomar la imagen tradicional de la mujer como heroína conflictiva o señora alterada para dar una nueva representación de la “mujer nueva.” Sin embargo, la película todavía presenta un punto de vista masculino y representa lo femenino como un objeto pasivo y dominado por el hombre, la presencia del doble rasero. Lo que falta en esa película es la presencia de una mujer fuerte que pueda romper esas normas socio-culturales.

Keywords: Cine; Cuba; cine cubano; Revolución Cubana; feminismo; mujer nueva

1 Introducción

La representación de la mujer en el arte ha cambiado mucho con el paso del tiempo. Desde que las mujeres comenzaron a luchar por su liberación política, económica y social, específicamente durante la Revolución, su representación en el cine cubano trajo modificaciones de los estereotipos tradicionales de “la prostituta, la heroína

romántica, la conflictiva burguesa, la indígena y la madre sacrificada" (Pastor, "La Presencia Marginal De La Mujer En El Cine Cubano: Retrato De Teresa" 433). En vez de continuar esa representación sexista de la mujer, muchos directores trataron de ofrecer una nueva visión de ellas (Pastor, "Redefining Gender in Revolutionary Cuban Cinema" n. pag.).

La película *Hasta cierto punto*, dirigida por Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, es un buen ejemplo de una obra de este periodo que introduce los problemas experimentados por las mujeres cubanas durante la Revolución. Sin embargo, Alea lo hizo desde un punto de vista masculino dentro de una cultura tradicional que todavía no había cambiado, y sin ofrecer ninguna solución (Baron n. pag.). En primera instancia, este ensayo dará una introducción del cine cubano post-revolucionario. En segunda instancia se analizará la forma en que Alea representa a la sociedad cubana y cómo ésta se apega a normas tradicionales de género. Para terminar, reflexionará sobre cómo Lina es una representación precisa de la mujer cubana durante este periodo.

2 El cine cubano-post-revolucionario

Después del triunfo de la Revolución en 1959, el nuevo gobierno se fundó el Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC). El objetivo de esta nueva entidad cinematográfica era crear una industria nacional y promover una ideología socialista (Pastor, "Redefining Gender in Revolutionary Cuban Cinema." n. pag.). A lo largo de ese periodo, directores trataron de abordar diferentes cuestiones sociales para traer atención hacia ellas. El ICAIC esperaba que los mensajes dentro de las películas apuntaran hacia la promoción de una sociedad revolucionada con valores socialistas y por consiguiente lograr una transformación social

(Pastor, "Redefining Gender in Revolutionary Cuban Cinema" n. pag.; McGillivray 4).

Una de las cuestiones sociales más importantes después de la Revolución Cubana era el cambio en la posición y el papel de las mujeres en Cuba. Por eso, en el cine se dio énfasis especial en cómo representar los personajes femeninos, ya que se buscaba mostrar la realidad para que los espectadores pensaran más en la marginalización que experimentaban las mujeres (Pastor, "Redefining Gender in Revolutionary Cuban Cinema." n. pag.). De hecho, desde finales de los años sesenta hasta finales de los años noventa, no se rodó casi ninguna película que no demostrara los cambios que tuvieron lugar con respeto al género (McGillivray 1). Muchos directores de este periodo, como, por ejemplo, Pastor Vega, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea y Rolando Díaz, querían retomar la imagen de la mujer a la que se le ha asignado una cultura dominante masculina para introducir una mujer que lucha contra la opresión en la sociedad y se convierte en lo que se puede llamar una "mujer nueva" (Pastor, "La Presencia Marginal De La Mujer En El Cine Cubano: Retrato De Teresa"). Por consiguiente, el cine cubano trataba de reflejar la complejidad de ese conflicto entre la represión histórica de la mujer, y su representación asociada en el cine, y su nueva liberación (Pastor, "La Presencia Marginal De La Mujer En El Cine Cubano: Retrato De Teresa" 437).

Sin embargo, todavía quedaban residuos en la sociedad de una ideología conservadora que mantenía estereotipos femeninos discriminatorios (Pastor, "Redefining Gender in Revolutionary Cuban Cinema" n.pag.). Tradicionalmente, las películas mostraban un personaje femenino que no podía cambiar la discriminación de las mujeres ni resistirse a esa sociedad opresiva. Desafortunadamente, a pesar de sus mejores intentos, el cine post-revolucionario no se salió completamente de esas

normas; las películas mostraban mujeres que intentaban lograr cambios para la igualdad, pero dentro de esa sociedad que solo cambió en cierta medida (Pastor, "Redefining Gender in Revolutionary Cuban Cinema" n.pag.).

Hasta cierto punto (1983) trata de dos intelectuales blancos de clase media, llamados Óscar y Arturo, que están investigando el machismo en los muelles de La Habana para el desarrollo una película. Durante la producción de la película, Óscar conoce a una trabajadora en los muelles con quien tiene una "tormentosa relación" (Baron n. pag.). La mayoría de la película se concentra en esta historia de amor y en el debate de si Óscar dejará a su esposa por esta mujer.

3 La presencia del machismo en *Hasta Cierta Punto* (1983)

A lo largo de la película *Hasta cierto punto*, Alea trata de arrojar luz sobre el machismo en Cuba, y como él mismo dice, "plantear que el machismo no sólo se refiere a la relación hombre-mujer, sino que es algo mucho más complejo, que es una actitud ante la vida en la que intervienen otros factores" (Evora, 48). Aunque presenta un par de problemas que experimentaban las mujeres durante este tiempo a causa de la desigualdad de los géneros, el uso de los escenas documentales dentro de la película, el punto de vista masculino, y la presencia del dominante protagonista socavan su crítica del machismo. Los párrafos siguientes darán más detalle.

3.1 El uso de escenas documentales

A través de *Hasta cierto punto*, Alea incorpora fragmentos documentales que filmó antes de hacer la película para investigar el tema del machismo. Dado que son entrevistas

con personas reales, no con actores, muestran la opinión verdadera de la gente cubana sobre la persistencia del machismo en los muelles de La Habana. La presencia de estos fragmentos es muy valiosa porque inmediatamente al comienzo de la película se oye la explicación de un hombre sobre el machismo en la sociedad post-revolucionaria, y explica que, aunque su actitud ha cambiado, no ha alcanzado la igualdad del hombre y la mujer en Cuba. Dice, “A mí me han cambiado, yo he cambiado un 80 por ciento, pero no voy a llegar a cambiar hasta el 100 por ciento en este sentido [...] la igualdad del hombre y la mujer es lo correcto, pero hasta cierto punto.”

Los espectadores oyen estos comentarios a lo largo de la película, y sirven para crear un diálogo sobre este problema contemporáneo. De una manera, plantean ejemplos reales para recordar a la gente que el problema existe aún fuera de la historia de ficción en que se basa la película. A veces la gente necesita oír y mirar lo que está pasando a su alrededor desde fuera, por ejemplo como espectador de una película, para darse cuenta de los problemas sociales que hay.

Los comentarios en esos fragmentos sirven otro papel en la película también, ya que reflejan lo que pasa entre las mujeres y los hombres en la película. Los pensamientos expresados por los entrevistados afirman que las mujeres son sumisas a los hombres y describen la presencia de un doble estándar en relaciones heterosexuales. Se ve casi exactamente lo que describen los trabajadores aquí dentro de esa historia de “amor” entre Óscar y Lina, pero también en otras relaciones a lo largo de la película (Baron n. pag.). Por ejemplo, la manera en que Óscar y Arturo hablan con sus esposas no es entre iguales, y esperan de ellas que hagan todo lo que ellos quieren, como si fuesen sus sirvientes. Así que por eso no muestra ningún cambio en la ideología tradicional de la mujer doméstica.

Además, uno de los trabajadores a quien Óscar entrevista afirma que puede flirtear y silbar a las mujeres en la calle, pero que su mujer no tiene el derecho. Aunque todavía es muy desleal, por lo menos reconoce esta doble moral. Sin embargo, cuando su esposa acusa a Óscar de su aventura con Lina, y dice que si fuera ella, habría consecuencias graves, él sólo niega su acusación. De este modo, la idea expresada en uno de estos fragmentos es un espejo de la realidad de Óscar. Aporta a la discusión sobre el machismo en la sociedad cubana, y además muestra que no solo aparece entre los trabajadores en el muelle, sino también en la clase media.

3.2 *El punto de vista masculino*

Varios directores en el cine cubano post-revolucionario trataron de subvertir “la mirada masculina”; sin embargo, este punto de vista es muy evidente en la película de Alea discutida aquí (Pastor, “Redefining Gender in Revolutionary Cuban Cinema” n. pag.). A lo largo de *Hasta cierto punto*, se ve la acción desde el punto de vista de Óscar. Podemos decir que este hecho es encarnado en las escenas donde se ve a Óscar detrás de la cámara cuando está filmando a la gente en los muelles. Se sabe que Alea quería mostrar la realidad de lo que estaba pasando en Cuba durante el periodo en que la película está centrada; sin embargo, también reconoció que la película nunca es una extensión de la realidad, sino “una extensión de la realidad subjetiva (del artista y del espectador)” (Evora 105). En este caso Óscar es el artista que filma a los trabajadores de los muelles. El hecho de que los espectadores vean lo que está filmando en la película es una metáfora para cómo todo lo que ve es de su punto de vista, no solo en las escenas documentales (Baron, “La ilusión de igualdad: machismo y cine cubano de la Revolución” n. pag.).

Cuando Óscar conoció a Lina en la asamblea de trabajadores, se puede ver que es inmediatamente atraído por

ella. En esa escena tanto Óscar como el espectador la ven como un objeto de deseo, de belleza y de sexualidad (Baron, “La ilusión de igualdad: machismo y cine cubano de la Revolución” n. pag.). Digo el espectador también porque tan pronto como Óscar se fija en ella, el ángulo de la cámara cambia para ver exactamente lo que él ve.

Desde este primer encuentro, la mirada fija y erotizada siempre es de Óscar, un hombre blanco de clase media, que deshumaniza al cuerpo de Lina. Todo lo que rodea a Lina es sexualizado bajo la perspectiva de él. Por ejemplo, en una escena, después de su primer encuentro, Lina trae a Óscar a su casa. La cámara, con el punto de vista de Óscar, se enfoca en Lina que lleva un vestido rojo y que posa con el cabello suelto porque acabó de salir de la ducha. Esta imagen evoca los atributos estereotípicos de las mujeres cubanas: belleza, voluptuosidad, eroticismo (Álvarez 20). Una vez más, la mujer está convertida en el objeto de atención y deseo del hombre. Es después de este primer encuentro que ambos personajes comienzan a tener una aventura, y es cuando Óscar empieza a aprovecharse de la vulnerabilidad de Lina, ejerciendo su poder sobre ella, como este ensayo discutirá en la sección siguiente. En este sentido, la película no refleja una completa ruptura con las ideas tradicionales machistas que forman parte del pasado pre-revolucionario, ni tampoco quiebra con la deshumanización de la mujer en el cine (Baron, “La ilusión de igualdad: machismo y cine cubano de la Revolución” n. pag.). No muestra una mujer fuerte que no se deja pisotear, sino muestra una mujer que puede ser manipulada o usada por un hombre.

3.3 *La presencia del hombre dominante y la mujer pasiva*

Esta idea se relaciona con la identificación de los hombres como agentes dominantes en la película y las mujeres como agentes pasivos. Es muy común en las películas (tanto de

Hollywood como de otras partes del mundo), tener una mujer solitaria y vulnerable que es objeto no solo del protagonista masculino sino también del espectador (Baron, "La ilusión de igualdad: machismo y cine cubano de la Revolución" n. pag.).

Es posible ver esa misma relación entre Óscar y Lina en *Hasta cierto punto*. Cuando se conocen por primera vez, Óscar se vuelve loco por Lina pero ella siempre tiene un papel subordinado en la relación. Siempre es la opinión y la perspectiva de Óscar las que dominan. Después de tener una aventura con ella, Óscar dice que va a dejar su esposa para vivir con Lina, pero nunca lo hace. Lina siempre espera las decisiones de Óscar. El espectador ve las emociones de Óscar, ve su situación doméstica, y casi experimenta el conflicto que tiene, pero solo ve a Lina como un objeto de su lujuria. Aunque se sabe que Lina quiere que vivan juntos, ella no puede hacer nada para cambiar la situación. Además, como el espectador, no se sabe mucho de la vida interior y privada de Lina, aunque sí la ve la de Óscar. Por ejemplo, casi al final de la película, su ex novio la viola cuando descubre que está en una relación con Óscar. Nunca no se sabía que él existía, y cuando lo ocurre inmediatamente se siente consternado por ella porque no se puede imaginar tan indefenso ni tan vulnerable ella debe haber sentido en este momento. Sin embargo, cuando Óscar la ve antes, solo la acusa de ser "una mujer ligera de cascos." No le pregunta que pasó, ignora sus lágrimas, y se enfoca en sus mismas emociones.

La violación es el epítome de cómo un hombre puede aprovecharse de su posición dominante sobre una mujer. Se puede relacionar esa escena con la historia de explotación de las mujeres en la isla—tanto de los españoles durante la conquista como de las turistas norteamericanos que venían durante la prohibición. Como dice Álvarez, esa explotación de la mujer "no solo legitiman el sistema patriarcal, sino que representan lo femenino como sujeto-para-otros y lo masculino como símbolo de dominación" (16).

Aunque al final es Lina la que deja a Óscar, un hecho que se puede interpretar como el esfuerzo de su poder sobre él, todavía lo interpreta desde el punto de vista masculino. Se ve a Óscar, desesperado y triste, ha perdido a Lina a causa de su comportamiento como un verdadero macho—un hecho irónico ya que estaba haciendo un documental sobre ese problemática. Toda la simpatía que contiene la vista de la cámara se enfoca en Óscar. Lina todavía es un objeto, pero ya no sexualizado, sino un “tormento psicosexual” del protagonista (Baron, n. pag.). Por lo tanto, la representación de Lina no es como una mujer nueva que está liberándose de las normas tradicionales de la mujer, está representada casi exactamente como los otros papeles femeninos antes de la revolución.

4 El papel de la mujer en la sociedad cubana en *Hasta Cierta Punto* (1983)

Aunque la película no ofrece ninguna solución para anular esa marginalización de la mujer, muestra en cambio, de una manera muy precisa, el papel de la mujer en la Cuba de esa época. Con la Revolución Cubana hubo un cambio radical de la mujer. En la Cuba postrevolucionaria, muy pronto las mujeres empezaron a encontrar oportunidades que antes no existieron.

Las mujeres empezaron a ser incorporadas a muchas esferas sociales como la laboral, intelectual, manual y política (Flietes-Lear 1). Según un informe por el Programa de Desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas, casi 59% de las mujeres entre 26 y 44 años en Cuba estaban empleadas en 1981, en 1995, 40.6% de la fuerza laboral consistía de mujeres y en los años 1995-1995 las mujeres constituyen el 57.7% de las graduadas universitarias (Fleites-Lear, 2). El personaje de Lina seguramente refleja esas normas de la mujer cubana. Ella

trabaja en el muelle de día, y de noche estudia junto con otras mujeres. Aprovecha de las nuevas oportunidades para mejorar la calidad de vida de ella y de su hijo; por lo que representa parte de ese porcentaje de mujeres activas en la sociedad.

Otro cambio que produjo la Revolución fue la liberación sexual de las mujeres. Una variedad de factores contribuyeron a este hecho, incluyendo la disminución del poder de la Iglesia Católica, ya que la Constitución declaró que el Estado era ateo (Fleites-Lear 5). Aunque las iglesias no cerraron, los que se identificaron como religiosos no tenían tantas oportunidades que los que eran ateos. Las mujeres que empezaron a ir a la universidad o al colegio se dieron cuenta casi inmediatamente que en la sociedad postrevolucionaria, la inteligencia importaba más que la virginidad (Fleites-Lear 6). Este cambio también es reflejado en el personaje de Lina, quien tuvo relaciones sexuales a una edad muy joven y quedó embarazada. Antes de la Revolución esto hubiera sido muy grave; sin embargo, con los pensamientos más progresivos en la Cuba postrevolucionaria, todavía es posible mantener el contacto con su familia, tener un trabajo, tener una casa y poder cuidar a su hijo sin problemas asociados con la inmoralidad, de acuerdo a lo impuesto por la Iglesia Católica.

Aunque la liberación en esas esferas parecía muy positiva, frecuentemente, después de casarse, las mujeres tenían mucha más responsabilidad que en la sociedad pre-revolucionaria. Tenían sus trabajos, cuidaban a sus familias y trabajaban con sindicatos. Si los maridos no las apoyaban, muchos matrimonios terminaron en divorcio (McGillivray 5). De hecho, a finales del siglo XX, 40% de hogares fueron dirigidas por madres solteras y eso fue reflejado en una variedad de películas cubanas, incluyendo *Hasta cierto punto* (Fleites-Lear 19). Como McGillivray dice, "The triple burden is shown in many Cuban films, as are other manifestations of machismo which include an unwillingness on the part of men

to let their wives work; infidelity and the double standard; violence against women; discrimination in the workplace; and the objectification of women" (5). [Se muestra esa carga triple en muchas películas cubanas, tanto como otras manifestaciones de machismo que incluyen una negativa por parte de los hombres de dar permiso a sus esposas de trabajar; la infidelidad y la doble moral; la violencia contra las mujeres; discriminación en el trabajo; y la objetivación de las mujeres]. El espectador es introducido a cada uno de esas manifestaciones en la película de Alea.

5 Conclusión

La representación de la lucha de la mujer para su liberación social, económica y política fue un tema muy importante en la industria cinematográfica postrevolucionaria en Cuba. Es evidente que Tomás Gutierrez Alea intenta de presentar un personaje femenino fuerte que lucha contra el machismo y la sociedad que todavía no acepta las mujeres como iguales; sin embargo, al final, Lina continua luchando y sufriendo a cause del machismo siempre presente. Por eso, la película no ofrece ninguna solución contra el imperante machismo, pero lo deja como estaría siempre presente.

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