

Akademia Cartonera:
A Primer of Latin American Cartonera Publishers
Academic Articles, Cartonera Publications Catalog and Bibliography

Akademia Cartonera:
Un ABC de las editoriales cartoneras en América Latina
Artículos académicos, Catálogo de publicaciones cartoneras y
Bibliografía

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¡Cartoneros de todos los países, uníos!: Un recorrido no tan fantasmal de las editoriales cartoneras latinoamericanas en el tercer milenio

KSENIJA BILBIJA

Cuando en 1848 Marx y Engels publicaron su *Manifiesto Comunista*, demandando el derrumbamiento del capitalismo y la instauración de una sociedad sin clases, cuando declararon que la revolución proletaria era una necesidad histórica y parte de un proceso ineluctable, advirtieron también que tal revolución no se podía dar sin que antes recorriera el periplo total. Nunca sabremos si sospecharon que un siglo y medio más tarde, en un porvenir que debería haberles parecido lejano, una versión de ese fantasma que vislumbraron, todavía estaría deambulando por el vasto continente latinoamericano. El capitalismo ya no es el mismo que describieron Marx y Engels, ni tampoco lo es su utópico comunismo. Pero eso no significa que todavía sus duendes—esta vez productos de una alianza de clases, proletarios e intelectuales—no estén recorriendo el orbe. Esta vez, entrado el tercer milenio, en la época del Internet y la nuevas tecnologías digitales, el fantasma parece estar encarnado en los libros cartoneros; encuadrado entre las tapas del cartón reciclado; comprado en la vía pública; con su carátula arreglada y pintada con témperas guiadas por las manos de los chicos cartoneros, y con su cuerpo textual en forma, simplemente, de fotocopias grapadas y pegadas: fruto de los entusiastas del libro, de los iconoclastas e irreverentes que se muestran descontentos con las políticas hegemónicas de las editoriales multinacionales.

En su vasta mayoría, los escritores que publicaron en las primeras ediciones, revolucionarios, comprometidos y solidarios, no pertenecían a la clase obrera y proletaria. Como lo reconocía años atrás Trotsky, el proletariado raras veces tiene tiempo suficiente para crear una cultura proletaria y los cartoneros, definitivamente, no tienen tiempo para cifrar sus memorias y metaforizar sus añoranzas en las palabras escritas. Dadas las circunstancias, no sorprende que los escritores cuyas obras se publican en los libros cartoneros no sean cartoneros. Son intelectuales de renombre que ceden sus derechos de autor a las editoriales cartoneras sin ninguna remuneración y con el simple reconocimiento en las portadas de las publicaciones. En segunda instancia, son también los escritores de la vanguardia literaria, jóvenes e iconoclastas, desconocidos para la gran mayoría de lectores y demasiado riesgosos para las inversiones de las glo-

balizadas editoriales transnacionales, regidas por el mercado irónicamente llamado libre y determinado por la competencia y la ganancia. En este sentido, la cartonera es una iniciativa anti-mercado. Y, en tercera instancia, se trata de las obras desaparecidas del mercado, textos no reeditados en años, o las obras de autores latinoamericanos que no se distribuyeron en todos los países del continente.

En sus comienzos, cuando surge la primera editorial cartonera en Argentina en agosto de 2003, sus libros ni siquiera llevaban la marca de los derechos de autor. La simple frase: “Agradecemos al autor su cooperación, autorizando la publicación de este texto”, sustituía el símbolo del copyright. La filosofía editorial se basaba en la idea de que la editorial no tenía derecho a los libros sino permiso de los autores a publicar.¹ El deber de la editorial es publicar y difundir libros, y en este sentido representa un ejemplo perfecto de *copyleft*, o sea, una copia permitida y a la vez asociada con la izquierda, que sirve como una reivindicación de la libertad para los usuarios, tal como lo propone la editorial argentina.² La función del editor responsable también estuvo reemplazada con el lema del sello comunitario “Asociación de lucha contra la exclusión social”, el lema que claramente expresa el compromiso social de la editorial. El resultado de esta des-jerarquización y colectivización de las identidades involucradas en la producción de libros es la creación de múltiples fotocopias del mismo título, todas distintas por las portadas diseñadas manualmente, todas únicas, auténticas y todas con las tapas de cartón que en algún momento fue sacado de una basura ajena. Y todas luciendo el aura de unicidad que Walter Benjamin declaró perdida en el mundo de la reproducción técnica, hechas literalmente por la mano de obra. Esto nos lleva a juzgar el libro por su cubierta, aunque no sólo por ella.

El escritor argentino Rodolfo Fogwill, apoyó desde los inicios el proyecto de la editorial cartonera matriz, Eloísa Cartonera y sus obras salieron publicadas en las tiradas inaugurales. Siempre crítico de “los contratos humillantes” y otras prácticas de la industria editorial que tendía a ver el libro como cualquier otra mercancía que necesitaba competir en el mercado global, Fogwill declaró en una entrevista a la revista *La Brújula* que “[l]os editores son medrosos, miran esto [el manuscrito] y dicen no se van a vender, se va a vender cuánto. ¿Qué me importan esas cifras en el mundo de la literatura?, ¿cuánto tiró la primera edición de *La Ilíada*? No existió, loco, dos copias”.³ Es la lógica que el co-fundador de Eloísa Cartonera, Washington Cucurto, sostiene al resumir las metas

del proyecto, que en sólo cinco años inspiró la creación nada fantasmal de siete otras editoriales cartoneras en América Latina: Sarita Cartonera (Perú), Animita Cartonera (Chile), Dulcinéia Catadora (Brasil), Yiyi Jambo (Paraguay), Mandrágora Cartonera, Yerba Mala Cartonera (Bolivia) y La Cartonera (México). Según él, el objetivo es “apropiarse del libro como arma contra las injusticias del capitalismo salvaje. Conseguir que los libros den trabajo a cinco muchachos cartoneros, convertidos en montadores de libros. Trabajar sin subvenciones ni ayudas”.⁴ A estas metas se puede agregar también el deseo de forjar movimientos de colaboración, comunidades sociales y de sobrepasar las fronteras nacionales, todavía irónicamente mantenidas por las grandes editoriales multinacionales, que tienden a distribuir sus escritores sólo dentro de los ámbitos locales, creando así una ilusión del mercado nacional. Lo problemático de tal mercado literario nacional es que no está producido por la industria nacional, financiado por el capital nacional, desde adentro, sino por las multinacionales, regidas por las inversiones del mercado globalizado que basan sus listas en lo vendible y competitivo que es un libro, tratándolo así como cualquier objeto de consumo, y perdiendo de vista su valor cultural y artístico. Las editoriales multinacionales están guiadas por los éxitos financieros y por la producción de *best-sellers*, lo cual tiende a determinar de antemano la circulación de ciertos escritores y a condenarlos a los mercados “correspondientes”, que frecuentemente ni siquiera incluyen a los países vecinos que, en el caso hispanoamericano, comparten el mismo idioma. El corolario de la producción del libro para el consumo masivo es la exclusión de todo lo que no esté escrito según la receta ya probada, o sea: la promoción y fabricación de una escritura rutinaria, caracterizada por la eliminación de los riesgos asociados con la experimentación. Las grandes empresas editoriales, guiadas por el marketing y la rentabilidad económica, consolidan la producción literaria en categorías previstas, eliminando así la incertidumbre de “lo inesperado” y lo que esté fuera del canon del momento.

A pesar del palpable sarcasmo del comentario de Fogwill sobre la minúscula tirada de un clásico como *La Ilíada*, el escritor argentino apunta hacia un grave problema editorial surgido de los efectos de la globalización. Ha cambiado la relación entre el número de títulos publicados y el tamaño de la tirada: se publican más títulos pero en tiradas menores, lo que mantiene alto el precio del libro. Por ejemplo, en Colombia, en el momento en que se lanza la edición de *Playboy* con una impresionante

tirada de 100.000 ejemplares, las novelas no alcanzan generalmente un tiraje mayor de 3.000 copias. El caso de las colecciones de cuentos y de la poesía es aún más crítico y alarmante porque pocas editoriales se arriesgarían a ofrecer contratos para estos géneros. Una vez publicados, los libros no permanecen mucho tiempo en los estantes de las librerías, tratándoseles así como cualquier mercancía de moda cuyo valor dura tanto como la temporada, o sea con una clara fecha de vencimiento. Las estadísticas de CERLALC (Centro Regional para el Fomento del Libro en América Latina y el Caribe) indican que en 2006 el 94% del total de títulos registrados en Latinoamérica correspondió a primeras ediciones, el 4% tuvo una segunda edición y el 2% requirió nuevas reediciones. Con el aumento del número de títulos publicados anualmente también surge el problema del espacio: sólo las librerías grandes pueden tener la variedad de títulos nuevos (de calidad dudosa), mientras que las pequeñas, las que no son parte de las mega-cadenas editoriales, no pueden competir con los *stocks* disponibles ni crear inventarios grandes. Esto no quiere decir que los libros no vendidos inmediatamente aguarden un mejor porvenir y otros gustos lectorales. Tampoco implica un cementerio del que alguna vez pudieran ser desenterrados o excavados. Se destruyen despiadadamente en lo que Antonio Astorga ha llamado “la guillotina de papel”, sin que exista la mínima posibilidad de que un lector del porvenir los resucite con su ánimo.⁵ Las inversiones del negocio editorial parecen ser a muy corto plazo, y la meta es adquirir rápidas y crecientes ganancias.

El problema, obviamente, está en las políticas editoriales latinoamericanas, sujetas a las leyes del mercado llamado libre. Mientras que la palabra quisiera invocar la apertura hacia diferentes puntos de vista, distintas ideologías y acercamientos, hacia la libertad de elegir entre varias opciones o maneras de ver el mundo, hacia la libre circulación del pensamiento y, más que todo, hacia la libertad que nos ofrece la imaginación, muchas veces visionaria, de los escritores de ficción y poetas, el mismo adjetivo anclado al sustantivo “mercado” denota la liberalización del mercado; implica que el capital tiene la libertad de moverse sin restricciones fiscales, laborales, medioambientales o sociales y que nadie, ni siquiera los gobiernos, deberían impedir este movimiento. La globalización y la política económica neoliberal determinaron la transformación de las casas editoras en empresas editoriales regidas por los capitales multinacionales y la despiadada lógica del mercado. Una vez expulsado el libro de la casa (editorial), e introducido en el ámbito de la empresa, una vez emparejado

el editor con el ejecutivo, cambia el proceso de edición, la rotación de títulos y la distribución a nivel nacional y transnacional. A la vez, en vía de extinción está también el librero, transformándose este conocedor y aficionado de literatura, que solía leer todas las novedades antes de recomendarlas, en el mero empleado de una de las tiendas que forman la cadena de mega-librerías, capaz sólo de averiguar en la computadora si el título está o no en los estantes. Es como si la cultura no tuviera lugar dentro del espacio del libre mercado, como si no fuera un capital intraducible al valor monetario.

José Luis de Diego, autor del estudio *Editores y políticas editoriales en Argentina (1880-2000)*, escribe enfáticamente que en Argentina ya casi no hay editoriales independientes: “Con la compra de Emecé en 2000, el grupo español Planeta controla el 20% del mercado; ya es propietario de las ediciones de Seix-Barral, Ariel, Espasa-Calpe y otras. El segundo lugar en las ventas lo ocupa Sudamericana, pero ya ha dejado de ser la empresa familiar de los López Llausás; en 1998 fue adquirida por Random House Mondadori, que controla Lumen, Grijalbo y Plaza y Janés. El tercer grupo que alcanza una fuerte presencia en los años 90 es Prisa-Santillana (Alfaguara, Aguilar y Taurus). En 1991, el grupo colombiano Norma compró la editorial Tesis, y tres años después, Kapelusz (Botto, 2006, 212-213). Estos conglomerados que desembarcan en los 90 controlan cerca del 75% del Mercado”.⁶ Argentina, el mayor productor de libros en Latinoamérica, con 27.1% de todos los títulos publicados en 2005, es un caso emblemático de toda la América Latina en cuanto a una gran asimetría en el comercio de los libros con España. Según los datos de CERLALC, en 2005 el 29% de los libros importados por Latinoamérica eran de origen español, mientras las exportaciones de esa región a España correspondieron a sólo un 2,3% de su facturación. Traducido en dólares: mientras que el valor de los libros exportados por España a América Latina es más de 244 millones, los libros importados por España de América Latina corresponden a sólo unos nueve millones.⁷

No sorprende entonces que el gesto hegemónico de las editoriales multinacionales, como Planeta, grupo Santillana, Random House-Mondadori, y su producción de libros dirigida al consumo masivo, haya significado un cambio en la valorización del libro. El sociólogo Pierre Bourdieu veía el libro como “una mercancía y un significado” y parece que en el tercer milenio la balanza apunta más hacia su valor de mercancía.⁸ El libro está guiado por motivos económicos. Si el libre mercado cuenta

con que unos 100.000 lectores inviertan en el *Playboy* colombiano, y sólo asume que unos 3.000 compren una novela, eso significa que el futuro del libro de ficción está en cuestionamiento. Y con menos consumidores en el presente, con la reducida demanda de libros, el libre mercado, guiado por la demanda, producirá menos libros. La práctica de las editoriales cartoneras es, usando el vocabulario gramsciano, una respuesta contrahegemónica, y en términos de Raymond Williams, sería una práctica emergente. Los potenciales lectores del futuro, ya acostumbrados a los nuevos hábitos de compra, ni siquiera tendrán la opción de evaluar un libro incompatible con su propio presente porque las leyes del mercado determinan que lo que no se vende debería desaparecer. ¿Qué será del concepto del clásico en este escenario? La triste respuesta a esta pregunta se puede deducir del planteamiento que hace el crítico brasileño Idelber Avelar en su discusión sobre mercado y memoria: “la mercantilización niega la memoria porque la operación propia de toda nueva mercancía es reemplazar la mercancía anterior, enviarla al basurero de la historia. El mercado opera de acuerdo con una lógica sustitutiva y metafórica según la cual el pasado está siempre en vías de hacerse obsoleto”.⁹

Del metafórico basurero de la historia, justa e irónicamente invocado por Avelar, pero también del basurero literal que la crisis económica y política argentina del 2001-2002 creó en las calles nocturnas de Buenos Aires, surgió la idea de la fundación de la primera editorial cartonera en América Latina. Con el cierre de miles de fábricas, el fracaso de un sin-número de negocios y la creciente taza de desempleo, aproximadamente 40.000 ciudadanos que antes trabajaban como camareros, zapateros, metalúrgicos, mucamas y que tenían trabajos estables, se vieron obligados a rebuscar todas las noches el material reciclable en las avenidas de la capital. El número de los desempleados que la calle reclutó fue multiplicado por diez de una semana a la otra. A la vez, el precio del papel subió el 300% y muchas pequeñas e independientes editoriales tuvieron que cerrar la producción.

En agosto 2003, Washington Cucurto, Javier Barilaro y Fernanda Laguna, un escritor y dos artistas plásticos, reaccionaron a estas condiciones con la apertura de Eloísa Cartonera, un proyecto “social, cultural y comunitario, sin fines de lucro”, en el que los artistas, escritores y cartoneros colaboraron en la producción de libros hechos del cartón reciclado y de páginas fotocopiadas de textos de autores de renombre y vanguardistas.¹⁰ Por ejemplo, *El Pianista* de Ricardo Piglia, uno de los primeros

títulos sacados en 2003, llevaba la siguiente inscripción: “Ejemplar realizado por cartoneros, con cartón comprado a 1,50 [pesos] el kilo [cuando habitualmente se pagaba 0,30]. Pintado de tapas y encuadrado por ellos mismos en “No hay cuchillo sin rosas, cartonería y galería de arte”.¹¹ “Ellos mismos” se refería a los que recogían el cartón, pero la editorial menciona en su página web que los chicos que pintaban las portadas cesaban de ser cartoneros en el momento en el que empezaban a trabajar en la editorial produciendo los libros y recibiendo tres pesos por hora. Es un detalle que muestra que el propósito del proyecto no era lucir con las identidades subalternas, usarlas para conseguir un cierto apaciguamiento de la conciencia de la clase media argentina. La meta, como lo mostró el futuro, era ayudar a los marginados y pobres y usar a los cartoneros exclusivamente como proveedores de materia prima. Ese mismo año, el diario *Página/12* declara al sello editorial Eloísa Cartonera el éxito cultural del año. Desde entonces este fenómeno artístico, social y comunitario no cesa de recorrer el mundo latinoamericano sembrando libros de cartón y creando un nuevo modelo de organización, un producto cultural y consecuentemente, una comunidad imaginada por excelencia.¹²

Cada una de las comunidades editoriales cartoneras diseminada por la matriz Eloísa Cartonera está en relación con contextos específicos en los que la circulación del producto—el libro—impacta la creación de nuevas identidades sociales. Cada una maneja distintas estrategias de producción y distribución, manteniendo así la necesaria coherencia interna dentro del ámbito local, mientras irrumpen en el mundo de las editoriales transnacionales que constituyen y moldean el espacio global según las pautas diseñadas por el libre mercado. La producción de lo local, discutida por el crítico cultural Arjun Appadurai, supone la creación de los sujetos locales que, en el caso de los sellos cartoneros, inscriben sus identidades en los libros hechos de un cartón que originalmente sirvió para transportar las cajas de los detergentes, vinos, chocolates y cualquier otro producto que necesitaba un traslado eficiente. Como ellos mismos se vieron reciclables y reciclados—siendo originalmente trabajadores en industrias que no pudieron competir en el libre mercado—el rescate del cartón de la basura urbana y su resignificación sirve como un indicio de que su identidad comunitaria no está encapsulada. A través de una brillante idea, mucho esfuerzo y persistencia, el reciclaje del cartón dio paso al reciclaje cultural y social.

Todos los libros cartoneros tienen en común su tosco aspecto físico: portadas hechas del cartón reciclado y pintadas a mano con témpera,

grapadas las páginas interiores, fotocopiadas o producidas en impresora casera y pegadas a la cubierta. Sus tiradas son limitadas y dependen de la demanda. El compromiso de todos los sellos es social y comunitario sin fines lucrativos. Los artistas que publican con ellos, más o menos conocidos, les ceden gratuitamente los derechos de edición. Los editores, idealistas, apasionados, también trabajan gratuitamente y los únicos remunerados son los cartoneros que venden su cartón a las editoriales y los chicos marginados de zonas periféricas, que antes recogían cartón y ahora pasan unas horas diariamente haciendo libros. Y todos los sellos cartoneros intentan ofrecer una alternativa editorial en el artísticamente empobrecido y uniforme mercado editorial global. Conjungan así literatura, artes plásticas y ecología. Sin embargo, la maleabilidad del proyecto permite mucha flexibilidad, lo cual resulta en las diferencias entre los sellos, que están determinados por las especificidades de la infraestructura local. Como lo dijo sucintamente Jaime Vargas Luna, uno de los editores de la editorial cartonera peruana, Sarita Cartonera, “[e]l trasfondo común tiene que ver con la necesidad de acercar la literatura a la calle y evidenciar la calle en la literatura; y también con cruzar las fronteras y generar movimientos colectivos. Los catálogos de cada cartonera tienen sus propias búsquedas, pero hay un espíritu más o menos anarco, más o menos desacralizante, que nos abarca a todos”.¹³ Las editoriales cartoneras se aprovechan de las libertades del mercado y de la posibilidad de competir con tal de estar afinadas a las demandas del mercado, apropiándose así de lo que Milton Friedman, el economista cuyo nombre en América Latina se asocia con la globalización, destacó como una de las ventajas de la misma.

Según la página web oficial, la política editorial, denominada en el caso de Eloísa Cartonera “la premisa editorial”, es “inventar una estética propia, desprejuiciada de los orígenes de cada participante, intentando provocar un mutuo aprendizaje, estimulada por la creatividad” y “difundir a autores latinoamericanos y publicar el material inédito, border y de vanguardia”.¹⁴ Los autores desconocidos se publican a través de los concursos encabezados por el jurado, que consta de famosos escritores y periodistas, como por ejemplo, el de Nuevo Sudaca Border, que se hizo de tal modo que coincidiera (y compitiera!) con el famoso premio literario de *Clarín*.¹⁵ Otras veces, los que trabajan en la editorial deciden sobre el valor de los manuscritos que llegan a la misma.

La editorial pretende generar mano de obra genuina, sustentada en la venta de libros, y no posee financiación ni subvenciones de ningún

otro tipo.¹⁶ Es “cultura a bajo costo”, según María Gómez, una de las integrantes principales del proyecto. Washington Cucurto, el más conocido miembro de la editorial, ve el proyecto como un intercambio con el estado neoliberal: “¿Qué nos dieron? Miseria, pobreza. ¿Qué les devolvemos? Libros. Y esto ayuda a difundir a autores jóvenes, para que haya otro camino, otra puerta, otra calle que también se pueda transitar”.¹⁷ Usar el libro como arma contra las injusticias neoliberales, no sólo teóricamente, sino en términos prácticos a través de su propia producción, es el objetivo de la editorial cartonera. Cucurto sueña con que el Estado argentino lo imite y propone la reapropiación de las estéticas populares: “Esto, con infraestructura, con un sistema más grande, podría dar laburo a muchos. Acá convertimos la basura en libros. Con el cartón se podrían hacer muchas cosas. Pero tiene que haber una participación del Estado. Si el Estado tomara este proyecto, le diera galpones grandes, podríamos ser mil”...¹⁸

El irreverente proyecto editorial Eloísa Cartonera hace hincapié en la comunicación social y la producción de un libro no sólo vendible, sino también comprable. No hay conteo de los números de ejemplares producidos, pues publican copias según la demanda y el éxito de la venta. La impresión que tienen los libreros de los establecimientos que venden los libros cartoneros y la que tienen los vendedores en las calles, ferias, manifestaciones políticas y protestas sociales, es que el libro de César Aira ha superado mil ejemplares y que el libro para niños de Ernesto Camili se vende tan bien que casi ha alcanzado el estatus de un *best-seller*. Sin embargo, como no les importa llevar estadísticas, siguen imprimiendo los libros que se venden, siguiendo así la demanda directa del mercado. Tampoco les importa que el ‘logo’ de Eloísa Cartonera aparezca en todas las ediciones. Por eso, algunas veces sus libros salen bajo el nombre “Brandsen y Zolezzi”, o sea las calles en cuya encrucijada está ubicada la cartonería en la Boca, otras veces aparece el nombre “Eloísa Cartonera Superrápida”, en minúsculas o mayúsculas, dependiendo de las ganas del que, en ese momento, está detrás de las teclas.¹⁹ ¡Parece ser un producto ejemplar de la onda “no logo”!²⁰

Sólo un año hizo falta para que el irreverente proyecto Eloísa Cartonera recorriera el vasto territorio latinoamericano que separaba a Buenos Aires de Lima y brotara la segunda editorial cartonera. Y el recorrido del fantasma cartonero no fue nada directo porque una de las fundadoras peruanas descubrió los libros cartoneros en Chile y no en Argentina. Y

mientras que el nombre de Eloísa se refería a un inalcanzable sueño amoro-so, a una riquísima modelo boliviana a la que uno de los participantes originales del grupo argentino quería impresionar bautizando la editorial con su nombre, las fundadoras peruanas de Sarita Cartonera, Tania Silva y Milagros Saldarriaga, se decidieron por hacer eco a una santa popular, no reconocida por la iglesia y protectora de los choferes, prostitutas, presos y los que emigran de la provincia a las ciudades en búsqueda de una mejor vida económica, conocida en todo el Perú como Sarita Colonia. En la portada de la página web de la editorial, esta patrona de los marginados sociales aparece sonriente con los anteojos de sol y vestida de colores bri-llantes, invocando una litografía warholiana típica del arte pop.²¹ En otras versiones aparece con la sonrisa enigmática cortada de la famosa imagen de Mona Lisa. Reciclada, transgresora de jerarquías, puesta al servicio de las necesidades de los subalternos a los que da la voz, Sarita Colonia parece cómodamente ubicada dentro de la primera editorial cartonera peruana.

El grupo fundador y el comité editorial está compuesto de jóvenes egresados de la carrera de Literatura de la Universidad San Marcos (además de las co-fundadoras está también Jaime Vargas Luna) que querían establecer algún vínculo entre sus intereses profesionales y el trabajo social. A diferencia de la editorial matriz, con la que comparte los preceptos comunitarios y solidarios, Sarita Cartonera consiguió el apoyo de la municipalidad de Lima para formar el taller, y el auspicio tanto de la Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional (AECI) como de la Oficina de la Cooperación al Desarrollo de la Embajada de Bélgica.²² Sin embargo, el auspicio de la municipalidad no duró más que un año y medio porque los dirigentes de la Casa empezaron a molestarse por la presencia del cartón, cartoneros y el hecho de que Sarita Cartonera no era de la vecindad. Al no poder renovar el convenio, la editorial se mudó a un taller cedido también gratis por la fundación Renée Navarrete en el centro de Lima y luego, después de un año, a un local de la Biblioteca Nacional en San Borja. Cuando la Biblioteca Nacional decidió alquilar el espacio a un banco, Sarita Cartonera se quedó sin alojamiento, así que decidió alquilar un taller y no depender de la no-siempre-tan-buena-voluntad ajena. A pesar de que al final se quedaron sin ningún espacio donado, el editor general Jaime Vargas Luna ve esta trayectoria de una manera positiva y sin resentimiento: “creemos que era una buena forma de establecer una alianza institucional, que para nosotros es muy importante en una sociedad

como [é]sta, en la que todos trabajan solos, no existen gremios, sindicatos ni ningún tipo de alianzas entre grupos”.²³

De hecho, su firme creencia en el poder de la cooperación, llevó a la fundación de una asociación de editoriales independientes del Perú, PUNCHE Editores Asociados, que reúne a Sarita Cartonera, Álbum del Universo Bakterial, El Hablador, Matalamanga, Estruendomundo, Dedo Crítico, Solar, Ginebra Magnolia, La mujer de mi vida, entre otras. Los caracteriza la juventud, la independencia y el deseo de vivir en un país donde la lectura sea una actividad que incorpore a un gran número de lectores. Unidos pueden conseguir mejores comisiones en librerías, distribución e inclusive costos de impresión. Si uno piensa en la triste estadística anunciada por el Director de la Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, Dr. Hugo Neira, que en el país hay “47% de estudiantes que no comprende lo que lee” entonces es entendible el ímpetu de los sellos independientes en ofrecer una alternativa editorial.²⁴ Lo irónico es que mientras las deprimentes estadísticas de la Cámara Peruana del Libro indican que el peruano lee sólo un libro por año, y que inclusive los que leen no entienden el texto leído, esta misma Cámara ha obstaculizado la participación de las editoriales independientes (Sarita Cartonera desgraciadamente incluida en la lista) en la Feria Internacional del Libro FIL-LIMA 2008 por su “informalidad”.²⁵ ¡Como si la democratización del libro no fuera uno de los objetivos principales de Sarita Cartonera! Lo que la Cámara Peruana del Libro vio como “informal” —muy probablemente las tapas de cartón y las páginas impresas en papel de baja calidad y reciclado, el color de la témpera que en cualquier momento puede dejar huellas en las manos que sostienen el libro— sirve para hacer el libro más barato, accesible y simplemente popular. La irrupción de las editoriales multinacionales como Planeta, Santillana y Norma en el mercado peruano agudizó el problema porque sus cadenas de librerías representan el 90% de las librerías del país.²⁶

A diferencia de Argentina, el Perú es un país que cuenta con una tasa mucho más alta de analfabetismo y falta de cultura lectora. Pero también es un país que ha tratado de solucionar el problema del bajo nivel y comprensión lectora de su población a través de la Ley de Democratización del Libro y del Fomento de la Lectura promulgados en octubre de 2003 y mayo de 2004. Aunque el objetivo de la Ley es laudable porque intenta incentivar y promover el libro, el problema es que pone más énfasis en los autores, traductores, editores, libreros, librerías, importadores y distribui-

dores que en la formación del lector, así que la dicotomía entre negocio y cultura continúa siendo vigente.²⁷ En este contexto, la aparición de un novedoso y original agente cultural como Sarita Cartonera, con la producción que depende de los voluntarios—los autores ceden los derechos gratuitamente y reciben el 10% del tiraje, los artistas plásticos trabajan también gratuitamente con los cartoneros y los editores tampoco reciben una remuneración monetaria—, con su política editorial que se enfoca en la capacitación del tipo de lector, lo cual generalmente no es la meta de las editoriales multinacionales porque este lector carece de suficientes fondos para comprar uno de sus libros, la aparición de este agente cultural, en tal contexto es extraordinaria. Por ejemplo, una de las novedades que introdujo Sarita Cartonera para formar a los nuevos lectores fue el de leerles a los jóvenes cartoneros los libros que encuadernaban y pintaban. Y aunque la política editorial es publicar los libros con temas urbanos y de lectura sencilla, parece que sus lectores se entusiasman con los textos que unos cuantos no considerarían livianos. Así, una cartonera de 14 años cuenta que un día había llevado el libro *El Pianista* de Piglia a su casa: “Y me gustó mucho. Es muy chistoso”.²⁸ Parece que la política de la difusión de los escritores latinoamericanos está dando frutos.

Con el propósito de difundir la literatura y formar nuevos lectores se organizó en el 2005 *Sarita Cool Tour*, una gira cuyo propósito era sacar la literatura de la capital y conectarse con el interior del país. Como uno de los planteamientos de la editorial era promover y publicar autores provincianos, este recorrido ayudó a conocerlos directamente. Otro proyecto novedoso, con claros ecos cortazarianos, cuya meta es la formación de lectores activos, Libros, un modelo para armar, era un taller en el que los chicos del tercer y cuarto año de secundaria hicieron un libro cartonero a partir de su propia interpretación de los textos seleccionados para la publicación en los libros cartoneros. En este proyecto ayudaron varios artistas plásticos y profesores de literatura; y después de tres meses, en el 2006, se pudo armar una exhibición de libros hechos en el Museo de Arte del Centro Cultural San Marcos. La iniciativa Libros fascinantes de 2007 también conectó literatura, arte y ecología, pero con la diferencia de que se le dió la oportunidad a los artistas plásticos de diseñar un libro de cartón basado en su interpretación de la lectura.

Sarita Cartonera ha publicado hasta ahora 40 títulos en tirajes de 300-400 copias y su catálogo incluye a escritores de renombre, como los peruanos Oswaldo Reynoso y Mario Bellatin, al lado de los más jóvenes y nuevos

como Paul Guillén, Edgard Saavedra, Romy Sordómez y Carlos Yushimoto; además de los extranjeros como Luisa Valenzuela, Pedro Lemebel, Ricardo Piglia y César Aira, entre muchos otros. Las reseñas de sus títulos y las notas de prensa salen regularmente en los principales diarios del país junto con las reseñas de las editoriales multinacionales, como por ejemplo, Alfaguara. Un libro que junta las historias de los niños de una hacienda, titulado *Un libro bien grande* comparte la página con un Carlos Germán Belli. Sus títulos se distribuyen no sólo en las librerías, sino también en kioscos universitarios, ferias, organizaciones de desarrollo social y en su propia página web. Y, a diferencia de la matriz argentina, los títulos publicados son depositados legalmente en la Biblioteca Nacional del Perú.

Con el lanzamiento de Animita Cartonera en 2005 en Santiago de Chile, ya era obvio que el fenómeno editorial cartonero tenía su propio espíritu y ánimo, y que Eloísa Cartonera había marcado el camino con éxito.²⁹ El fantasma cartonero había cruzado los Andes y estaba recorriendo el periplo latinoamericano. Pero Chile, el país que había pasado por una transformación nación-mercado en las últimas décadas del siglo xx, traía una importante diferencia al fantasma cartonero.³⁰ El mismo nombre de la primera editorial cartonera chilena hace referencia a las pequeñas grutas en forma de casitas que se construyen en los lugares de muertes accidentales en los caminos. Son alojamientos para los espíritus que inesperadamente habían dejado los cuerpos. Estas casitas se convirtieron en el logo de la editorial cartonera chilena. Y después del grito enfático de María Gómez, co-editora de Eloísa Cartonera, en contra de la entrada al mundo de las multinacionales, las marcas y las corporaciones, la declaración de Ximena Ramos, la co-editora de Animita Cartonera, de que “El ícono de esa casita es también el logo de la editorial,” resulta ser sintomática del discurso libremercadista chileno. Otro desvío llamativo del camino cartonero anterior es que la editorial no trabaja directamente con los cartoneros, o sea “recolectores independientes” como los llaman en Chile, según explica Ximena Ramos al decir “[s]on un gremio difícil”. Otra de las editoras fundadoras, también egresada de letras de la Universidad Diego Portales, Tanya Núñez, agrega: “trabajamos con algunos haciendo libros, pero no les motivaba hacerlo, así que vamos a trabajar con jóvenes en riesgo social y dueñas de casa”³¹. La postura, aparentemente elitista, de Animita Cartonera frente a los que no disponen de tiempo libre y que no están socializados y educados para enriquecerse a través de la lectura de la ficción y poesía, sólo significa que su manejo de los

criterios del mercado es distinto. Igual que Sarita, Animita Cartonera es parte de Editores de Chile, una asociación de editoriales independientes y al igual que las otras, compra el cartón pagando un precio más alto que el mercado. Sin embargo, siendo Chile un país con una economía fuerte, los llamados ‘cartoneros’ argentinos y peruanos se transforman en ‘recoletores independientes’.

Igualmente, la producción de los libros en Chile se desvía de la forma de edición rústica que es la original argentina y de la peruana, que involucra las series producidas por artistas plásticos. Animita Cartonera describe sus libros como “intervenido[s] a mano con témpera, acrílico, spray, tinta tipográfica y decorados con distintos materiales reutilizables: papel, lana, revistas, etcétera. De esta manera, el libro se transforma en un objeto de arte, y cada ejemplar en un libro único y exclusivo”.³² La cantidad diferente de técnicas, indica la ampliación de las posibilidades de expresión artística.

Su producción editorial distingue tres líneas: el muy híbrido y heterogéneo catálogo general, que publica tanto autores reconocidos por la crítica, como a los marginados sociales y los experimentales, todos divididos en tres colecciones. Una de las colecciones, nominada *Literatura bailable* consta además de un libro cartonero acompañado por un CD con tres versiones musicalizadas del texto. La segunda línea es la de rescate, que pone en circulación obras injustamente olvidadas, y la tercera, la infantil, dedicada a los niños. Los niños también participan en los talleres de creación de libros y de fomento del gusto por la lectura. Animita Cartonera, también como sus precursoras, organiza concursos para identificar las nuevas voces en el ámbito cultural chileno, voces no necesariamente asociadas con la universidad. “Aquí te las traigo” es uno de estos concursos que se dirige a los cultivadores del ensayo, dramaturgia, narrativa y poesía entre 18 y 25 años de edad.

Washington Cucurto había deseado una vez que “muchas Eloísas aparecieran para que la gente viva un poco mejor” y aunque no aparecieron muchas Eloísas, su sueño se volvió realidad con el surgimiento de muchas (editoriales) Cartoneras. Animita Cartonera, como cada una de ellas, maneja diferentes criterios del mercado y sigue con la idea original de revalorizar el trabajo comunitario y desarrollar una política publicitaria que funcione mejor dentro de los márgenes chilenos.

Bolivia, el país con el mercado editorial más pequeño de América Latina, ya tiene desarrolladas dos editoriales cartoneras: Mandrágora

Cartonera, fundada a fines de 2005 por Iván Castro Aruzamen, profesor de literatura y filosofía en la Universidad Católica de Cochabamba, y Yerba Mala Cartonera, establecida a principios de 2006 en El Alto, cerca de la capital gracias a los esfuerzos de los estudiantes de literatura Darío Luna, Crispín Portugal y Roberto Cáceres.³³ Y si todo sigue funcionando tal como lo había prometido el presidente Evo Morales, para el final de 2008, los 12% de los analfabetos van a desaparecer y el país va a ser el tercero en Latinoamérica (después de Cuba y Venezuela) sin analfabetismo. Los nombres de las cartoneras bolivianas hacen referencia a las plantas y así, consecutivamente, a la *Pacha Mama* de los aymara, la Madre Tierra que denota poderes mágicos y resistencia: por una parte, mandrágora es la planta afrodisíaca cuyas raíces de forma humana son famosas porque pueden emitir voces, la yerba mala, por otra parte, es imposible de destruir porque aunque se arranque, vuelve a brotar otra vez. Uno de sus editores, Roberto Cáceres, hace referencia a las palabras de Hemingway, quien decía que “los pobres [son] como la yerba, [crecen] en cualquier parte.”³⁴ Y los libros que producen, en tiradas que no sobrepasan 30 ejemplares, son para los que quieren leer autores no publicados por los conglomerados editoriales. Y son baratos, los más baratos de todas las editoriales porque cuestan sólo 71 centavos de dólar.³⁵ Lo que apunta hacia el hecho de que entre todos los mercados cartoneros, éste es el más pobre, y como lo ha mencionado uno de los editores y fundadores de la editorial, Crispín Portugal, “[d]icen que ni cartón se tira en El Alto, hermanito”. Explica también que “[n]iños de la calle, lustrabotas o voceadores recolectan cartones de las tiendas, puestos o basurales y ellos mismos los trabajan-recorte, pintado y hasta collage—para convertirlos en el forro de los cuentos, poemas y hasta novelas breves que distintos escritores ceden gratuitamente. Los créditos de la venta, efectuada por los mismos trabajadores, van en un porcentaje a la compra de materiales e insumos, pero la parte mayor es para el beneficio de los muchachos.”³⁶ Tenemos entonces el mercado editorial más chico, el país más pobre, los libros más baratos y vendidos en el “shopping” andino más alto del planeta: la *Feria 16 de julio*, de la ciudad de El Alto. Y ésta es también la única editorial entre las cartoneras que ya tiene un documental dedicado a su proyecto. El colectivo 7, integrado por siete artistas argentinos y catalanes, pasó unos ocho meses filmando las actividades de Yerba Mala Cartonera: “El proyecto nació para mostrar la experiencia de los escritores alteños, pero con el tiempo nos dimos cuenta que también era necesario mostrar la realidad del libro

y la lectura de Bolivia”, explicó Nancy Cejas.³⁷ Según Victoria Ayllón, una de las editoras entrevistadas, lo que distingue la cultura boliviana es su agrafía, o sea, otras maneras de expresión que van más allá de la palabra escrita, así que la editorial cartonera ofrece una inclusión de lo visual en la formación de este libro artístico.

Aunque Mandrágora Cartonera y Yerba Mala tienen muchos puntos de contacto, parece que sus políticas editoriales se separan en cuanto a la relación con el planteamiento progresista del presidente de izquierda, Evo Morales. Aruzamen, el profesor de Literatura y Filosofía en la Universidad Católica de Cochabamba y fundador y director de la primera editorial cartonera en Bolivia, ve la alternativa al “neoliberalismo salvaje” como uno de los puntos claves de su política y resalta tres dimensiones particulares de la editorial: literatura, educación y derechos humanos. También añade que “Mandrágora es un proyecto social y cultural, sin fines de lucro, inserto en la lucha contra la deshumanización del neoliberalismo, pero no desde una óptica marxista o socialista. Sabemos que el modelo causa estragos en sectores como los recicladores y que los nuevos parias entre los parias son los cartoneros y chicos de la calle; pero pensar que haciendo libros les vamos a dar un futuro mejor, es una quimera. Sólo buscamos democratizar el acceso al libro y difundir literatura”. Ninguna de las otras editoriales cartoneras sostiene que con la producción de los libros cartoneros, la vida de los más pobres va a ser esencialmente distinta. Sin embargo, sostienen unánimemente que es un punto importante en el multifacético proceso del cambio social. “Para que el aymará sepa que es explotado, no le es necesario leer un libro”, dice explícitamente uno de los fundadores de Yerba Mala Cartonera.³⁸ Mandrágora Cartonera es la única editorial cartonera fundada por un profesor universitario y la selección de los títulos publicados refleja su inclinación académica. Por ejemplo, *Los fundamentos de los derechos humanos* del académico mexicano Mauricio Beuchot originalmente publicado en 1994 por Anthropos o *Los derechos humanos: historia, fundamento, efectividad* del recientemente fallecido jurista y filósofo chileno Jorge Iván Hübner Gallo, originalmente publicado en 1994 por la Editorial Jurídica de Chile, están escritos para los sofisticados lectores versados en la jerga académica. La inclusión de estos dos teóricos extranjeros en la colección cartonera parece confirmar la opinión de Aruzamen que “Hablar de intelectuales en Bolivia es una tontería, porque no hay pensadores y la crítica literaria está en pañales”.³⁹ Por el otro lado, la ausencia de las publicaciones cartoneras en los

programas docentes de estos académicos extranjeros, es llamativa desde el punto de vista de la importancia que ellos mismos dan a tales editoriales. Sus libros parecen pertenecer a la dimensión educativa y de los derechos humanos, eje fundamental del cambio social según el manifiesto del proyecto editorial, y como tales, son bastante únicos entre otras editoriales cartoneras. De este modo, la propuesta de divulgar los libros educativos a los que carecen de los recursos para pagarlos parece ser cumplida, aunque sin precisar cómo se soluciona en estos casos el problema de los derechos del autor. Curiosamente, el mismo documento enfatiza también que “los derechos en la calle u otros espacios públicos, pueden ir generando la posibilidad de crear un derecho alternativo, un derecho jurídico que posiblemente la liberación, de los más necesitados a través de una justicia para todos en igualdad de condiciones”.⁴⁰ Tal filosofía editorial, hasta cierto punto, contradice la declaración anterior del director sobre la quimérica (im) posibilidad de que un libro cartonero pueda darle un futuro mejor a los pobres. La palabra “thawís”, el nombre usado para los cartoneros bolivianos, está libre de los ecos españoles, lo que claramente indica que quienes pertenecen a esos grupos son de descendencia indígena. Thawís son los que buscan sobrevivir con la recolección y venta del cartón. Reciben tres veces más por el cartón vendido a la editorial y también son remunerados por las horas que dedican a la producción y diseño de las cubiertas.

Mandrágora sigue la pauta establecida por la editorial cartonera matriz, pero sin tratar de convertir a los thawís en lectores de sus títulos. El diseño de algunos libros más recientes también apunta hacia manos más artísticamente sofisticadas que las que recogen el cartón de los basureros. Tanto la publicación del cuento “Como la vida misma” de Edmundo Paz Soldán, internacionalmente el más conocido escritor boliviano contemporáneo, también profesor de literatura en la universidad estadounidense Cornell, como la publicación de la novela corta *Noche abandonada* del director de Mandrágora Cartonera, no lucen las portadas decoradas con témpera sino con collages. En última instancia parece que la declaración de Aruzamen, de que “frente a editoriales tradicionales, [en] la nuestra no es una necesidad urgente el vender, porque los que hacemos Mandrágora cartonera, vivimos de otros rubros, como la docencia” indica la mayor diferencia entre esta editorial cartonera académica y las otras.⁴¹ Dentro de esta vena, cabe incluir la bastante pomposa declaración de Aruzamen sobre las razones de la conflictiva relación con otra editorial cartonera boliviana: “Ellos [Yerba Mala Cartonera] defienden abiertamente el pro-

yecto de Evo Morales, y buscan una estética afincada en la literatura de cuño indigenista, marginal, contracultural y todas esas vainas que andan de moda hoy con los populismos".⁴²

Cuando en 2003 Eloísa Cartonera fue nombrada en homenaje a una mujer inalcanzable y casi soñada, nadie pudo sospechar que sólo cuatro años más tarde la quinta editorial cartonera iba a llevar el nombre que se referiría a una verdadera cartonera que vendía el cartón recogido de las calles de São Paulo a la primera editorial cartonera en Brasil, Dulcinéia Catadora: el nombre, a la vez invoca a la inspiradora de las hazañas quijotescas con todo su diapasón idealista, altruista y soñador, o sea, lo que este proyecto artístico y comunitario realmente es, y a la campesina real, una tal Aldonza Lorenzo.

Fundada y dirigida por la artista plástica Lucia Rosa, esta cooperativa reúne artistas, escritores y *catadores*, o sea, cartoneros, en quienes trata de promover la autoestima. Siendo la directora una artista plástica, no sorprende su visión de la sociedad como una escultura que podría ser mejor formada. Y eso es precisamente lo que Dulcinéia Catadora se empeña en hacer.

La editorial está patrocinada en parte por el Movimento Nacional dos Catadores de Materiais Recicláveis, el Movimento Nacional da População de Rua, cuyos miembros ayudan en la producción de los libros y la ONG Projeto Aprendiz, en cuyo espacio se producen los libros cartoneros. Lo novedoso de este colectivo son las intervenciones urbanas que organizan, como por ejemplo, cuando rodearon una plaza pública con las letras pintadas de tamaño de 1,6 metros expresando la esencia de la editorial: "O sapo não pula por boniteza, mas porém por precisão".⁴³

La mayoría de los objetivos de Dulcinéia Catadora coinciden con los de otras editoriales cartoneras, y sin embargo, ésta ha conseguido en poco tiempo publicar más libros escritos por los poetas y cuentistas que provienen de las filas de los cartoneros que cualquier otra. La relación con la comunidad se traduce en la contribución más activa de los que viven en la calle, así que, como se trata de una cooperativa y las ganancias se reparten, algunos cartoneros realmente pueden ganar de su trabajo artístico y no sólo de la labor física. El uso de cultura libresca para la integración social parece funcionar. El primer libro que publicaron, *Sarau de Cooperaifa*, contenía los poemas escritos por los poetas que viven en las zonas marginadas de São Paulo, quienes se reúnen los miércoles en el Bar do Ze Batidão, también conocido como *O mayor quilombo poético da cidade*

de São Paulo. Unos meses después, otro poeta de la calle, Tião publicó el libro *Cátia, Simone e outras Marvadas* sobre la vida de los que no tienen su propio alojamiento. La editorial ya tiene 31 títulos publicados en sólo un año de existencia.

En 2007, el mismo año de la fundación de Dulcinéia Catadora en Brasil, en la capital paraguaya se fundó Yiyi Jambo.⁴⁴ Con el sitio web que brinda menos información coherente que cualquier otra editorial cartonera, Yiyi Jambo resalta sus cualidades vanguardistas, jovialidad y un cierto aire iconoclasta a través de las imágenes de mujeres indígenas y criollas luciendo sus senos desnudos. Las primeras siguiendo una tradición cultural y las últimas, reflejando las demandas de las tradiciones machistas y patriarcales. Escrito en un *portunhol selvagem* o sea, el portuñol salvaje, en palabras de su fundador, el poeta Douglas Diegues, la editorial nació entre los besos de un poeta con una linda muchacha, una yiyi, y a porpósito de la visita del co-fundador de Eloísa Cartonera, Javier Barilaro. Diegues, junto con el otro participante, un pintor-cartonero, Amarildo García, crípticamente llamado El Domador de Yacarés, compran el cartón de los cartoneros paraguayos y lo transforman en libros. Lo novedoso de la editorial es que su descripción del proyecto parece lo más cercano a un contrato: “los interesados en laburar vendiendo los libros de Yiyi Jambo en las calles y plazas y kioscos y librerías de Asunción ganarán 5000 G\$ por ejemplar vendido a 15,000G\$”.⁴⁵ Aunque reconocen que a nivel regional su proyecto emula las iniciativas de Eloísa Cartonera, también son enfáticos en verse como parte de la tradición iniciada por el poeta y antropólogo paraguayo Carlos Martínez Gamba, recipiente del Premio Nacional de Literatura 2003, quien escribió todas sus obras en guaraní para reconfirmar su propia identidad en el momento del exilio causado por la dictadura militar de Stroessner, y quien en los años setenta produjo libros en la similar forma alternativa.⁴⁶ Su influencia en la editorial cartonera, se ve no sólo en la combinación del guaraní con el español y portugués salpicados por varios neologismos, sino también por la colaboración con los marginalizados y culturalmente perjudicados. Tal vez por verse parte de la tradición nacional, más que de un proyecto global, como otras editoriales cartoneras, Yiyi Jambo, o sea Muchacha Jambo, no lleva el apellido común de las editoriales cartoneras aunque sí continúa la tradición de usar la referencia femenina en su nombre.

El meollo de la editorial, su signo de diferencia, parece ser el *portunhol selvagem*, la lengua en la que “caben todas las lenguas del Brasil y del

Paraguay”. Diferente de un simple portuñol, ya apoyado públicamente por el cantautor, poeta y nada menos que Ministro de Cultura de Brasil Gilberto Gil y el premio Nobel José Saramago, el *portunhol selvagem*, promovido y usado por el poeta Douglas Diegues, incorpora además del español y portugués, el guaraní y las lenguas de las otras veinte o más etnias de la zona de la triple frontera, como por ejemplo el tomáraho, el ashlushlay, el ybytozo, el toba quom, el sanapaná, el maká, el axe-guaya-ki, el ayoreo. Es una lengua poética y lúdica, cuya base es la invocación de una libertad absoluta, caótica, fuera de cualquier sistema gramatical, ortografía o reglas oficiales, mezclada con la idea de que las fronteras nacionales no pueden limitar la cultura y la lengua que se desborda por las bocas que la usan.⁴⁷ Es la lengua que, tal como la usa el co-fundador de Eloísa Cartonera, Washington Cucurto, se apropiá de los términos vulgares e intelectuales y que transita las fronteras nacionales. En este idioma los miembros de Yiyi Jambo escribieron una carta/manifiesto a los presidentes izquierdistas de Brasil y de Paraguay, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva y Fernando Lugo, rogándoles no perder “esta maravillosa oportunidad histórica-poética-filosófica de hacer volar una imagen poderosa de amor-amor a toda la globolandia.”⁴⁸ La globalización no denota el libre intercambio, porque las transferencias pasan de un empresario al otro, parecen advertir los miembros de Yiyi Jambo, pero tal vez con la aspiración de oralidad, con una lengua libre de las reglas ortográficas y contornos gramaticales, tal vez con esta lengua nueva se podrá esbozar un mundo más justo en la escala global.

Y mientras que el portuñol salvaje define a la primera editorial cartonera paraguaya, el capitalismo salvaje es uno de los ejes opositoriales de La Cartonera, la versión mexicana del fantasma cartonero que se inauguró en Cuernavaca en febrero de 2008. Lo novedoso de la versión mexicana es la perdida, la supresión de los cartoneros.⁴⁹ Aunque el nombre de la editorial usa el apellido de todas las editoriales cartoneras, en el caso mexicano la referencia tiene que ver con el material del que están hechas las tapas y no con los que sobreviven económicamente reuniendo este material en las calles de las metrópolis y que representan el meollo del proyecto solidario. El credo de la editorial resume su misión del siguiente modo: “La Cartonera es una editorial artesanal, rústica y artística, de publicaciones de tiraje muy corto, casi simbólico, que desea mostrar el trabajo colectivo de editores y artistas, escritores y creadores, que surge con la idea de publicar libros de todo género o subgénero posible, a

contracorriente, ya que publicar libros y revistas en estos tiempos, sin tener una maquinaria financiera y administrativa poderosas, es o un gesto audaz o un sueño guajiro. Y eso es lo que nos proponemos, realizar un sueño comunitario producto de la imaginación y no de las buenas conciencias, y por lo pronto que siga la osadía”⁵⁰. Se oponen a los conglomerados editoriales e inclusive resaltan que ven el libro como un producto de imaginación y no de las buenas conciencias. Su logo representa a un hombre sentado en la calle, dedicado a la lectura de un libro y con una bolsa de plástico, pero este hombre resulta ser un fantasma y brilla por su ausencia en cuanto al proyecto de la editorial, ya que los cartoneros de ninguna manera forman parte del proceso editorial.

Aunque La Cartonera reconoce la existencia de otras editoriales cartoneras, ve su “antecedente más cercano” en el proyecto artístico y vanguardista de la poeta argentina Elena Jordana, que en los años setenta creó Ediciones El Mendrugo y que publicó libros de Ernesto Sábato, Octavio Paz, Marco Antonio Montes de Oca, Iris Zavala en Nueva York, México y Buenos Aires. “En la página web de la librería Ninon se vende un ejemplar a 148 dólares. ¡¡En antiqbook otro ejemplar cuesta 377 dólares!!!”,⁵¹ dice enfáticamente Raúl Silva, uno de los miembros de la editorial mexicana. Parece que el sueño de esta última editorial cartonera está dirigido hacia el colecciónismo y un cierto elitismo que brindaría a sus ejemplares (siempre numerados, como destacan en su presentación de uno de los títulos) el mismo destino.

Y ese elitismo es precisamente lo que el fundador de la primera editorial cartonera, el visionario Washington Cucurto, quería evitar. Su contagiosa risa acompaña el profético comentario hecho 2004, cuando sólo existían dos editoriales cartoneras: “Tú compraste en una librería por Internet *Mil gotas* por 10 euros, ¿no? Los libros valen cuatro pesos ¡te mataron!”⁵² Sin embargo, los ejemplares de las ediciones cartoneras ya se pueden comprar en las librerías universitarias de los EEUU por \$23. La diferencia entre el valor del libro asignado por los cartoneros y éste que paga un estudiante no va a ser compartida entre los que produjeron el libro. Y si este mismo estudiante quisiera sacarlo de la biblioteca, descubriría que los libros cartoneros están en la colección especial, junto con los ejemplares de las raras copias de la Biblia de los siglos pasados, y que necesitaría un permiso especial para tenerlos en sus manos. Decía el poeta chileno Raúl Zurita, que hay algo profundamente democrático en la manufactura de los libros cartoneros, porque al tener en las manos

uno de ellos es imposible no sentir “el latido de la vida concreta, ese telón de fondo de la existencia, que los cartoneros recolectan en la madrugada, de la calle”.⁵³ Ese latir fantasmal se está imponiendo en América Latina como rebeldía contra el neoliberalismo, pero no hay que olvidarse de la etimología griega de la palabra fantasma, *phantasos* que invoca al hijo del sueño, y que los verdaderos fantasmas en las grandes ciudades latinoamericanas, los que pierden el sueño para recoger el cartón de las calles de Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Lima, Santiago, Asunción, La Paz, son invisibles para el resto de la población. Tal vez este latir fantasmal, el telón de fondo de la existencia amalgamado a los libros cartoneros, ayude al resto de los ciudadanos a reconocerlos.

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NOTAS

1. Entrevista a María Gómez (Djurdja Trajković), 8 de agosto de 2008.
2. El término *copyleft* es una reacción a copyright y proviene de libro *Open Sources* de Richard Stallman y su GPL (General Public Licence, licencia pública general), <http://www.gnu.org/gnu/thegnuproject.html>.
3. Juan I. Calcagno Quijano, “En esta sociedad mercantil si no tenés un packaging no vendés”, *La Brújula*, 1, no. 2 (mayo-junio de 2006): 13.
4. Lidia Bravo, “De la basura a los libros singulares”, *El Mundo* (Madrid, España), 9 de agosto de 2004.
5. Antonio Astorga, “Los escritores y la guillotina de papel”. http://www.abc.es/hereroteca/historico-05-06-2006/Cultura/los-escritores-y-la-guillotina-de-papel_1421870978678.html.
6. José Luis de Diego, “Políticas editoriales y políticas de lectura” http://abc.gov.ar/lainsitucion/RevistaComponents/Revista/Archivos/anales/numero06/ArchivosParaDescargar/6_dediego.pdf.
7. <http://www.lahora.com.gt/notas.php?key=31545&fch=2008-06-04>.
8. “La especificidad del sistema de su producción combinada con la especificidad de su producto —una realidad bidimensional, mercancía y significado, cuyo valor estético no puede ser reducido a su valor económico aun cuando la viabilidad económica confirme la consagración intelectual— conduce a la especificidad de las relaciones que se establecen en su interior”. <http://la-blog-de-praxis--hemeroteca-y-algo-mas.noblogs.org/post/2006/12/07/campo-intelectual-y-proyecto-creativo-pierre-bourdieu>.
9. Idelber Avelar, “La escritura del duelo y la promesa de restitución”, en *Alegorías de la derrota: la ficción postdictatorial y el trabajo del duelo* (Santiago: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2000).
10. De la tapa del libro *El pianista* de Ricardo Piglia, una de las primeras publicaciones de Eloísa Cartonera en 2003. Sin embargo, la biografía de Cucurto que aparece en la solapa de su libro *El curandero del amor* publicado por Emecé en noviembre de 2006, ubica la fundación de Eloísa Cartonera en 2002.
11. Dos años después, el rubro del editor responsable ya no llenaba los nombres de los tres co-fundadores originales, sino Eloísa Cartonera-Asociación de lucha contra la exclusión social. Las ediciones 2007 en adelante sólo lo reducen a Eloísa Cartonera, cortando la parte de la asociación y su compromiso social. A la vez, la inscripción también cambió, informando que el libro fue “cortado y pintado a mano e impreso con una imprenta donada por la Embajada de Suiza en Buenos Aires, y con el apoyo del Centro cultural de España en Buenos Aires...” (de la tapa interior de *El cerebro musical* de César Aira 2005). Vale la pena mencionar que no hay consistencia cronológica en cuanto al texto de la inscripción porque, como diferentes ejemplares se imprimían según la demanda del mercado, esta hoja a veces era una copia directa de la edición original y otras veces era la copia de la versión alterada). En las últimas ediciones, como por ejemplo la de Martín Adán y su *Casa de cartón* (2007), cambia el lugar de la información bibliográfica situándosela en el final del libro y suprimiendo la información sobre el precio del cartón comprado. También está reflejado el cambio de la dirección que ahora, después de la mudanza de la editorial de Almagro, aparece como “Brandsen 647, República de La Boca, Ciudad de Buenos Aires.”
12. El término “comunidad imaginada” fue desarrollado por Benedict Anderson. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London/New York: Verso, 1991).
13. Silvina Friera. “Editoriales cartoneras de América Latina”. *Página/12* (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 3 de junio de 2008.
14. <http://www.eloisacartonera.com.ar/eloisa/>.
15. El concurso se hizo solo en 2004 y de los 100 manuscritos escogieron 6 para la publicación en Eloísa Cartonera.
16. La editorial no acepta donaciones de cartón de los ciudadanos para poder comprárselo a los cartoneros y remunerarlos por su trabajo. Aunque no aceptan donaciones hubo algunas excepciones como, por ejemplo, cuando necesitaron comprar la imprenta para mejorar la producción de libros y fue donada reconociéndose en la inscripción del libro *El cerebro musical* de Aira donde aparece lo siguiente: “cortado y pintado a mano e impreso con una imprenta donada por la Embajada de Suiza en Buenos Aires, y con el apoyo del Centro cultural de España en Buenos Aires...”
17. Pedro Pablo Guerrero, “Disparos contra la alta cultura” *El Mercurio* (Santiago, Chile), enero de 2004.
18. Patricia Kolesnicov, “Proyecto solidario: “Eloísa Cartonera” ya publicó 43 títulos de

- autores Argentinos y Latinoamericanos”, *Clarín* (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 22 de septiembre de 2006.
19. Se usa el nombre de la editorial “Eloisa Cartonera Superrápida,” como por ejemplo en la edición de César Aira de *El todo que surca La Nada*. En las ediciones 2005 aparece el nombre de la editorial como Eloísa Cartonera. Sin embargo en la edición de *La casa de cartón* de Martín Adán (2007) aparece el nombre de la editorial como “Libros de Eloísa Cartonera”. También la edición de Bejerman (2008) aparece como “Libros de Eloísa Cartonera” (en minúsculas). En 2007 el libro de Camilli apareció como “ELOISA CARTONERA” (mayúsculas).
 20. En la entrevista hecha por Djurdja Trajković, María Gómez, declaró: “Javier, quien es el diseñador, siempre tuvo esta idea de *no logo* y todos lo aceptamos. Entonces, no tenemos ni un logo de Eloísa, ni nada, ni marca. Por esto podemos ser Eloísa, Libros de Eloísa... depende del día. Por esto. Es la idea...no logo, no marca...”
 21. <http://www.saritacartonera.com/principal.htm>.
 22. En una entrevista electrónica, Jaime Vargas Luna explicó: “La Municipalidad de Lima mantiene casas municipales en todo el centro de la ciudad, allí funcionan comedores populares, talleres para hacer cerámica, karate, etc., para la población del lugar. En febrero o marzo de 2004 (es decir, cuando recién empezaba el trabajo) ellos nos cedieron un espacio en la Casa municipal Nº 5 para trabajar dos días a la semana, y guardar allí nuestros materiales. Es decir, Sarita Cartonera nació trabajando en ese taller, junto a muchos vecinos que lo usaban como comedor popular, taller para hacer orfebrería, tejer, etc. Allí trabajamos más o menos un año y medio pero la relación con quienes dirigían la casa se fue haciendo difícil: les molestaba el cartón, la presencia de los recicladores y el que no fuésemos vecinos del lugar, así que, cuando venció el convenio que teníamos con ellos, no lo renovaron. Después nos mudamos a un taller que nos cedió, también gratuitamente la Fundación René Navarrete en el centro de Lima, allí estuvimos un año también gratis, luego de lo cual, como no teníamos unos documentos que la Fundación necesitaba para el Ministerio de Trabajo, tuvimos que dejar el lugar. Luego la Biblioteca Nacional nos prestó un local en su sede de San Borja, allí estuvimos un año más, pero luego decidieron alquilar ese espacio a un banco y volvimos a quedarnos sin taller. Por eso decidimos ahora alquilar un taller del que nadie pueda botarnos, aunque nos parecía importante trabajar en un espacio cedido por otro.” Lauren Pagel, julio de 2008.
 23. Jaime Vargas Luna, entrevista electrónica con Lauren Pagel, julio de 2008.
 24. “Boletín de la Biblioteca Nacional del Perú”, 28 de junio de 2008, http://www.bnpgob.pe/portalbnp/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=786&Itemid=1
 25. 13 de julio de 2008 <http://elclickdemeco.blogspot.com/2008/07/camara-peruana-del-libro-censura-alpe.html>.
 26. Jaime Vargas Luna. “Sarita Cartonera: experiencia de un proyecto literario, comunitario y solidario,” Primer encuentro Internacional del libro alternativo en el marco de la Segunda Feria Internacional del Libro de Venezuela, 31 de octubre de 2006.
 27. Dante Antonioli Delucchi, “La ley del libro y su impacto en la industria editorial peruana”. *Boletín Gestión Cultural*, 13, septiembre de 2005.
 28. Miguel Angel Cárdenas. “Artistas del cartón peruano”. *El Comercio* (Lima, Perú), 11 de agosto de 2004.
 29. Según las entrevistas con el fundador de Mandrágora Cartonera, la editorial se fundó en 2005 con la visita de Javier Barilaro de Eloísa Cartonera <http://blogsbolivia.blogspot.com/2007/10/entrevista-con-mandrgora-cartonera.html>. Sin embargo, en la página web del fundador aparece diciembre 2004 como el comienzo de la existencia de la editorial cartonera boliviana <http://www.blogger.com/profile/00018222933381482146>.
 30. Luis E. Cárcamo-Huechante hace un análisis de la constitución de la nación-mercado y las repercusiones del “milagro chileno”, en: *Tramas del Mercado: Imaginación económica, cultura pública y literatura en el Chile de fines del siglo veinte* (Santiago: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2007).
 31. Rodrigo Alvarado. “Historias de cartón” *La Nación*, 5 de noviembre de 2006, http://www.lanacion.cl/prontus_noticias/site/artic/20061104/pags/20061104190330.html
 32. <http://www.animita-cartonera.cl/>.
 33. “Castro Aruzamen de Mandrágora Cartonera reconoce que la relación con Yerba Mala es conflictiva. ‘Ellos defienden abiertamente el proyecto de Evo Morales, y buscan una estética afincada en la literatura de cuño indigenista, marginal, contracultural y todas esas vainas que andan de moda hoy con los populismos’” (artículo *Página/12*).
 34. Silvina Friera. “Editoriales cartoneras de América Latina”. *Página/12* (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 3 de junio de 2008.

35. Esto, en el momento en el que un libro cuesta \$14 y un sueldo básico es \$70.
36. "Yerba Mala Cartonera tiene a Roncagliolo en catálogo". *La Prensa* (La paz, Bolivia), 12 de agosto de 2006.
37. http://yerbamalacartonera.blogspot.com/2008_04_01.archive.html
38. <http://www.renacerbol.com.ar/cultura07.htm>.
39. Silvina Freira, *Página/12*.
40. http://mandragoracartonera.blogspot.com/2007_03_01_archive.html.
41. <http://blogsbolivia.blogspot.com/2007/10/entrevista-con-mandrgora-cartonera.html>. Como he subrayado en las primeras líneas de este ensayo, las editoriales cartoneras no están cambiando drásticamente la vida de los cartoneros pero sí ofrecen alternativas anti-mercado. Son un proyecto cultural comunitario y no solamente una iniciativa social.
42. Silvina Freira, *Página/12*; según la antropóloga cultural Johana Kunin que trabajó en la zona de El Alto, "Lo andino y lo aymará es mucho más fuerte allí [El Alto] que en Cochabamba. Y no sólo socialmente es distinto el panorama, sino que económica y políticamente también. Con el resurgimiento del orgullo aymara y andino en general que se ha visto en Bolivia desde hace dos años no es de extrañar la aparición de Yerba Mala como respuesta a ese fenómeno social. Tampoco es sorprendente que los cochabambinos tengan una contra-reacción y no se vean identificados con tal proceso pues su realidad es distinta" (correspondencia personal, 16 de septiembre de 2008).
43. "El sapo no salta por belleza sino por precisión".
44. La editorial fue fundada un año antes de la inauguración el 15 de agosto de 2008 del presidente de Paraguay Fernando Lugo, el ex-obispo cuya elección marcó una clara orientación a la izquierda después de 61 años de gobierno del conservador Partido Colorado. Lugo está apoyado y vinculado a los movimientos sociales populares y sectores de la Teología de la Liberación.
45. http://yiyijambo.blogspot.com/2007_10_01_archive.html.
46. Carlos Bazzano, "Jambo Girl", dos poetas y una editorial underground jopara", 4 de noviembre de 2007, <http://elyacare.wordpress.com/2007/11/04/jambo-girl-dos-poetas-y-una-editorial-underground-jopara/>.
47. <http://guillermosequera.blogspot.com/search?q=yiyi+jambo>.
48. <http://foro.elaleph.com/viewtopic.php?t=37738>.
49. La editorial chilena, Animita Cartonera había, por lo menos, intentado inicialmente una colaboración con el gremial cartonero, que luego abandonó por una serie de dificultades sustituyéndolo con la asociación con jóvenes en riesgo social.
50. http://edicioneslacartonera.blogspot.com/2008_03_01_archive.html.
51. <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/espectaculos/subnotas/10245-3232-2008-06-03.html>.
52. Lidia Bravo, "De la basura a los libros singulares" *El Mundo* (Madrid, España), Lunes 9 de agosto de 2004, Año XV, Número 5.357.
53. http://edicioneslacartonera.blogspot.com/2008/06/blog-post_12.html.

Notes on the Expansion of the Latin American Cardboard Publishers: Reporting Live From the Field

JOHANA KUNIN

Six years. Ten countries. Twenty initiatives with the same “surname” (or what the market research specialists would call “brand name” or even “branding”). I am not talking about McDonald’s, which promotes an automatic replication wherever it installs its franchises, nor am I willing to discuss the H1N1 global pandemic’s expansion that was quick, international, with apparent no pattern, uncontrolled, and unexpected. Instead I am referring to the spread of the Latin American “cardboard publishers,”¹ a social initiative that is promoted mainly by independent writers and artists from the region. To summarize their often dissimilar actions and goals within a few general statements, the cardboard publishers buy cardboard from cardboard collectors at a rate higher than the trade value and then use this cardboard for the covers of their books. Most hire current or former cardboard collectors or their children and work within a process that encourages young people from different social backgrounds to acquire writing and reading habits through various innovative educational initiatives.

They have managed to expand across ten countries in just six years time and to found twenty different cardboard publishers. Surprisingly enough, there is not a main editorial house that controls and regulates the others or that has planned the houses’ regional expansion. Having been launched in Argentina, the initial idea has been adopted with adaptations in Peru, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Paraguay, Ecuador, El Salvador, Colombia, and Bolivia. The pioneering idea has not been mechanically replicated nor executed in any of the countries in the way often suggested by “the steps of implementation” in the fixed guidelines developed by the northern “headquarters” of some social enterprises, NGOs or international aid cooperation agencies.² Rather, each cardboard publishing house is locally tailored, follows a few principles that are shared by the others, and adapts to local circumstances and needs: One publisher is based in prisons and another in a deaf children’s learning center; some work with street cardboard pickers; others establish alliances with social movements, a few with marginalized youngsters and another with housewives; some provide literacy training or literature workshops; some organize alternative book fairs or “counter-power” responses to important literature awards, others are part of the official book fairs; some receive funding from local governments or international aid agencies,

others are organized as cooperatives; some have invented a “new language”; one has tried to de-centralize the access to literature by taking it to marginal regions of the country; that same publisher has organized workshops at schools so as to make students realize that literature is “non sacrilegious”... The cardboard publishers do not follow a specific model but they do share a work methodology and the basic material used in the manufacture of books, cardboard, in order to make “the book”, and to challenge and question the books’ symbolism and implications of the book in Latin America (reflections on the use and role of the book, and the meaning of literature in the region). As I conduct field work for my dissertation’s research,³ it becomes more difficult to picture the essence that they all share. Today I could tentatively say that they all share the long term goal of democratizing access to literature and publishing possibilities and, of course, that they all make books out of re-used cardboard. As Tania Silva from Sarita Cartonera puts it, “we all share the love for literature and the intention to make people think about what the value of books is.”⁴

In the next section, I will describe the history, project and mission of each *cartonera*; then I will consider some common principles and differences among the publishers. Afterwards, I will discuss possible causes for the creation and expansion of the presses in the last six years. Then, I will consider whether or not they are the sole “revolutionaries” of the regional editorial market or if they find themselves as part of an alternative editorial generation of publishers. Next, I will ask if there is a regional network or a movement of cardboard publishers. Finally, I will reflect upon the geographical expansion of the *cartoneras* and the role of the media and the academic world in shaping the publishers’ identity as a “network” and as a “phenomenon” and also encouraging the group’s inner knowledge, communications, and expansion. I will try to explain briefly the main points of each section as this article is intended to be a short introduction to my deeper research project on the expansion and creation of the cardboard publishers.

CARTON⁵-ERA

Eloísa Cartonera, in Argentina, was the pioneering project of *cartonera* publishers, created and promoted by a young writer and two visual artists in 2003, less than two years after the Argentine economic collapse that

caused urban cardboard-pickers (*cartoneros*) to become a symbol of the suddenly increased poverty rates and urban marginality and vulnerability levels. Cardboard is purchased from cardboard-pickers at a price higher than the value that cardboard-pickers usually receive on the market. That cardboard is then used as book covers, which are decorated with colorful stencil techniques by youngsters⁶; inside, the photocopied pages of the books are hand-bound containing stories and poems. Acknowledged Argentine and Latin American authors grant permission for the publishing house to edit their books without asking for benefits. This has given great visibility to the project. In addition, by publishing the texts of young avant-garde Latin American writers, Eloísa Cartonera also provides a means of expression for authors who would otherwise struggle to have their voices heard. All the books are sold at an affordable price and thus promote “democratic” access to Latin American literature and to reading in general. The publishing house is self-managed, works as a cooperative, and is maintained by means of its own production.⁷

One of the founders of the Peruvian publisher, Sarita Cartonera, discovered the Argentine books in a Chilean book store in 2004. Sarita's books have been manufactured by youngsters of a family of cardboard sellers who receive payment for each book they produce. Reviews about the publishing house's texts appear regularly in major national newspapers next to those of multinational publishers.⁸

Bolivia, a country with one of the smallest publishing markets of Latin America, has already developed three cardboard publishing houses. In a place where the value of a book can be one-fifth of an average monthly wage, Yerba Mala was created in 2006 in El Alto and La Paz and offers cheap literature written by young writers in the urban jargon of the street and the local low-income sectors. It has participated in the creation of the counter-book-fair and now takes part in the official one. It has also published the countercultural Des-tamayados anthology that gathers all the stories that participated in the National Literature Prize Franz Tamayo that was declared “void” as its jury considered the entries just “mediocre.”⁹ Yerba Mala decided to publish these entries so that the readers could judge their quality after such a controversial decision. The press does not have its own workshop, and although they began hiring cardboard-pickers in order to produce the books, now the members of Yerba Mala manufacture the books themselves before a book's presentation or upon request. Mandragora Cartonera was founded in 2005,

in Cochabamba, Bolivia, is devoted to acclaimed writers and produces books mainly for university students who order their course's syllabi wrapped in cardboard covers. Deaf children manufacture and paint the books as part of an artistic activity in the specialized center they attend. Nicotina Cartonera was founded in April 2009 in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. Its creator was inspired after watching a documentary film about Yerba Mala in a local cultural center. Yerba Mala advised and helped the members of Nicotina so as to create the publishing house.¹⁰

In 2006, Animita Cartonera was the first Chilean cardboard press. It does not work directly with cardboard pickers but instead with at risk youth and with housewives. Canita¹¹ Cartonera was born in May 2009 in Iquique, in the North of Chile. It is defined as an editorial project within the frame of the creative resources associated with the community of interns from Alto Hospicio Detention Centre.¹² In October 2008, they met the people from Bolivia's Yerba Mala, who had published the works of the Chilean poets Danitza Fuentelzar and Juan Malebrán, the two creators of Canita. The press has received support from various regional institutions.

Dulcinea Catadora,¹³ is based in São Paulo, Brazil and was founded in 2007. In their foundational process Javier Barilaro, one of the creators and a former member of Argentine Eloísa Cartonera, was a very important influence. Dulcinea is a cooperative that gathers artists, writers, and cardboard-pickers. The publisher is partly sponsored by the National Movement of Recyclable Materials' Collectors and by the Street Population National Movement, whose members help in the production of books. Katarina Cartonera is based in Florianópolis, Brazil, and was created in September 2008. They consider themselves the "sister" of Douglas Diegues' Paraguayan Yiyi Jambo because the publishing house was founded after meeting Diegues in "Semana Ousada de Arte" (Daring Art Week), promoted by the local university Universidade Federal de Florianópolis, where Evandro Rodrigues, the press founder, is a graduate student. Cardboard-pickers do not manufacture the books in this case.

Paraguay's Yiyi Jambo began work in 2007, publishes books whose writing is inspired by oral traditions, and uses a language free from the rules of spelling and grammar called *portunhol selvagem*.¹⁴ Felicita Cartonera, Mamacha Kartonera and MBurukujarami Kartonéra were founded at the end of 2008 and are "bifurcations" from Yiyi Jambo and also work with texts in *portunhol selvagem*.

La Cartonera was created in February 2008 in Cuernavaca, Mexico. Its aim is to publish books without having a powerful financial and administrative machine. For La Cartonera, the “undertaking of craft projects in current digital times is an act that commits itself to the future.”¹⁵ They do not work with cardboard-pickers for the production of the books. Santa Muerte Cartonera was created in the Mexican capital city at the end of 2008 and proposes “to make books as a design object in relationship with its contents. That is why every design is very different to the rest.”¹⁶

Matapalo Cartonera in Riobamba, Ecuador, started publishing at the beginning of 2009. A young writer and anthropology student, a visual artist, a craftsman and a young editor decided to create a *cartonera* after hearing about Eloísa Cartonera. Some of Matapalo’s goals are to become “a publisher of cardboard books that works with low income youth; to open a space where those youngsters could learn alternative trades so as to help them make ends meet; to count on an alternative space of publication that is not located in the biggest cities of the country and that could articulate an nonexistent cultural movement in a small city like Riobamba; to create networks with other *cartoneras* so as to help spread Ecuatorian literature in the region; and to disseminate Latin American literature that does not reach Ecuador.”¹⁷

Textos de Cartón is the second Argentine cardboard-publisher and was created in 2009 in Cordoba province. The founder read about other *cartoneras* over the internet, he liked the format and the social task that they had undertaken. The members of the press make the books themselves and when they have financial resources they buy cardboard from cardboard-pickers; if not, they try to get cardboard for free.¹⁸ They have communicated with Cristina Bogado from Paraguayan Felicita Cartonera, but surprisingly they have not been in touch with the people from Eloísa Cartonera, the other Argentine Cartonera and the most mediagenic of all because it was the pioneering project. Cartonerita Solar is composed of students of Literature and Psychology from Universidad Nacional del Comahue (Neuquén, Argentine Patagonia). It started in June 2009 and they intend to make the books themselves, as there are no cardboard-pickers in their region. They want to publish the things that they write but that the “big” publishers look down. Their objective is to publish young authors from the Patagonia region. As they have stated, the only means for publishing in the region is to befriend the people

from the local government so that they can help to fund publications or publish in the official publishing house. However, the local government “only publishes the piece-of-junk-authors that are good for that press, who are the same people that run the publishing house.”¹⁹ Since they do not have a workshop, they plan to sell their books within universities, as they believe their most probable clients will be university students. Cristino Bogado, from Paraguay’s Felicita Cartonera sent them some examples of books through the post so that they could learn how to edit and design more *cartonera* books. This has been the only contact they have had with the rest of the *cartoneras*.

Cabuda Cartonera was born in April 2009 in El Salvador. Héctor Hernández Montesinos, from the Mexican Santa Muerte Cartonera, explained the cartonera project to them. Patasola Cartonera is based in Bogota, Colombia. Maggie Torres, one of its founders, worked with Felicita Cartonera in Paraguay and decided to create her own press when she went to study in Colombia. They have also been in contact with Santa Muerte Cartonera.

SAME SURNAME BUT DIFFERENT FAMILY MEMBERS

It is difficult not to think that twenty initiatives across Latin America—most of them with the same surname or that share the feeling of belonging to a family larger than their own local one—must all have something in common. However, as I continue to conduct fieldwork, it becomes more difficult to figure out what they all share exactly, other than the use of cardboard to make their books. I believe that there is something else, but it does not seem immediately evident. For example, not all of the cartonera publishers work with cardboard-pickers. Just one former cardboard-picker works in Eloisa; relatives from cardboard-sellers work in Sarita; Dulcinea works with an acknowledged and institutionalized Cardboard-pickers National Movement; deaf children manufacture the books from Mandragora; the members from Yerba Mala, Textos de Cartón, Katarina Kartonera, Nicotina, La Cabuda, Felicita and Cartonerita Solar make the books themselves; Animita works with at-risk youth and housewives; Matapalo with low-income youngsters; and Canita with prisoners from a detention center. I do not consider this to be a failure in any way. Rather, I believe that the diversity of experiences is what enriches the *cartoneras* case. It would be

unrealistic to expect the rest of the cardboard presses to follow the non-existent cardboard-publishers creation guidelines that Eloísa Cartonera never wrote nor gave as an oral or formal piece of advice. It is not easy to lump the publishers together.

Among their goals, some presses emphasize the social role of the initiative; others the artistic (or aesthetic) side of the project; some focus on the editorial or literary issues; a few on the political or ideological position of their work; others on their role towards educational practices; and a number could easily be related to charity or NGO initiatives in how they act and manage their projects. Some publishers are funded by international aid agencies or NGOs; others are sponsored by local governments or institutions or the national state; at least one works as a formally constituted cooperative; quite a few are self-managed where the editors have made the initial investment and have reinvested profits in new books.

Some cardboard publishers want to leave the cardboard material from the books' covers quite visible and with a rustic style when painting the books' covers so that the reader will be conscious of the ethical and political implications of reading in this format. Other presses make book-objects. At some cardboard publishers, anyone visiting the workshop can paint the books; in others, only low-income youngsters can do so; and in quite a few the editors produce the books. Some publishers produce only upon request or before a book presentation or to restock sold titles. One press makes books every time they get a "project" funded by an institution. Another produces books on a daily basis.

Academic literary critics have had different reactions to the projects. Some have complimented the work of some presses and consider them to be innovative, while others have said that the cartoneras "are not making literature because it is just cardboard."

Mandragora Cartonera in Bolivia "does not take the fact of participating in a cartonera as a quest for utopia"²⁰; which is just the opposite of Yerba Mala, which defines its mission quite close to that idea. Mandragora and Sarita publish acknowledged authors; Yerba Mala publishes young, avant-garde writers; Eloísa and Matapalo publish a mixture of both. Some publishers feel that they have a sort of counter-hegemonic role against big multinational publishers; others are very comfortable as "part of the system." This is why I do not consider all of the *cartonera* publishers to be a form of cultural resistance or counter-cultural initiatives as a whole, nor do I think that every *cartonera* re-appropriates the

so-called popular aesthetics in the literature they publish. I agree only in part with Jaime Vargas Luna who said: “the common background is related to the need to bring literature closer to the street and to show the street in literature [...] the catalogues of every *cartonera* have their own explorations, but there is a more or less anarchic spirit, a de-sacrilegious spirit that embraces all of us.”²¹ He is correct in regard to the desacralizing the Book (yes, with a capital letter), for example in the presentation of new titles. At some of those events, actors, storytellers, mimes or cumbia bands have taken part. Book presentations have taken place many at non-conventional sites like rough port bars or the city halls of poor municipalities. On such occasions *cartoneras* have offered pisco,²² beer or other popular²³ beverages or foods (like *choripan*²⁴) instead of the traditional wine or champagne cocktails. Many have a common “alternative” approach toward the sale of books. Sarita, for example, had a stand in the International Book Fair in Lima that was made out of cardboard. Additionally, all of the cardboard publishers state that they share a love for books and they are non-profit initiatives. Projects like Matapalo, Cartonerita Solar, Canita, Yerba Mala and Sarita—with its *Cool-tour*²⁵—have expressed a common intention to decentralize literature: to make literature spread in alternative spaces (like a detention center) or to peripheral cities.

Many of the publishers have declared among their goals an objectives to democratize the access to literature. *Cartoneras* generally sell books at a price that is lower than the market price for “traditional books.” However, buyers are mostly university students and professors, writers, journalists, and other middle class professionals, that is to say people who would usually have access to “traditional books.” It is also important to consider whether or not there is a kind of *cool-ture* in buying cardboard books: a certain BoBo²⁶ habit, or fashion that is a product of an un-desired underground marketing machine; or is it just curiosity or morbid fascination with the material of the books or with those who “theoretically”²⁷ make the books or who are being helped with the sales of the books, more than toward the text itself? There is nothing especially negative about this possibility. I am simply pointing out that the low-income sectors that usually do not have access to literature have yet to come closer to literature with the *cartoneras* initiatives. Sarita’s project LUMPA²⁸ has shown how education that encourages the love for reading and the loss of fear for the book object is more impor-

tant than the price (access) of the book itself. Nevertheless, as Eduardo Yumisaca from Matapalo put it, *cartonera* publishers are not “interested in results, as [...] they] are not an NGO.”²⁹ The principal achievement of the cardboard publishers would then be to reveal the importance of the symbolic power of the cardboard books: the opportunity to show that it is possible for many people to write, edit and make books themselves and also to re-think the meaning and the role of the Book.

Regarding the surname *cartonero*, it has been quite remarkable to discover that many editors from the Latin American cardboard publishers do not know what the term *cartonero* implies in Argentina, where it was initially used by the original *cartonera*. After Argentina’s economic meltdown, hundreds of low-income families in cities like Buenos Aires were forced to rummage through the trash in search of recyclable materials such as cardboard that they could then re-sell. These people were named *cartoneros* and collectively became one of the main symbols of the 2001 social and economic crisis.³⁰ The *cartonera* surname of the pioneering Eloisa was inspired by the *cartoneros* or cardboard collectors, and this surname had a very special symbolic, social and political power. The rest of the publishers have employed that surname more generally because they were either using cardboard for the making of the books or because they associated the word with the “literary movement they wanted to be part of, which was named in that way.”³¹ I have asked some of the cardboard publishers’ editors and managers if they worked with *cartoneros* and they have said “we are *cartoneros!*” I used the word in its original Argentine meaning (“cardboard collectors”) and they understood it as “members of the cardboard presses.”

Finally, I want to mention a peculiar myth that was developed regarding the “first name” of each cardboard press. As Sarita Cartonera was named after a popular Peruvian saint, someone in Mexico thought that the “rule” was to name the *cartoneras* after local saints and used the name “Santa Muerte.” Others believed that the “trend”³² was to name the publishers after popular icons or using local jargon as in the case of Animita,³³ Yerba Mala,³⁴ La Cabuda,³⁵ and Matapalo.³⁶ The pioneering Eloisa, however, was neither an Argentine saint, nor a popular icon or local jargon word. She is supposed to be a Bolivian model that one of the press’ creators had a crush on. This proves again the lack of actual communication between the publishers and of any kind of guideline that would help to define what a cardboard publisher is.

WHY HAVE THEY EXPANDED IN THE LAST SIX YEARS?

Some analysts, media or even a few publishers have related the creation and expansion of the Latin American cardboard publishers, which started in 2003, with the election of so-called left or post-neoliberal governments in the region. But so-called left-wing administrations do not govern in all ten countries where the presses are found (Peru, Mexico, or Colombia). Moreover not all of the other countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador) share presidents with post-neoliberal policies, as a single Latin American XXist century left has been widely discussed as non-existent.³⁷ Thus, there is not a deterministic relationship between a supposedly left-wing-government and the opening of a cardboard publisher.³⁸ There is a relationship between the symbolic influence of some historical party politics getting into office like the case of Evo Morales³⁹ and the creation of the Bolivian Yerba Mala. The founders of Yerba Mala have openly declared that having a president like Morales helped them realize that they “could also make their dreams come true.”⁴⁰ But again, I don’t want to establish this line of thinking as a generalization for all the presses. If I continue to analyze the Bolivian scenario, I could erroneously conclude that the Santa Cruz region’s cardboard press, located in an area where Morales and La Paz region are not widely appreciated, would not befriend the members of Yerba Mala, a conclusion that could not be less true. Yerba Mala from La Paz advised and helped found Nicotina from Santa Cruz. This case shows how party politics and regional politics are not deterministically related to the opening of the cardboard presses.

Another explanation for the creation and expansion of the cardboard publishers is that they are a response to the editing, publishing, and selling criteria of neoliberal multinational publishing houses. This could be the reason for the opening of some presses, but not for all, as many have stated that they are more a response to local needs or stakes in their cities’ cultural spheres than to transnational business influences. Another theory suggests that the publishers are a response to the Latin American economic crisis. However, one could easily ask: when has this region not been undergoing a crisis? The same could be said about the price of books in Latin America. Often, the creators of the presses are motivated to sell books at a lower price but they are not the first publishers in history with this purpose (for instance Populibros Peruanos and Centro Edi-

tor de América Latina, CEAL). Furthermore, the price of books in the region was high for low-income sectors many years before the cardboard publishers were created. Additionally, pirated books allow texts to be sold cheaply and in an industry that has widely developed in the last years in the region and theoretically could have discouraged the founding of the *cartoneras*.

I believe that the creation and expansion of these presses is a result of the Information Technologies (I.T.) that have really made the editing and designing of books accessible to a more people willing to participate in the editing process. I.T. have spread across the region (and worldwide) at the same time as the cardboard publishers. As I will explain in the section that follows, these technologies allowed the founding and expansion of many other alternative publishers in the region.

Besides the massive use of Desktop Publishing programs like *Quark Xpress*, the internet has worked as a vehicle for the transmission of news about the creation and activities of the cardboard publishers, as well as their blogs, Facebook pages and web pages. Many newer presses have declared that they were “inspired” to create their own cardboard press after reading the blog of a *cartonera* or a piece of news about them online. However, these tools have not favored communication between the presses, as most of them did not even have the others’ email addresses until recently. The few instances when advice was given for opening a new *cartonera* were face to face, in casual encounters, for example during meetings between Latin American students or writers.

CARDBOARD REVOLUTION?

Even if some people have considered the case of the cardboard publishers as a kind of isolated and “revolutionary” story of a small David against the giant Goliath of the multinational publishers, I believe that they are in many cases part of a bigger alternative publishing trend in the region.

It would be interesting to analyse fanzine production in Latin America as well as the publishers around the scene of Feria del Libro Independiente y (A) (F.L.I.A.), whose events usually take place in seized factories in Argentina; and Estruendomudo, Matalamanga, Álbum del Universo Bakterial, [sic], and many other presses related to Alianza Peruana de Editoriales (ALPE) and Punche Editores Asociados in Peru. Writers who publish with these alternative presses emphasize that these publishing

houses give opportunities to novel or “risky” authors and that the editors are “warmer” than the ones of big publishing houses and don’t just think about sales. They tend to humanize the figure of the writer, and don’t present him as an isolated god or movie star. The consumption circuit of these publishers’ books is focused on universities, counter-book-fairs, neighbourhood cultural centers or community radios, regional meetings of writers, political demonstrations, or at the presentations of new and un-conventional titles. Many of these publishers are used to establishing alliances among themselves for different purposes. Cardboard publishers are part of this trend of alternative presses that, as I have stated, have multiplied thanks to the help of I.T. for editing and designing. Also, they are not the first to make books out of cardboard, as the cases of Ediciones Embalaje (Colombia) and Mexico’s Ediciones El Mendrugo show.

CARTON⁴¹ NETWORK?

Some cardboard publishers, media, or analysts have defined the group of the twenty cardboard presses as a network or a movement. Of course, this is more or less true depending on the definition of those concepts. I recall the opportunity when I found out that there was a new press in Ecuador and I went to Eloisa’s workshop in Argentina only to discover that they were uninformed about it. Additionally, the people from Eloisa told me that they want to publish a regional anthology of all the cardboard publishers but they have had trouble achieving this because they did not have the other publishers’ email addresses or a fluid method of contact with them.⁴² Until very recently, they did not even know what the others were publishing or about their activities. Knowing this, can one talk about a “network”?

On the other hand, I should mention that the Mexican newcomers, La Cartonera, managed to organize a simultaneous launch of Mario Santiago Papasquiaro poems at several of the cardboard publishers in December 2008.⁴³ Some presses have also exchanged texts to publish. Dulcinea Cata-dora is now organizing a collective edition of a children’s book that will be translated into Spanish and published by several other *cartoneras*.

There is a cardboard publisher network but it is still being developed, slowly and not institutionally. In a way, there are two generations of pub-

lishers. The first generation found out about Eloisa from a distance and in a very uncertain way, and these publishers were focused on adapting to their local context (Dulcinea, Sarita, Yiyi Jambo, Mandragora, Yerba Mala, Animita). They have shared texts for publishing, but they have never had a lot of contact among themselves nor thought of themselves as a network. The newer, second generation discovered the first by reading about it in the media. News articles have described the *cartoneras* as a “phenomenon” and a network.⁴⁴ Santa Muerte, Matapalo, La Cartonera, Katarina, Textos de Cartón, Cartonerita Solar, Canita, Nicotina, La Cabuda and Patasola were created because they wanted to “be part” of the movement whose identity has been built and described by the media. They started organizing collective activities for the “network” and establishing stronger bonds of communication. Several of the second generation publishers share a goal of “creating networks with other *cartoneras*.” This situation is like having parents who don’t know that they have a family, and children who desperately want to be part of it.

ME AND THE CARTONERAS AND EVERYONE WE KNOW: ARE THE MEDIA CONSTRUCTING THE “PHENOMENON” WITH ROMANTIC APPROACHES?

Some media outlets have described the group of cardboard presses as a “phenomenon” or as a network, which has affected the construction of the cardboard publishers’ collective identity. Regarding this issue, Jaime Vargas Luna, former member of Sarita, mentioned: “what I ask myself is not why there are [eight] cardboard publishers in Latin America but what they see in us, why we are a symbol or a symptom of something for someone. I have the feeling that the “*cartonero* phenomenon” is not something that we are actually doing but a label put from the outside and I think that it would be very interesting to find out why.”⁴⁵

The media has also often emphasized the “social role” of the publishers without highlighting the fact that they are actually publishing houses and present the publishers more as NGOs. The “social role” is less important to some presses, as they do not work with cardboard-collectors or with at-risk youth or prisoners. They are simply editors and writers who make the books themselves in order to sell what they write or to publish what they consider valuable. However, the media, and even some scholars, tend to highlight this “social side.” Perhaps this occurs because

they “fell in love” with the *cartoneras*, and they tend to romanticize the projects’ goals and to generalize when talking about all of the presses. Diego Muñoz, a member of a family of cardboard sellers who works in Sarita making books said: “in *El Comercio* newspaper an article was written saying that we were cardboard collectors, implying that we were kids with no family, that we did not have anything to eat, that we were poor. That is not true. We have a family and a place to eat. I am not saying that there is something wrong in being a cardboard collector, but we do not do that. Newspapers try to encourage a morbid fascination so that the people will continue reading.”⁴⁶ As a former journalist and current academic researcher, I know that both the perversity of the media and of the academic system obliges many professionals to “sell” their articles’ ideas or research topics to their editors, research grant-makers or directors as completely new, exotic, fascinating and unseen. I believe that the cardboard publishers are creative, smart, and striking initiatives, but I find myself with the ethical obligation of situating them within a certain historical and social context, following what I actually hear from its creators. Through my research, I have come to the conclusion that sometimes insightful projects are more the byproduct of imagination, effort, anarchy, and friendship bonds (between the publishers, in this case) than the result of romantic and revolutionary heroic motivations.

Some people have pointed out that academic analysis and actions like the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s and my own research have also helped shape a cardboard press identity or to encourage the *cartoneras* members to think about themselves, the reasons for their creation, connections and expansion. Jaime Vargas Luna, former member of Sarita, spoke about the “Madison effect.” The university might have promoted the presses’ inner-communication and thoughts about their group identity by organizing the *cartoneras* conference. Regarding my case, far from suffering an egocentric research illness, I believe that I work with subjects of study, human beings, people; not with “objects of study.” And even if it may sound very funny, I share the ethical and political position of thinking that researchers are also human beings who intervene in the social processes that they are studying. According to Gabriela Falconí from Matapalo,⁴⁷ my collective emails to all the publishers in order to coordinate my field research helped promote the contact between them and their reflection about who they were and what they had in common. What’s more, as I have a Participatory Research Approach (P.A.R.), I have decided to film videos of every

press I visit so that the rest of the publishers can get to know the faces and voices of the often completely unknown cardboard publishers' fellows. This widely influences the perceptions that the presses have of each other and also the contact between them and the construction of their group identity. I also carry books from one press to the other while I conduct my multi-site field research. All of these actions inevitably affect the perceptions of *cartoneras* about the other cardboard presses.

ON THE EXPANSIONS OF THE CARTONERAS: HOW THEY ARE NOT JUST A CARDBOARD VERSION OF MCDONALD'S AND WHY THIS IS SO GOOD

I believe that the installation of cardboard publishing houses arises in casual and sporadic encounters between Latin American writers and artists in the region's cities, where the "cardboard spirit" is informally "learnt" in one afternoon. Alternatively, cardboard publishers-to-be read about older presses over the net and were "inspired" to do something similar in their own cities. The installation of almost every cardboard publishing house lies in the will of its creator and in the local situation and needs of each city where every press is born. That is why the main idea of my project is that the expansion of the Latin American cardboard publishing houses resembles the spread of oral traditional tales: it is transmitted by word of mouth, and it is spontaneous, creative, with freedom, with no hierarchies or strict rules...but preserves the "tale's" spirit.

Imagine that "A," a person very concerned with beauty, tells "B" some tales from *A Thousand and One Nights*. "A" will highlight Scheherazade's beauty while recalling how she continued to tell king Shahryar tales night after night. Wisdom is very important for "B," and so when he tells the "same" tale to "C," he emphasizes Scheherazade's intelligence for telling tales night after night. In this simple example, both "A" and "B" tell the same tale but they add their own influence or perceptions to it, related to their own interests and needs and also probably to their audience. That is how oral tales, myths, and legends have spread over the centuries and geographies. I believe that the same thing has happened with the spread of *cartoneras* across the region. As most of them have expanded by word of mouth, they have profited from the flexibility of orality that has allowed them to adapt each initiative to local needs and interests. Both the spread of oral tales and that of the Latin American *cartoneras* are also a

result of spontaneous contacts and actions as there is no scheduled plan behind their expansion. Casual encounters—in villages' fairs or in writers meetings—are both the context for oral-story-telling and for learning about what a cardboard publisher is.

Victor Vimos, from Matapalo, recalls wondering who he was supposed to ask for permission before creating his own *cartonera* until he discovered that there was no one with such a bureaucratic function.⁴⁸ He consequently did what he and his group wanted to do. Freedom and creativity, as in the case of the oral tales, are part of this process. Pioneering Eloísa could have established fixed rules for the creation of sister initiatives or could have functioned as a *cartonera* headquarters, organizing projects, internationalizing the idea or granting authorizations. The spread of the cardboard publishers happens the same way as the expansion of the oral tales: there are neither strict rules nor hierarchies for telling the stories, for deciding how to tell them, nor for who can tell them.

Moreover, as oral-story-tellers usually do not maintain contact after hearing the others' tale, cardboard publishers also have not had shared fluid communication besides the initial spontaneous points of contact (however, this situation has recently begun to change for reasons that I have already explained). Also following the case of A, B and C, it could be mentioned that even if A knows B because A told B the tale, A does not necessarily know C. Few *cartoneras* publishers have actually ever met.

Similar analyses to mine have been done on the subject. Jaime Vargas Luna has said: "there are a thousand reasons for explaining the expansion of *cartoneras*, but if I had to choose one, I would compare their spread to the osmosis process: each one discovered that a *cartonero* project existed, liked it, realized how easy it would be to put into action a similar project and launched it."⁴⁹ In turn, Juan Gómez, a member of Eloísa, has also compared the expansion to the spread of gossip.⁵⁰ Javier Barilaro, a former member of Eloísa, has related it to the Deleuzian concept of the "rhizome."⁵¹ A rhizome is a model where the organization of the elements does not follow hierarchical lines of subordination, instead it has a base or roots that give rise to multiple branches; anything can affect or influence any other element.⁵²

The goal of my work is not only related to the descriptive nature of an interesting case and the context of its emergence. My research will to invite readers to reflect on NGOs, civil society organizations and international aid agencies' practices, expansion and relevance; or, in more

general terms, “development” practices in Latin America. In a recent work (2007) developed by the Association of German Foundations about *social franchising*,⁵³ it is explained that “it makes sense to scale up what has already been proven successful. Because the money, time, and energy associated with implementing new projects are reduced, it is a cost-effective means of utilizing scarce resources, while simultaneously achieving greater impact.” Although some of those statements may be true, I find that the automatic replication of a model or a central institution that controls the rest of the “social franchises” or their expansion might prove to be inefficient or even counterproductive, as social initiatives cannot be compared to for-profit-businesses. I hope that the findings of my study will show a group of encouraging “de-franchised”⁵⁴ experiences that stress the importance of local knowledge, needs and experience when proposing or adopting solutions for social change projects.

I believe that cardboard publishers have experienced a multiplying expansion, neither planned nor centralized (as the pioneering press has never showed a specific institutionalized interest in promoting or discouraging the spread of its idea). The expansion of the presses has been spontaneous, horizontal, and fast and it has produced heterogeneous initiatives as a result. In contrast, Bradach argues: “Effective replication often depends on having a constant, standardized context within which a program will operate. The consequent tight alignment between the organization’s operating model and the intended beneficiaries makes it difficult to serve other groups unless the model is modified at the same time...Replication requires answers to three critical questions: (1) where and how to grow; (2) what kind of network to build; and (3) what the role of the “center” needs to be. While the right answers require both good data and careful analysis, replication is basically a process of planned evolution.”⁵⁵ This has not been the case of the cardboard publishers. They are an example of an anti-franchised kind of expansion. That is why one of the biggest and unmentioned values of the members of Eloísa Cartonera, the first initiative, was not to create guidelines and to give freedom to whoever wanted to create a *cartonera*, granting a lack of need to ask for any kind of permission or instructions.

As Alabarces explained, one must have a complex reading that cannot be reduced to the surface of the poetic text when analysing an artistic manifestation, but that must include the aesthetic side, the *mise en scène*, the industrial and commercial circuits, the rituals of consumption,

the consumers' practices, and the institutions and actors involved in the process. It is impossible to analyze a "phenomenon" such as *cartonera* publishers without an intention to have total look that re-builds the full and thick map of culture in a given society or societies. Otherwise, to deal with these "free areas of culture can lead us to 'populist autonomization,' to the celebration of isolated fragments, to the space where the weak becomes strong and celebrates its identity, without seeing the countless times when the powerful marks the boundaries of what is legitimate and enunciable."⁵⁶

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NOTES

1. Their name in Spanish is “editorial cartonera” that could mean that books are made out of cardboard (“cartón” in Spanish) or also that they are made by or to help cardboard collectors (“cartonero” in Argentine Spanish). “Cartoneros” are cardboard-pickers or garbage-pickers in more general terms. Throughout Latin America, children, women, and men rummage through trash in search of recyclable materials that can be sold. Because of the economic crisis that devastated Argentina in 2001, garbage pickers have become omnipresent and a symbol of the victims of neo-liberal policies in that country. Most of the cardboard publishers share the surname “Cartonera” in their initiatives’ name: Eloísa Cartonera, Yerba Mala Cartonera, Sarita Cartonera, Santa Muerte Cartonera, etc.
2. Jeffrey Bradach, “Going to Scale The Challenge of Replicating Social Programs,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, (Spring 2003), http://www.ssireview.org/images/articles/2003SP_feature Bradach.pdf; Gregory Dees, Beth Battle Anderson, and Jane Wei-Skillern, “Scaling Social Impact Strategies for Spreading Social Innovations,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, (Spring 2004), http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/2004SP_feature_dees.pdf; Paul Tracey and Owen Jarvis, “An Enterprising Failure: Why a Promising Social Franchise Collapsed,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, (Spring 2006), http://www.ssireview.org/pdf/2006SP_casestudy_Tracey_Jarvis.pdf.
3. I have started conducting intensive field research on the subject only three months and a half ago and I expect the reader to take this work as a sort of draft of my field notes. My ideas and impressions can change over time and while I keep on getting to know personally the people of the rest of the Latin American *cartoneras* as well as the writers that have published with them and some other regional alternative publishers. Among the cardboard publishers, I have already worked with Bolivian Yerba Mala and Mandragora, and Peruvian Sarita. I have spent a lot of time with the members of Argentine Eloísa, but still have not conducted field work interviews. I have already contacted and briefly interviewed through email Mexican Santa Muerte Cartonera and La Cartonera; Argentine Cartonerita Solar and Textos de Cartón; Bolivian Nicotina Cartonera; El Salvador’s La Cabuda Cartonera; Chilean Animita Cartonera and Canita Cartonera; Brazilian Dulcinea Catadora and Katarina Kartonera; Ecuadorian Matapalo Cartonera; Paraguayan Yiyi Jambo, Felicita Cartonera, Mamacha Cartonera and MBurukujarami Cartonera; and Colombian Patasola Cartonera. Most of the people from the publishers are aware of my research and are kindly expecting my arrival to their countries. I am using an ethnographic multi-site research method, with a Participatory Action Research (P.A.R.) approach. See G. E. Marcus, “Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 95-117.
4. Tania Silva in conversation with the author (June 2009).
5. “Cartón” is cardboard in Spanish.
6. Initially, they were only young cardboard-pickers, but currently only one of the six permanent members of the cooperative Eloísa Cartonera work or worked also as cartonero.
7. For more on Eloísa Cartonera, please see Craig Epplin, “New Media, Cardboard, and Community in Contemporary Buenos Aires,” *Hispanic Review* (Autumn 2007) p. 385-398; Ksenija Bilbija (2008) “What is Left in the World of Books: Washington Cucurto and the Eloísa Cartonera Project in Argentina,” *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture* 27 (2008): 85-102; Mariano Lopez Seoane and Deymonnaz Santiago, “Sneaking in the Illegal: Notes on Eloísa Cartonera,” (paper presented at Latin American Studies Association, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 15-18 March 2006).
8. For more about Sarita Cartonera, please see Lauren Pagel, “Sarita Cartonera’s Space Invasion: The Communication Circuit of a Cartonera Publishing House,” *Illumination* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2009).
9. W. Camacho, “¿Y qué fue lo que pasó con el Premio Franz Tamayo?” *Fondo Negro*, 16 November 2008, http://www.laprensa.com.bo/fondonegro/16-11-08/16_11_08_edicion4.php. The translation is mine.
10. Julio Ricardo Zuna in conversation with the author (May 2009).
11. Canita means “jail” in Chilean and Bolivian Spanish jargon.
12. Danitza Fuentelzar in conversation with the author (May 2009).
13. “Catadora” means “Cartonera” or cardboard-picker in Portuguese.
14. *Portunhol selvagem* is a mixture of the languages present in the Triple Border of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil: Spanish, Portuguese and native population languages

- such as Guarani.
15. Members of La Cartonera in conversation with the author (August 2008).
 16. Héctor Hernández Montecinos and Yaxkin Melchy in conversation with the author (December 2008).
 17. Gabriela Falconí Piedra in conversation with the author (January 2009).
 18. Andrés Nieva in conversation with the author (June 2009).
 19. Members from Cartonerita Solar in conversation with the author (June 2009).
 20. Iván Castro Aruzamen in conversation with the author (April 2009).
 21. Silvina Friera, "El homenaje a un autor que escribió en los márgenes," *Página/12* (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Dec. 1, 2008. Translation is mine.
 22. Peruvian grappa.
 23. Meaning not "famous," but from the "people."
 24. Argentine sandwich of grilled highly-seasoned pork sausage.
 25. The purpose of the *Cool-tour* was to connect the non-central-provinces of the country with literature from Lima.
 26. Term refers to bourgeois-bohemians, people often of the corporate upper class, that rarely oppose mainstream society, claim highly tolerant views of others, purchase expensive and exotic items, and believe American society to be meritocratic. David Brooks, *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).
 27. As many people keep on thinking that mostly cardboard-collectors are the ones that make the books.
 28. "Books, a model for assembling" (LUMPA, in Spanish), was a workshop that took place in primary schools where students hand-bound and wrote a cartonero book, using their own interpretations of the texts they read. In this way, literature was brought closer to young people, rendering it "non sacrilegious." For more info see Kristel Best Urday, "Libros un Modelo Para Armar: Ediciones Artesanales Itinerantes."
 29. Eduardo Yumisaca in conversation with the author (June 2009).
 30. Besides probably the "pots and pans" that were used to protest in the streets.
 31. Dulcinéia Catadora would be a clear exception to that case.
 32. La Cabuda in conversation with the author (June 2009).
 33. "Animitas" are the small caves with a shape of little houses that are built in the places where people have accidentally died along the roads. They are supposed to be "accommodations" for the spirits that have unexpectedly left the bodies. Bilbija, "¡Cartoneros de todos los países, uníos!" in this volume.
 34. According to local stories, the "yerba mala" (weed) is supposed to be impossible to be destroyed because even if it is pulled out, it will grow again. Bilbija, "¡Cartoneros de todos los países, uníos!"
 35. In local El Salvador's jargon "cabuda" means "to cooperate." La Cabuda in conversation with the author.
 36. Matapalo is a characteristic tree from the warm hills from Ecuador and an element from José de la Cuadra's *Los Sangurimas* novel. Its particularity lies in the infinite number of branches that it has. Víctor Vimos in conversation with the author (June 2009).
 37. Franklin Ramírez Gallegos, "Mucho más que dos izquierdas," *Nueva Sociedad* 205 (2006), <http://www.nuso.org>.
 38. Unless they would have been State-funded initiatives.
 39. Morales is the first indigenous president to be elected in the history of a country whose population is mostly indigenous.
 40. Darío Luna in conversation with the author (April 2009).
 41. "Cartón" means cardboard in Spanish.
 42. That is why, as I have a Participatory Action Research approach on my research, I have agreed with them in helping them to gather the materials so as to publish the anthology.
 43. Animita, Eloísa, Yiyi Jambo, Sarita, Yerba Mala, Mandrágora and La Cartonera participated in that project. One local author wrote the prologue of each local edition of the book.
 44. Friera, "El homenaje a un autor que escribió en los márgenes"; F. Mosquera, "Literatura humilde, pero rebelde," *El Telégrafo* (Guayaquil, Ecuador) March 21, 2009.
 45. Jaime Vargas Luna in conversation with the author (September 2008).
 46. Diego Muñoz in conversation with the author (June 2009).
 47. Gabriela Falconí in conversation with the author (May 2009).
 48. Víctor Vimos in conversation with the author (June 2009).
 49. Jaime Vargas Luna in conversation with the author (September 2008).

50. Juan Gómez in conversation with the author (December 2008).
51. Javier Barilaro in conversation with the author (July 2008).
52. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 1* (París: Minuit, 1972).
53. “Franchising” practices for social enterprises.
54. In the sense of stop behaving as if they would be installing franchises
55. Bradach, “Going to Scale The Challenge of Replicating Social Programs.”
56. Pablo Alabarces and María Graciela Rodríguez, *Resistencias y mediaciones: Estudios sobre cultura popular* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2008), 32, 35.

Theory of the Workshop: César Aira and Eloísa Cartonera

CRAIG EPPLIN

“What are books made of?”
César Aira¹

DISTRIBUTIONS

One of the reasons we pay attention to artists, to writers and filmmakers, to performers, and founders of small presses, is because we care about the worlds they invent. That is, we care to find out what forms of labor and collective action, of cooperation and hierarchy, are proposed through their symbolic interventions. We care, in short, about what a given distribution of the sensible looks like when modeled as a work of art. And this interest in turn reiterates an old conceit: that artists are capable—for so goes this particular conceit—of placing under the microscope, or refracting through a prism, or situating inside a hall of mirrors, the myriad sense perceptions that make up the stuff of everyday life. To switch metaphors, this would be an understanding of the work of art as the site of an experiment and of the aesthetic experience in general as a small (or large) laboratory made out of words (and other things): a laboratory—or perhaps more accurately, given the topic of this volume of essays, a workshop—for modeling the construction of collective life.

By invoking the idea of a “distribution of the sensible,” I am referencing the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière. The phrase refers to a “system of self-evident facts of sense perception” that establishes at once what is common and what is private, what is shared and what is not. Works of art—and works of other sorts as well—parse out the realm of what is perceptible; they draw lines that determine what counts and what does not. This is why, to Rancière’s mind, there is “an ‘aesthetics’ at the core of politics,” because artistic practices are “ways of ‘doing and making’ that intervene in the general distribution of ways of doing and making.” If politics “revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it,” the arts similarly articulate “modes of being and forms of visibility” that are proposals for collective life. Here the aesthetic laboratory finds its ultimate application, for aesthetics and politics would (often secretly) share a common task: the delineation of worlds accessible to sensation and thought.²

The “distribution of the sensible” is a central concept throughout Rancière’s work. There is a brilliant exposition of its political consequences in “The Order of the City,” an essay on the division of labor as understood by Plato and Aristotle. In it, Rancière finds that the central prohibition in *The Republic*—that no one person occupies two different jobs—has nothing to do with competence. This pretense is only a ruse, aimed solely at shoring up class divisions. Thus, “[t]he only danger” in Plato’s republic “lies in confusing orders. Between artisan and warrior, or between warrior and ruler, there can be no exchange of place and function; neither can two things be done at the same time without bringing doom to the city.” Stripping away the rhetoric of competency that underlies this mandate, we find that “[a]ll that remains is the prohibition,” which is to say that the function of the citizen is simply to obey, to stay in “his” place.³ This political division is foundational for Western philosophy, and it is not restricted to questions of labor. Thus in another essay Rancière finds that Western theater is premised on “a gap between two positions,” identified with the dramaturge and the spectator. “There is,” in this distribution of positions, “capacity on one side and incapacity on the other.” The rhetoric of capacity, its lie revealed in the essay on *The Republic*, recurs in the genesis and structure of Western theater, oriented again toward delineating a basic division of roles. For Rancière, what is contravened, as long as we accept this framework, is a democratic distribution of authority. The alternative, or one alternative in any case, is to jettison the principle of inequality and to “emancipate the spectator.” “Emancipation,” Rancière proposes, “starts from the opposite principle, the principle of equality. It begins when we dismiss the opposition between looking and acting.”⁴ Emancipation, stand-in for a more democratic mode of social life, thus begins with a leveling and also with a blurring or erasure of lines, a “distribution” in which equality and collusion among participants is assumed from the outset.

It would not be a stretch to assert that the series of aesthetic interventions that are the topic of this volume are motivated by a similar desire: the desire to distribute roles and responsibilities in an egalitarian, fluid manner. Thus the rhetoric of Eloísa Cartonera, the first of the *cartonera* presses to appear and still the most well-known among them, emphasizes cooperation among cardboard collectors, artists, and writers: “a cardboard shop, called No hay cuchillo sin Rosas, is its site, where cardboard collectors exchange ideas with artists and writers.”⁵ This putatively free

exchange of ideas would seek to generate a collaborative work environment, which is to say that the press considers itself “a social and artistic project in which we learn to work in a cooperative manner.”⁶ Eloísa Cartonera’s participants, subsumed under the “we” (“aprendemos”) of this formulation, aim at “working in a cooperative manner” and also a more responsible one: as the project’s website tells us, the cardboard collectors are compensated at five times the going rate for their materials. All these efforts at achieving equality are oriented toward producing a more “genuine” mode of labor: “The idea of the project is to generate genuine work through publishing books of contemporary Latin American literature. To this end, we came up with a very simple form of work that consists in making cardboard books.”⁷ The cardboard book, in this picture, becomes a vehicle through which a somewhat egalitarian distribution of labor and authority is theorized.

All of this is not without precedent, of course, as attempts to build bridges across class divides are not new in Latin American literary history. In this direction, we might think of the long pedagogical (and more often than not, pedantic) tradition that stretches from certain nineteenth-century “national romances” through the *Martín Fierro* up to novels like *Doña Bárbara* and the *Teatro Guiñol* of Rosario Castellanos and others. In broad strokes, these texts and undertakings sought to mediate the class and ethnic divisions of postcolonial Latin American countries through a literature of cultural uplift. The pedagogical bent of this tradition, it almost goes without saying, largely leaves intact that initial division critiqued by Rancière: “capacity on one side and incapacity on the other.” More radical—and more immediately informative for the *cartonera* presses—is a project like the “teatro do oprimido” of Augusto Boal. A series of theater projects staged primarily in São Paulo and rural Peru, this “theater of the oppressed” provided a touchstone for a complex theoretical apparatus. Thus, in an eponymous text, the Brazilian director traces a genealogy of Western theater and finds, as Rancière later would, a foundational division between actors and spectators: “In the beginning, the theater was the dithyrambic song: free people singing in the open air. The carnival. The feast. Later the ruling classes took possession of the theater and built their dividing walls. First, they divided the people, separating actors from spectators: people who act and people who watch—the party is over! Secondly, among the actors, they separated the protagonists from the mass. The coercive indoctrination began!”⁸

Here, then, Boal proposes that prior to the Aristotelian “distribution of the sensible” there had been a time of flux and celebration, of “free people in the open air.” The factual basis of this assertion is of little concern for the present essay. What is more interesting is how this history became the basis for Boal’s theater experiments, interventions conceived as nothing less than a “rehearsal for revolution.” Animating this “rehearsal” was an attempt at recuperating a moment anterior to a distribution of roles putatively based on “capacity and incapacity.”

We find, then, an antecedent of the *cartonera* publishing houses—more specifically, of Eloísa Cartonera—in a particular theater tradition. *Cartonera* publishing, like Boal’s theater, seeks to “stage,” through a series of elaborate and somewhat informal scenes, the construction of social life itself. Equally significant for the *cartonera* presses, however, has been a certain lineage of print literature. In an essay published on the website of Eloísa Cartonera, Washington Cucurto, one of the press’s founders, traces a genealogy of Argentine writers—from Roberto Arlt through Copi up to César Aira and Dalia Rosetti (pseudonym of Fernanda Laguna, another of the founders)—who in some way prefigure the operations of the *cartonera* presses. What do these writers’ texts have in common? Cucurto claims that the work of all these authors is propelled forward by the “force of circumstances,” which is to say that their writing is conceived as a sort of event, the performance of a real-time intervention in reality.⁹ That Cucurto makes this point is hardly surprising, for in some way this is also the form that his own writing would ideally take. For example, his novel *Hasta quitarle Panamá a los yanquis* was published in serial format on Eloísa Cartonera’s website, and its prologue extends an invitation to his readers: “Ah, and to all those visitors to W.C.’s page, he’ll be waiting on you each Friday at midnight at the danceable Mbarete Bronco (Pasaje O’Brian 150).”¹⁰ The publication of the novel is thus linked, conceptually, to the possibility of a meeting, of an informal encounter among readers with the writer. And this is what connects the written work of Cucurto to the operations of Eloísa Cartonera in general: a distribution of roles in which the literary act is seen as a collaborative performance, as the occasion of an encounter.

Of the two living authors mentioned as forerunners of this sort of literature, César Aira is certainly the better known. The author of more than fifty short novels and essays, Aira is fast becoming one of Latin America’s most celebrated writers; this will continue as more of his books are trans-

lated and reissued. Aira's readers would certainly find resonance between his work and a gesture like Cucurto's invitation to readers. Already in *Cómo me hice monja*, one of his better-known texts, he had encouraged his readers to call him on the phone: "My number's in the phonebook. I keep the answering machine turned on, but I'm there next to the telephone." Such a gesture, like Cucurto's, would correspond to a central fantasy in his work, "the fantasy of a text that registers and displays the concomitant unfolding of life and writing, writing inciting the unfolding of life, life imposing its inscription in writing."¹² The fusion of the act of writing and the process of living, the idea of a writing that advances at the pace of lived time, a literature of circumstances: this describes an old avant-garde aspiration, a filiation that Aira often underscores when he writes and speaks about his own work. With the rapid, almost careless, publication of his short novels, he seemingly follows Breton's first commandment of surrealism to the letter: "write quickly...." But, underlying this fantasy—indeed, underlying the entirety of Aira's work—is a more fundamental question: that of the dimensions of the literary experience, of the temporal and spatial extensions of writing and reading, for what we call literature is always mediated through things with particular limits and potentials. How do these things—books, to take a paradigmatic example, or telephones, webpages and discotheques, to mention others—delineate an experience of literature? This is the question presupposed by the shared fantasy of Aira and Cucurto, and it is one that affects directly the distribution of the sensible proposed by each of them.

What are the dimensions of the literary experience imagined by Aira? And by Eloísa Cartonera? The latter of these suggests an answer to this question: its dimensions are those of a workshop. Everywhere on the project's website—a video demonstrating how a cardboard book is made, the emphasis on each individual book's roughly-hewn appearance, the availability of book-making classes—it points toward its own workshop as the central space of literary experience. It is with respect to this emphasis on work, and on work that takes place in a determinate location, that Aira can most usefully be seen as a precursor—indeed, the primary precursor—of the press's operations. This relationship—the conceptual linking of Aira's writings to Eloísa Cartonera's operations—occupies the crux of this essay. In it, I will propose that Aira delineates a notion of literature in which the task of writing and the job of publishing are seen as necessarily interdependent processes, a notion that later becomes

foundational for Eloísa Cartonera. In other words, Aira proposes a form of literature that engages with the materials of its construction, and the *cartonera* presses ultimately enact this sort of literature. It is at the crossing of these writings with these publishing projects that we witness the emergence of a literature based on concrete work, a literature that is best conceived along the lines of a theory of the workshop.

WRITERS AS PUBLISHERS

But what is a workshop? “[A] productive space in which people deal face-to-face with issues of authority”: Richard Sennett offers up this provisional definition in a recent cultural history of work and craft.¹³ With characteristic concision, Sennett’s formula gets at the question of distribution that I have outlined above. The *cartonera* presses would be workshops in as much as they foreground the question of authority, of how it is distributed and how it is exercised. And following Sennett’s definition closely, this question ideally emerges in a face-to-face dynamic, which is to say in a space whose dimensions are somewhat limited. That is, a key characteristic of workshops tends to be a high level of contact among participants. The result is an intimate, tight-knit social scene. “The history of the workshop shows, in sum, a recipe for binding people tightly together.”¹⁴ As Sennett tells the story, the workshop has been, in its various incarnations since medieval times, a “living scene of labor.”¹⁵

Sennett’s use of the term “scene” is not surprising. Like Boal and Rancière before him, he makes reference to the theater in order to illustrate an elementary division of labor: “In the archaic theater there was relatively little divide between spectator and performer, seeing and doing: people danced and spoke, then retired to a stone seat to watch others dance and declaim. By the time of Aristotle, actors and dancers had become a caste with special skills of costuming, speaking, and moving. Audiences stayed offstage, and so developed their own skills of interpretation as spectators. As critics, the audience sought to speculate then about what the stage-characters did not understand themselves (though the chorus on stage sometimes also took on this clarifying role).”¹⁶

The resonances with Boal’s text are evident here: singing, dancing, speaking, and sitting in turn, participants in early theater took on every possible role. But, by the time of Aristotle, this participatory flux had given way to an early form of specialization, which would ultimately

produce the professional actor and, simultaneously, the professional critic (the most highly specialized of spectators): some perform, others watch. This division between spectator and actor bears important consequences for Sennett's appeal to craftsmanship as a paradigm for work because it limits access to the "tools" (broadly conceived) of a given art. The prohibitions of specialization, in short, make craft impossible. "The craftsman, engaged in a continual dialogue with materials, does not suffer [the] divide" between maker and consumer, or between performer and spectator.¹⁷ Craft, in this conception, corresponds to a mode of labor in which roles are not distributed as hard-and-fast positions, but rather where all participants would engage in various tasks.

Here, as is the case with Eloísa Cartonera, engagement with the materials of construction is central. This sort of engagement recurs, almost obsessively, in the novels of César Aira. These texts are replete with fanciful descriptions of practices that, we are led to suppose, imagine ways of constructing literary objects. They abound with instructions and tools, and with scenes in which tools are invented or improvised. There is an extraordinary example of this tendency in the 1992 novella *El volante*, which as the title indicates begins as a "flier," although it quickly gets out of hand and becomes something like a novel, the one we are reading. Halfway through, we read a description of how the text is being constructed:

I'm using what's called, in English, "stenciling," "extensiling," as you'd say it, and will later print it on a mimeograph machine. These days fliers are made with the photoduplication system, I looked into it, but it was pretty expensive. And besides, just as with simple photocopies (more expensive still, but with the advantage that I could make them as I passed them out), I'd have to make a typed original, and as it happens I don't own a typewriter. [...] And now, since I don't have a typewriter, I make those incisions by hand, with a needle, imitating as best I can a printed typeface.¹⁸

Here we find a "living scene of labor," a workshop-like figuration of the act of writing: a made-up one, for certain, but one that accurately represents the relationship between literature and labor imagined in Aira's fiction. The task of the writer, if we follow the suggestion of this scene, would ideally take the form of an artisanal practice, in which the author must carve out the individual letters he will later use on a mimeograph.

The resultant product is likely to be rough and imprecise, still bearing traces of this improvisational labor. That is, the author will imitate, as best as he can, standard typeface, but as he implicitly recognizes he can hope only to come close.

Aira couches this painstaking operation within a situation of penury: this writer (a wryly constructed stand-in for himself) cannot afford a typewriter, and photocopies are prohibitively expensive. The suggestion is that in such circumstances one must go back and start over, reinventing the wheel, or in this case the press, in the face of a poverty of options. The passage thus reads well as a comment on contemporary publishing conditions—both in Latin America and in numerous other places. The material constraints hyperbolized here are nothing new to Latin American publishers. Throughout the twentieth century, and even during what Matilde Sánchez calls the “era of publishing splendor” of the sixties, Spanish-language publishers faced all sorts of difficulties, ranging from political repression to seemingly banal commercial problems like the high prices of paper, postage, and translation rights.¹⁹ In recent decades, this penury has given rise, among young Argentine writers, to a particular set of aesthetic practices and attitudes, which ultimately become manifest in a concern with how the literary object appears, with how it is made and circulated. One recent essay on “new” Argentine poetry proposes that:

...if there's something truly new in this literature it's the material on which it appears. The first thing about this poetry that attracts attention isn't the way it's written but rather the materiality of the book-object that houses it. Curious designs, formats rather distinct from “common” books... things that make us wonder “but what is this?” That feeling of surprise is the mode in which the “new,” the distinctive element of this recent poetry, initially appears to us. And we should pay special attention to it. The design of books of recent poetry makes up the first and fundamental mediation that the critic should pay attention to when s/he sits down to read it.²⁰

A fundamental characteristic of recent Argentine poetry, then, would be a concern with the vehicle that allows it to appear—a concern that simultaneously provokes experimentation with other vehicles (cardboard books, for instance). To be sure, this is not the result of an artistic whim. Rather, it reflects a concrete economic conjuncture characterized by the “absolute impossibility” for an ambitious or experimental writer to be

published by a major press. While most contemporary writers of this ilk do not carve their own typeface, in this context it is not inconceivable that one or some of them might.

To illustrate how this plays out, I will mention just one exemplary case, the “Escuela de Poesía y Edición” (“Poetry and Publishing School”) recently announced by Argentine poet Daniel Durand. At first glance, the description of the school (a simple text posted on a blog) seems quite unremarkable: the first year centers on reading, writing, and critique, and the second focuses on translation and orality; classes are small, none of them exceeding five participants. However, another topic of the course’s second year seems particular to the present moment, as the practice of publishing is taught. While completion of the course will not result in a diploma, something more substantial is promised: “at the close of the second year students will walk away with a poetry press under their arms.”²¹ Students will not take away with them a published text, as the metaphor of the arm would lead us to expect, rather they will construct a poetry press of their own. Like Durand himself (co-founder of Ediciones Deldiego and Colecciones Chapita), participants in the school will become ideally both poets and editors.

“First publish, then write”: this notorious dictum sums up this general reorientation in Argentine letters. This phrase is scattered, in various permutations, throughout the work of Osvaldo Lamborghini, a writer whose posthumous writings have been edited and extensively glossed by Aira. In his notes on these volumes (epilogues that contain invaluable insights into his late friend’s work) Aira never ceases to underscore the centrality of this notion. This owes to a number of reasons, for certain, but to one in particular: Aira conceives that publishing is a central—and perhaps the central—act in the contemporary literary experience. As I outline above, this conception of literature results from a general impoverishment, both in general economic terms and in particular of access to channels of publication. However, and just as significantly, it also stems from a number of more propitious circumstances. In Argentina, for instance, the maintenance of a strong peso during the nineties meant that imported photocopy machines became more widely available. This was good for students and non-mainstream writers, but less good for the book industry (already undergoing transformations of vaster proportions).²² Similarly, during those same years advances in computer technology opened up new possibilities for text design. By the mid-nineties,

writes one observer, “[t]ext and images could be prepared, edited and even typeset on the computer. With the introduction of the laser printer, high-quality printing too became a desktop operation. Every aspect of the traditional publishing industry had been made accessible, except the mechanisms of distribution.”²³ And of course, it goes without saying that these developments in printing and design were mirrored by an expansion in the possibilities of online publishing. By the late nineties, user-friendly platforms such as Blogger had appeared, providing the infrastructure for influential blogs such as Daniel Link’s “Linkillo (cosas más)” as well as a host of others. Aira had his finger on the technological pulse when he advised, during those same years, to “expect nothing from publishers. The future, if there is a future, is in self-publication. Very soon, thanks to technological advances, books will be able to be made at home, we’ll all be able to make them.”²⁴ The *cartonera* workshops represent the logical unfolding of this scenario, as they seemingly suggest that the future (of literature, I might add), if such a future exists, is contingent on a fusion of roles, on writers becoming publishers.

AIRA AS THEORIST

Aira’s position, prescient of the *cartonera* presses and of other phenomena in contemporary Argentine literature, has often been read as indicating his resistance to the imperatives of market culture. Take, for instance, this judgment by Francine Masiello: “In the style of Macedonio Fernández,” she writes, “who knew that the unfinished work was the one that most resisted the market, Aira leaves a sense of fragmented knowledge, which resists linear recuperation, and refuses a turn to nostalgia. As such, his texts remain outside the usual forms of best-seller commerce and sales and instead celebrate the dissolution of identity politics along with the dissolution of conventional narrative form.”²⁵ Here, Masiello conjugates a number of features of Aira’s work—its seemingly unfinished quality, its unconventional form, its anti-essentialist attitudes around questions of identity—as signaling his resistance to the demands of the market in cultural goods. Aira’s essays on literature (generally polemical in tone) indeed frequently lend credence to this interpretation. Between the best seller and the work of literature, he writes in one text, “the incompatibility is absolute.”²⁶ The real work of literature, in this somewhat derivative formulation, would resist its incorporation into the sphere of commerce.

A novel like *Las curas milagrosas del Doctor Aira*, to take one example, would, on the surface, serve to bolster such a claim. The Doctor Aira of the novella's title is a sort of medicine man, a paranoid healer convinced that his rival, representative of the medical establishment, is out to get him, to out him as a fraud in a candid camera stunt. He is also, we learn, a writer, a prolific and unpublished one, who in his spare time has filled notebook upon notebook with his meditations on what he calls "miraculous cures." He has come into some money, and takes a sabbatical from healing to edit and publish his accumulated writings. This is no small task, for the writings are as ill-organized as they are extensive. "He was," we read, "in the position of a poet who had written ten thousand poems, and the time had come to start thinking seriously about editing them."²⁷ The analogy, however, does not precisely hold, for Doctor Aira's writings do not take the form of discrete, easily identifiable units such as poems. Rather, his is an amorphous body of text that extends in all directions, covering—it would seem—the entirety of his thought throughout his lifetime: "over the course of the last years he had filled an incredible number of notebooks with the development of his ideas; he had written so much that to write more, on the same theme, was directly impossible."²⁸ Editing such a body of work means parceling it out, and to do so Doctor Aira decides that the most adequate format will be the *fascículo*, or serial installment. His *fascículos* will be little hardcover volumes, will not exceed a few pages in length, and will appear at regular intervals, as is customary with serial texts.²⁹

Unlike other common forms of serial production—novels by Dickens or Rowling, or Latin American *telenovelas*—Doctor Aira's novels will not be profitable, will not come close to covering their own costs. Thus, Doctor Aira decides to edit his works only upon receiving a lump sum of money, analogous perhaps to a sort of fellowship or grant, to draw a parallel with one common form of financing artistic production in the present. This allows him a certain freedom in the production of his installments: economic calculations become superfluous. And thus, Doctor Aira "did not consider selling the *fascículos*, for which he would have had to set up a commercial sort of business, register as a publisher, pay value-added taxes, and a thousand other things that he didn't dream of doing. He'd give them away; nobody could stop him from doing that."³⁰ But if they are unlike other, more profitable forms of serial texts, what sort of thing are these *fascículos*? With their whimsical focus on "miraculous

cures,” they seem rather to invoke the sort of text that any recent visitor to a large Latin American city cannot help but encounter: eight- or twelve-page books of poetry (stapled or just folded) handed out on the subway, small compilations of quotations by philosophers aimed at improving our love lives given away for a small donation, fliers handed out by people standing on corners. These are some common forms of circulation taken by marginal forms of written material in many parts of Latin America today.³¹ And they certainly make their way from their authors to their readers (or to their potential readers—I, for one, spend little time reading the texts that are thrust into my hands) outside “the usual forms of best-seller commerce and sales,” to return to Masiello’s neat formulation. And it is in something like this manner that Doctor Aira imagines his *fascículos* circulating, which ultimately explains why Masiello reads resistance in Aira, and by extension in the print subjects who remain faithful to his poetics.

In the critical reception of Aira’s work, this perceived resistance has almost invariably been coupled to his allegiance to the avant-garde (ultimately an articulation of an arrière-garde, to draw on a recent text by Marjorie Perloff).³² Dierdra Reber has identified this aspect of Aira’s work as marking the dominant strand of critical reflection on it. She cites the plethora of “arguments that seek to define his entire oeuvre as a unified set of unorthodox procedures either suggestive of or identifiable with those of historical Vanguard artists,” a characterization that Aira himself has, as I signal above, often promoted.³³ This critical tendency, she maintains, invariably centers on Aira’s invocation of procedure as the driving force that underlies all artistic creation. Thus Aira’s most cited critical text, titled “La nueva escritura,” affirms that “[t]he great artists of the twentieth century aren’t those who made works, but rather those who invented procedures for works to make themselves, or not. What do we need works for? Who wants another novel, another painting, another symphony? As if there weren’t enough already!”³⁴ The question is worth asking: who, in effect, wants another novel, another painting, another symphony? Who, when there are so many out there already, needs more? The question makes sense not because of the empirical answer to it (for plenty of people do indeed want more novels, more paintings, more symphonies), but because it reminds us of the original inventive gesture—the labor—that gives rise not to works but to the possibility of works. This would be, then, the defining characteristic of the avant-garde that Aira seeks to recover.

Aira's emphasis on process—his obsessive return to the act of fabrication, to the invention of procedures—is thus often seen as indicative of a resistance to the cultural demands of late capitalism. It would be an easy enough task to debunk this claim. After all, we all know that capitalism is voracious, that its appetite is only whetted by cultural models that seem to escape its reach. We still find ourselves within the prolonged “historical moment at which the commodity completes its colonization of social life.”³⁵ And thus, it comes as no surprise that Aira’s texts are increasingly taken up by large publishing houses firmly ensconced within the international culture industry (seemingly negating, years later, Masiello’s original judgment that his texts are, in practical terms, unassimilable to the market). Various second editions of his novels, for example, have appeared under Mondadori’s imprint. The Spanish-language operations of this Italian company, chaired by Silvio Berlusconi, are managed through a partnership with Random House. This company, in turn, forms part of Bertelsmann media, a German conglomerate comprising five divisions involved in broadcasting, music, periodicals, media distribution, and publishing. In this very literal sense, Aira’s work is increasingly integrated into the literary arm of the culture industry.

Debunking can be satisfying. It is easy enough to answer the question, “does Aira’s work, in spite of its express desires, resist the operations of transnational capitalism?” with a resounding or qualified “no.” And while we are at it, we might say something similar about Eloísa Cartonera, notwithstanding its rhetoric of “genuine work” and cooperative labor. We might easily see such a project as engaging in the cultural administration of members of the urban poor, of a global underclass that, as Mike Davis has shown, is increasingly treated as a “surplus humanity.”³⁶ But to restrict our analysis to this point would leave another, more pragmatic and immediate question unasked: within the present cultural ecology, what sorts of literary and social worlds do these projects imagine? That is, within contemporary constraints on literary and cultural production, what distribution of roles are proposed and set forth by them? Such a question sidesteps the issue of resistance, instead focusing on what happens within the horizon of production characteristic of the present. This question is, in part, answered above: for Aira, as for many literary actors in contemporary Argentina—Eloísa Cartonera foremost among them—the possibility of literature (its future, if it has a future) is contingent on publication and writing becoming two sides of the same coin. Aira

highlights and exemplifies this in his work—his critical essays and his fiction—as for him the act of making ultimately takes precedence over the finished literary product; publishing exists on a continuum with writing (even preceding it, conceptually speaking). The literary experience, in this formulation, ideally becomes a “scene of living labor” in which traditional roles, the traditional divisions based on divergent capacities, are confounded. And this is why I propose we read Aira’s texts as theorizing an experience of literature centered in the workshop.

LITERATURE AND PRACTICE

Scenes of literary labor such as these necessarily happen in concrete places, which is why the *cartonera* workshops—invariably anchored in a neighborhood, at a specific address—exemplify this notion of literature. And this has consequences for the reach, for the dimensions of this sort of literary experience, dimensions that are necessarily small. “Small” means two things here. It means, on the one hand, that the literary horizon has diminished for writers like those who see their work published by presses such as Eloísa Cartonera. As one astute observer points out, contemporary literature has become, within a highly variegated media landscape, “[j]ust another among so many formats that the versions or stories of historical or social life might take.”³⁷ This is a widely commented, general development, and it places limits on the reach of contemporary literary discourse. At the same time, however, these limitations often become the occasion for a certain delirious optimism. “Literature,” Aira writes in a moment of illumination, “that grandiose, oversized institution, can also be small and light like a butterfly.”³⁸ This revelation puts a particular spin on the loss of literature’s grandiosity and, indeed, its relevance (again, a loss experienced principally by certain sorts of literature). This loss suddenly seems strangely liberating. Why is this so? Perhaps because through its reduced reach, literature is forced to posit forms of production that are heterodox to inherited modes.

For example, this smallness is what would permit the close engagement with materials carried out by Eloísa Cartonera. As in Sennett’s workshop, reduced dimensions are part and parcel of contact with the materials of construction. As I have pointed out above, this form of literature informs and grows out of a context in which the “materiality of

the book-object” is of primary importance. At times, it seems that this concern is particular to literature, though it also speaks to the work of art—or indeed, to work—in general: “The maquette of the particle can be constructed at home, in a low-cost workshop, and in your free time. And here we’ll have to guard against a common error: perfectionism. If we wait until we have the most adequate materials for constructing the elements, and until we have the right technology to put them in motion, we’ll never get it done. But scrap materials are good enough: wood, cardboard, paper, strings, rags. It doesn’t matter if it comes out looking like a monstrosity: what matters is making it.”³⁹

In this passage Aira explicitly makes reference to a workshop, and the object being constructed is deliberately generic (it is simply a “particle,” made of “elements”). The list of materials evokes a heap of scraps, leaving it up to the reader to imagine what sort of object might emerge from this “low-cost workshop.” This is a recipe for engaging closely with materials of construction—of art or of any object—for creating what Aira often calls “just anything,” a formula that throughout his work is synonymous with the ideal work of art.

This passage was first published in 1995. It was eight years later that Eloísa Cartonera began a project for which it might serve as a set of guiding principles. A small, informal workshop that makes use of waste materials (among them, cardboard) and espouses an ethos of anti-perfectionism: this is an adequate description of the *cartonera* workshop. The last of these characteristics—a bias against “perfectionism”—is perhaps the key one, as the imperfect, roughly constructed book-object would epitomize Eloísa Cartonera’s mode of production. And this last principle ultimately invites us to extend the form of construction exemplified here to other realms of social life. After all, the literature that emerges from the workshop described here would necessarily be, at least in part, a literature of amateurs, or more precisely a literature in which the amateur acquires a unique position vis-à-vis experts (which is to say, professional writers, however we conceive this category). This fact is crucial for understanding the sort of social world proposed by Aira and Eloísa Cartonera. This is true because if it is useful to view aesthetic experiences as occasions for modeling collective life, then the invocation of the amateur points us toward an urgent question in contemporary society. This question would ask how amateur practices (or at least non-specialist ones) of all sorts engage with what is by now an entrenched and generalized

culture of expertise. Expert practices have a long history, as I have intimated above, and yet recent years have seen their purview extended in unprecedented ways. While earlier forms of expertise—those identified with Taylorist production, for instance—centered on the management of human labor, on the “decomposition of a particular human task into its basic components,” the emergence and increasing sophistication of “intelligent machines” over the past few decades has broadened the possibilities for concentrating knowledge and power.⁴⁰ To give just one example, in his sweeping history of military assemblages, Manuel DeLanda demonstrates that contemporary military strategy involves a “process of draining the [human] expert’s brain” and depositing that knowledge in computer networks, “a process that represents an intensification of the earlier historical process of capturing human nature in tables and lists.”⁴¹ Expertise, long concentrated in human brains and bodily practices, is thus increasingly accumulated within an expansive, and by now “social” world of machines. Of course, neither Aira nor Eloísa Cartonera directly takes a position on this question; rather, their work engages this generic scenario—one affecting almost all realms of labor—within the sphere of literature, proposing modes of social relations in which the expert and the amateur might enter into dialogue with each other and with the materials of their labor.

This hypothetical dialogue brings us back to those original divisions identified and critiqued in various contexts by Rancière, Boal, and Sennett: the hierarchical and fixed distribution of capacities. Drawing (directly in some cases, obliquely in others) on the work of César Aira, the *cartonera* workshops propose another sort of distribution. This would be one in which roles are combined and negotiated, in which the act of construction, and thus the sorts of authority that govern it, becomes the central matter of concern. This is not to say that these aesthetic projects annul these forms of authority; rather, they place them into view—on stage as it were—offering them up for debate. “What are books made of?”: Aira asks this question, one that also seems to lie at the conceptual center of the *cartonera* presses, in an essay cited above.⁴² And in the case of the cardboard publishers, it isn’t simply a question of materials, for we know (because they remind us incessantly) what materials these books are made of. Rather, it is a broader question that asks what sorts of social dynamics might be generated around and through “ways of ‘doing and making’” (Rancière) literary culture in the present. And this in turn takes

us, as Rancière intimates, to a final question, a political one: what are the possible, and what are better, ways of doing and making assemblages of social life today?

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NOTES

1. César Aira, *La trompeta de mimbre* (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 1995), 132. Throughout this essay, I will use my own translations, citing the original text in brackets as footnotes.
2. Jacques Rancière, *Politics and Aesthetics*, translated by Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), 12-13.
3. Jacques Rancière, “The Order of the City,” translated by John Drury, Corinne Oster, and Andrew Parker, *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 2 (2004): 290-91.
4. Jaques Rancière, “The Emancipated Spectator,” *Artforum* XLV (2007): 177.
5. Eloísa Cartonera, *No hay cuchillo sin Rosas: Historia de una editorial latinoamericana y Antología de jóvenes autores* (Buenos Aires: Merz & Solitude / Eloísa Cartonera, 2007), 4.
6. Ibid.
7. Eloísa Cartonera, “¿De qué se trata?” <http://eloisacartonera.com.ar/que.html>.
8. Augusto Boal, *Theater of the Oppressed*, translated by Adrian Jackson (New York: Routledge, 2006), 119.
9. Washington Cucurto, “Intensidad desviada,” <http://eloisacartonera.com.ar/rosetti.html>.
10. Washington Cucurto, *Hasta quitarle Panamá a los yanquis*, Eloísa Cartonera, <http://www.eloisacartonera.com.ar/cucurto.html>.
11. César Aira, *Cómo me hice monja*, 74.
12. Reinaldo Laddaga, *Espectáculos de realidad: Ensayo sobre la narrativa latinoamericana de las últimas dos décadas* (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 2007), 19.
13. Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 54.
14. Ibid., 80.
15. Ibid., 53.
16. Ibid., 125.
17. Ibid.
18. César Aira, *El Volante* (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 1992), 44-45.
19. Sánchez makes this observation in María Teresa Gramuglio et al., “Literatura, mercado y crítica: Un debate,” *Punto de vista* 66 (2000), 8; Eustasio A. García, “Historia de la empresa editorial en Argentina: Siglo XX,” in *Historia de las empresas editoriales de América Latina, siglo XX*, edited by Juan Gustavo Cobo Borda, 15-104 (Bogotá: CERLALC, 2000), 38.
20. Ana Mazzoni and Damián Selci, “Poesía actual y cualquierización,” *El Interpretador* 26 (2006): http://www.elinterpretador.net/26AnaMazzoniYDamiánSelci-PoesíaActualY_Cualquierización.html.
21. Daniel Durand, “Escuela de Poesía y Edición,” 9 February 2009: <http://escuelade-poesia.blogspot.com/>.
22. For an excellent survey of these transformations see Malena Botto, “1990-2000: La concentración y polarización de la industria editorial,” in *Editores y políticas editoriales en Argentina, 1880-2000*, edited by José de Diego, 209-49 (Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006).
23. Wade Rowland, *Spirit of the Web: The Age of Information from Telegraph to Internet* (Toronto: Thomas Allen, 2006), 345.
24. [“no esperar nada de los editores. El futuro, si hay futuro, está en la autoedición. Dentro de poco, gracias a los adelantos técnicos, los libros podrán hacerse en casa, todos podremos hacerlos”] Aira, *La trompeta de mimbre*, 131-32.
25. Francine Masiello, *The Art of Transition: Latin American Culture and Neoliberal Crisis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 103.
26. César Aira, “Best-sellers y literatura, vigencia de un debate,” *La Nación* (28 December 2003): http://www.edicionesdelsur.com/articulo_104.htm.
27. César Aira, *Las curas milagrosas del Doctor Aira* (Rosario: Beatriz Viterbo, 1998), 38.
28. Ibid., 39.
29. Ibid., 46-50.
30. Ibid., 51.
31. An excellent study of related forms of textual circulation in Lima is Víctor Vich’s *El discurso de la calle: Los cómicos ambulantes y las tensiones de la modernidad en el Perú* (Lima: Editorial del Pacífico, 2001). I thank Jorge Coronado for bringing this study to my attention.
32. Marjorie Perloff, “Writing as Re-Writing: Concrete Poetry as Arrière-Garde,” *Ciberlettas* 17 (2007): <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberlettas/v17/perloff.htm>.

33. Reber, "Cure for the Capitalist Headache," 375.
34. César Aira, "La nueva escritura," *La Jornada Semanal* (12 April 1998): <http://www.literatura.org/Aira/caboom.html>.
35. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994), 29.
36. Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums* (New York: Verso, 1996), 174.
37. Sergio Chejfec, *El punto vacilante: Literatura, ideas y mundo privado* (Buenos Aires: Norma, 2005), 18.
38. Aira, *La trompeta de mimbre*, 80.
39. Ibid., 23.
40. Manuel De Landa, *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), 168.
41. Ibid., 174-75.
42. Aira, *La trompeta de mimbre*, 132.

Literature, Are You There? It's Me, Eloísa Cartonera

DJURDJA TRAJKOVIC

“Never judge a book by its cover,” goes the adage, suggesting that we should not judge a book by its look alone, since appearances can be misleading. In its literal meaning, this phrase becomes cautionary, warning us that the book’s visual narrative, when juxtaposed to the textual one, can be misaligned and deceiving. Why is it, then, that the visual leads to deception? What is the story that a book’s cover tells that its words do not? These questions are further complicated in contemplation of one particularly unusual Argentine publishing house, Eloísa Cartonera.

In the case of Eloísa Cartonera, we cannot judge books by their covers not because they are entirely deceptive, but rather because the book covers are the stories themselves textual narratives with a clear beginning and visual narratives necessarily representing a (hi)story. This (hi)story starts with Argentina’s economic crisis of 2001 which destroyed many lives and arguably made it impossible for thousands of Argentines to perform their citizenship. High unemployment and its negative impact on the labor force altered the Argentine social, economic, and cultural landscape. As a result of the crisis, the country underwent a reconfiguration of its poorest socio-economic class into *cartoneros*—cardboard-pickers. Influencing every aspect of society, this crisis also had an enormous impact on literary production and the publishing industry. Due to 300% inflation in early 2002,¹ the price of books escalated and paper became a valuable commodity. Consequently, the impact of the cost of paper determined the selection of authors published in well-established publishing companies as well as the affordability of books. Contingent upon the market, authors had to secure an instant economic gain for publishing companies and produce marketable books. In conjunction with this demand, the crisis further exasperated the problem by ensuring the accessibility of books only to a particular readership, the rich elite, who were able to afford and consume these bestsellers. This is not to say the crisis alone caused this change. The shift in the publishing industry was also caused by the impact of globalization that started in the 1980s. Publishing companies had been transformed into transnational conglomerates that would only publish (inter)nationally well-known authors who were highly marketable, assuring instant bestsellers.² Additionally, these companies would promote Argentine authors in Spain without making

them accessible within Argentina.³ The availability of Argentine authors to Argentine readers was at stake.

The change in the publishing industry and the impact of the economic crisis left Buenos Aires, in such a state of ruins that narratives could no longer (re)present themselves in traditional forms. Narratives and narrators began to search for unconventional modes of expression. The quest for an alternative profoundly affected new and emerging authors. As unpredictable and dangerous to the mainstream literary diet, new writers were not able to distribute their work in the transnational publishing venues that dominated the national market.⁴ Authors without the support of a publishing house had to find different and unorthodox ways to narrate themselves and their ways of seeing.

And so, the (hi)story goes, groups of artists responded creatively to the crisis in two ways; by giving jobs to *cartoneros* and by publishing new and emerging authors. The Argentine publishing house Eloísa Cartonera was founded in 2003 by three young artists and writers—Javier Barilaro, Fernanda Laguna and Washington Cucurto—as a response to the economically impoverished status of *cartoneros* and to the culturally poor status of emerging writers. As a publishing house, they combined the social and aesthetic aspects of literature by including *cartoneros* in the book-making process and by offering a chance for visibility to authors emerging on the literary scene. Starting with recyclable cardboard, they produced inexpensive books that were then hand-painted by the *cartoneros* themselves. Just as this new model now implied that labor was seen as a creative process, the books' low costs made them accessible to a wider readership. As a side effect of the initial enterprise and consequent success, Eloísa created a new publishing paradigm while refreshing the Latin American literary canon. This enterprise became well known through the Americas and many other alternative publishers adapted the concept to their own social and cultural contexts.⁵

The literature and authors published by Eloísa Cartonera have not been analyzed in-depth by literary critics in the Americas. Yet over the years, local and international media have embraced the impact of this publishing house on Argentina's cultural scene. *The Guardian*, *BBC* and *Rolling Stone* have featured interviews with Eloísa's founding members celebrating their response to the national economic crisis.⁶ Washington Cucurto, as both co-founder and author, has been the focus of various literary and cultural studies.⁷ However, there has been little intent to engage the aesthetic of the

publishing house and to address critically its literary texts. When one such attempt was made, there was an instant critical dismissal of the *cartonera*'s published texts. At a 2007 book fair in La Paz, Guillermo Mariaca argued that *cartonera* publications did not make any contribution to literature; he saw neither "originality nor dialogue" in their texts.⁸ Is it possible that *none* of these texts contained the slightest literary contribution? Assessing this "contribution to literature," is not an easy task that any critic would take upon him/herself. This kind of intellectual positioning is precisely what all publishing houses were attempting to challenge by giving voice to and promoting new narratives.

Not all were as hypercritical of the *cartonera*'s publications. Several critics embraced the literature of some of the featured emerging authors. In a paper given at the 2006 LASA conference in Puerto Rico, López Seoane and Deymonnaz celebrated the "illegal" literature of the new Argentinean authors, labeling them representatives of a rebellious subculture of a dominant literary scene. These texts, they argued, "don't give a damn about the canon" because they are full "of disrespect towards the consecrated figures of literature and towards the hegemonic norms of beautiful writing and good expression" thus making it possible for literature to be opened "to a new world of popular, young and improper bright languages."⁹ Nevertheless, these observations are not as obvious as these critics would have us believe.

What follows is an exploration of Eloísa Cartonera's aesthetic principles and a demonstration of these standards as applied to its authors and publications. As I intend to establish the taxonomy of writers already published by Eloísa, the second part of this essay will be dedicated to some narratives of emerging Argentine authors. I will illustrate the themes and aesthetics that these authors convey in order to trace their shared literary tendencies and influences.

THE AESTHETIC OF ELOÍSA CARTONERA

Eloísa Cartonera claims to provide a space that originated from the "reappropriation of popular aesthetics confronting the aesthetic colonization enforced by dominating countries."¹⁰ Their website states that they publish "unedited, border and vanguard material from Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Brazil, Peru: it is the publisher's premise

to distribute Latin American authors.”¹¹ Although the publishing house does not quite define what they consider to be “border” or avant-garde, one catches a glimpse of these notions via interviews with various members of Eloísa. On several occasions, Cucurto has stated that the literature is supposed to be light, fun and liberating.¹² Additionally, Eloísa’s publications also seek to give voice to ignored writers and narratives of the so-called low literature. When journalist Tamara Novelle asked Alejandro, one of Eloísa’s members, to define the literature they publish, he stated: “Call it as you wish. The marginal, the alternative, the ‘gore’, the ‘border’, what many consider to be low literature in Argentina, Peru, Chile, Mexico, Costa Rica, Uruguay, Brazil; it has a place in Eloísa.”¹³

Eloísa intends to subvert the main centers of power in the literary world, intelligentsia (institutional and academic) and the publishing industry that mandate the norms of the literary canon. Subversion of the hegemonic canon within Latin America is evidenced by the publication of marginalized, alternative literature that is light and escapist as well as defiant of harsh, day-to-day realities. In a 2005 interview with Silvina Friera for the *Página/12* Cucurto declared: “To write a grand book? For what? Literature does not influence reality nor can change it?”¹⁴ Cucurto’s allusion to the narratives of the *boom* suggests the publisher’s desire to destabilize the canon of literary works produced within Latin America by liberating it from grand and master narratives. By insisting on producing ignored narratives, those of low literature and popular culture, Eloísa arguably seeks to become an alternative publisher, offering narratives once omitted or entirely neglected by centers of intellectual power or by dominant publishers such as Emecé. Furthermore, this identity as alternative publisher is underlined by the fact that Eloísa does not have an editorial committee that decides what and who will be published. Everyone is welcomed to submit their work for publication.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the characterization of Eloísa Cartonera as an alternative and subversive press becomes problematic when we examine their catalogue.

TAXONOMY OF AUTHORS

From the day of its foundation in 2003 to mid-2009, Eloísa Cartonera had published 123 titles that represent 75 authors. These titles include mostly poetry and short fiction. Readers can buy one published short story or one poem as a book. With few exceptions, such as the writ-

ings of Cucurto and César Aira, one does not find longer novels as they tend to be thicker and are consequently difficult to assemble in *cartonera* book format.¹⁷ Just as the selection of genre becomes profoundly marked by modes of production, the selection of published works is marked by editorial power. Eloísa discursively opposes the existence of an editorial committee; it has been stated on various occasions that Washington Cucurto is the editor. While fully accepting works of prominent published authors, he is invested with the authority to reject manuscripts from unpublished authors.¹⁸ These modes of exclusion and inclusion are supposedly based on his literary tastes. While this may be the case for the emerging and unpublished authors, it surely is not so for already known and consecrated figures of the literary scene in Argentina and Latin America. For this reason, we must identify the various categories of authors included in Eloísa's catalogue.

Out of 123 published titles, sixty titles correspond to already known and consecrated literary figures in Argentina and Latin America. A consecrated literary figure is an author who, having created and published extensive literary texts with established publishers, has also completed the difficult task of appealing to popular, academic and critical audiences both in their own countries and in North America. A good example is Ricardo Piglia. In Eloísa's catalogue there are forty titles produced by known authors from throughout Latin America. One encounters names such as Haroldo de Campos and Waly Salomão (Brazil), Reinaldo Arenas (Cuba), Gonzalo Millán and Enrique Lihn (Chile), Luis Chávez (Costa Rica), Mario Bellatín and José Emilio Pacheco (Mexico), Oswaldo Reynoso and Martín Adán (Peru). The diffusion of prominent Argentine authors is remarkable. There are twenty publications by literary figures such as Ricardo Piglia, Rodolfo Fogwill, Leónidas Lamborghini, Néstor Perlongher, César Aira, Tomás Eloy Martínez and Elsa Drucaroff.

On the other side of the spectrum, there are 57 titles by emerging Argentine authors. An emerging author is a writer who has previously published through independent, local publishers like Interzona but has yet to be recognized by (inter)national critical and academic audiences (for example, Fernanda Laguna). Finally, there is also a group of unpublished writers in print media like the six winners of the publisher's prize, *Premio Sudaca Borders*, such as Leandro Ávalos Blacha.

The categorization I propose here, and based on Eloísa's catalogue, reflects contradictions in the publisher's "official aesthetic" chartered on

their website and interviews. The surprising number of published authors does not correspond at all to the aesthetic and politics proposed by Eloísa—rejecting the hegemonic canon and publishing alternative, “gore,” “border” narratives. In other words, half of the their published titles are a mere recycling of the canon as created by the same centers of intellectual power and big publishers that Eloísa, ironically, has been trying to subvert and reject. There is no simple explanation from where these contradictions arise.

My first thesis considers that this publishing house has become a far greater venture than previously anticipated. The proposed aesthetic has gone beyond the initial enterprise since the need to establish publishing alternatives coincided with the economic crisis that affected a great portion of the Argentine population, not only emerging authors. The need was as economic and political as it was aesthetic. Second, although their first publication in 2003 was by an emerging Argentine author, Gabriela Bejerman, none figures joined the catalogue soon after. This represented an economic need since what guaranteed the publisher’s monetary survival was the successful selling of prominent authors’ texts. Thus, the exclusion of such writers would have been unthinkable since Eloísa desperately needed support from renowned authors in order to become visible on the Buenos Aires’ cultural scene. The presence of the publishing house was not immediately welcomed by all national institutions and media. In December of the same year, within the pages of *Página/12*’s cultural supplement, *Radar Libros*, editor Daniel Link addressed the supplement’s omission to acknowledge the Eloísa Cartonera as that year’s “cultural happening,” this awakening occurred after Eloisa’s tremendously successful selling of some 1000 copies of César Aira’s book *Mil Gotas*.¹⁹

Thus, one could say that the alliances about to be created entered mutually codependent spheres of aesthetics, politics, and economics. An alliance rooted in both political and social awareness was necessary in order to maintain and produce literature that corresponded to the aesthetic discourses as well as to the cultural production of the entire continent. To label these alliances between the publisher and authors from Argentina and Latin America as leftist would be reductonist, excluding the aesthetic alliance created in the book-text relationship. Additionally, seeking the categorization of literary figures based purely on aesthetic terms would also be limiting. For that reason, there are various multidimensional tensions encountered in the text that demand to be explored. In each of

the categories proposed above, the alliances are constructed on diverse aesthetic, economic, and political necessities.

CONSECRATED ARGENTINE AUTHORS

The first obvious economic alliance between publisher and prominent authors is that none of the authors receive monetary compensation for the copies sold by the publishing house. By donating their texts to Eloísa, they intervene in a cultural sphere that is now based upon kinship, belonging to the publishing house that also needs them. Authors do not profit monetarily from the sale of their texts since this money is granted to the publishing house. Thus, the unilateral economic gain is directed toward the publisher's efforts at self-sustainability.

Piglia supported the idea by explaining that "this is an historic alliance. New networks are being created in Argentina, and writers are finding ways to connect themselves to the new social situation. It's not about making a cult of poverty, but rather, not allowing oneself to be intimidated by it."²⁰ This new political and literary alliance gave authors like Aira, Piglia, and Pauls an opportunity to be associated with the social endeavor that Cucurto and his team were imagining, producing and consuming literature to defy poverty. Elsa Drucaroff explained her reasons for publishing the erotic story *Leyenda erótica* since it coincided with both her desire and that of Cucurto to "democratize the symbolic capital, to join those too humble to access the pleasures of literature that we have the privilege to enjoy; it is not an alien gesture, it comes from their own biographies, and social origins, and one can notice this in Eloísa, in their impartial catalogue, and in the proposition of books where manufacture and manual work are underlined."²¹

It is significant to note Drucaroff's discourse here as she uses rather suggestive language (desire, pleasure, taste) to describe her alliance with the publisher reflects her own style in the mentioned story. In addition, Alan Pauls explained why he published the short story *El caso Malarma* by stressing that he liked the project "of a publisher that instead of mourning misery, made virtue out of necessity—neither sacrificing nor burdensome, but not jovial and festive..."²² Both Drucaroff and Pauls were celebrating that Eloísa was bypassing the division between the social classes as a product of economic and publishing crisis. They underlined

the role of the publishing house as a bridge between two social spheres that were not previously able to communicate: Argentines of the lowest socio-economic status, the majority of the country's citizens, and those within the higher ranks of privilege, the intelligentsia. Supporting these authors in the new social context of post-economic crisis Argentina was necessary for the publisher due to the credibility that Eloísa sought to establish as a new publishing house. Just as the publisher needed influential authors to empower its visibility, writers also needed the publisher in order to create and be part of the new social and political network in a post-crisis Argentine socio-cultural context. Furthermore, well-established Argentine literary figures embraced the new alliance because it gave them an opportunity for further visibility and wider distribution to a national readership previously unfamiliar with their oeuvres.

CONSECRATED LATIN AMERICAN AUTHORS

Eloísa's literary landscape is further complicated by the diffusion of Latin American authors. The need for this type of network creates a continuity of literary influences within geographical and historical frameworks. It also makes previously ignored narratives accessible to a wider Argentine demographic. This simultaneous effort is evidenced in Cucurto's desire to reintroduce Latin American authors, omitted by transnational publishing companies, to an Argentine readership.

The inclusion of works by Haroldo de Campos, a fixture of contemporary Brazilian literature, illustrates the socio-political efforts that the publisher seeks to undertake by stepping outside of national and linguistic boundaries by reintroducing Brazilian authors ignored by Argentina's publishing scene.²³ Published in 2007, *El ángel izquierdo de la poesía* is a bilingual edition of Campos' poetry in which the poet denounces various social injustices of twentieth century Latin America; this particular book also demonstrates the complex relationship between the literary and cultural realities of the continent. It fits perfectly into the publisher's ideology of alternative ways of responding to both globalization and economic crises. As evoked in the title, the Brazilian poet's leftist and political aesthetic parallels the relationship between *cartonero* social realities and the poetic language with which Campos elaborates the subaltern subjects of the continent. The relationship between the book-object and book-text becomes more complicated as the *cartonero*'s visibility is both illustrated on the book

cover and experienced through Campos' poetic language. Various other narratives fit into this model including Venezuelan poet Juan Calzadilla's *Manual para inconformistas* and the anthology of Brazil's marginalized poets during the military junta, *Brasil años 70: Poesía Marginal*.

Nevertheless, this does not constitute a predominant model. The social and political aspect within the literary content are not entirely fixed. One only need consider the works of Enrique Lihn and his aesthetic. The Chilean poet's inclusion within Eloísa's canon²⁴ evidences Cucurto's admiration for his poetry²⁵ but is also the revival of an internationally lesser known poet overshadowed by compatriots like Pablo Neruda and Gonzalo Rojas.²⁶ Lihn's anxiety of everyday life and existential crises in constant denominations of his poetic language do not quite reflect the notion of popular literature. However, his work encompasses discourses emerging from themes of the human condition and alienation. It is the *cartonero* who breathes life into Lihn's text. His poetry nearly establishes a mirror image of the *cartonero* who reconfigures his or her own identity by assuring Lihn's presence in *cartonero* book form.

The relationship between the visual aspects of the *cartonero*-produced book and Lihn's textual discourse echoes Roland Barthes' notion of the ideal text as imagined in literary analysis. In *S/Z*, Barthes poses a definition of an ideal text in which: "the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signified; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend *as far as the eye can reach...*"²⁷

Barthes' insistence on the network that includes the visual aspect (eyes) supports my assertion that one consider *cartonero* book covers as discursively related to the text. Similar themes and relationships resonate in the poetry of other Latin American poets, including the Chileans Gonzalo Millán (*Seudónimos de la muerte*), Sergio Parra (*La manoseada*) and the Mexican Julián Herbert (*Autorretrato a los 27*).

LITERARY FATHERS

Before the discussion of emerging Argentine authors, I will address another important element of the Eloísa enterprise: the creation of literary

paternal figures who will symbolically serve as models/authority figures for emerging authors. One such writer to embody this paternal model is Argentine Ricardo Zelarayán.²⁸ Frequently marginalized within infrastructures of intellectual power – literary criticism, academic institutions, and publishing markets—Zelarayán is also the voice of the marginalized. Critic Nancy Fernández has drawn similarities between Cucurto and Zelarayán, noting that this alliance is foreseeable because Zelarayán: “...is an author who works with materials foreign to the classic aesthetics, he works with the scraps of language and leftovers of the rational logic. There are no explanations that close the story nor formulas that guarantee total comprehension of an anecdote.”²⁹

According to Fabián Casas, Argentine emerging author and critic, the resurgence of interest in Zelarayán within the past decade is, in large part, due to his style that combines “[the] Creole picaresque with Joyce and Celine, and his work is a reflection about violence of language.”³⁰ It seems unexpected that Casas would compare a singular literary figure like Joyce to a writer who intentionally rejects notions of literary elitism. Despite this contradiction, Cucurto identifies Zelarayán as one of the most influential writers in his own literary development and within the national canon, as a possible replacement for the ever-present, haunting figure of Borges³¹; in homage, Cucurto’s first book of poems is even titled *Zelarayán*. Zelarayán secured his position in Eloísa with the short story *Lata Peinada* that concludes the anthology of young Argentine authors, *No hay Cuchillo sin Rosas* published in 2007. Regardless of his physical age, it is not unreasonable for Zelarayán to be considered a “young” author. As a representative of a newer generation of authors, his talent and artistic accomplishments have eased much of the anxiety surrounding the nearly messianic situation affecting the contemporary literary scene: the arrival of a literary figure that will replace the old authoritative model in Borges. This specific relationship is elaborated in a short story by Fabián Casas republished by Eloísa Cartonera. Dedicated to Fogwill, *Casa con diez pinos* narrates an encounter between a Great Writer and the narrator Sergio, also a writer, who exchange ideas on current literary trends. After offering Sergio a job as a secretary, the Great Writer informs him that in order to become a good author, he must read the canon: Borges, Macementonio, Onetti, etc. Disturbed by such a command, the young writer is further perturbed once he realizes that the Great Writer has never heard of Zelarayán. Notably annoyed, Sergio seeks his revenge by giving away

the Great Writer's "best work yet" to some girls at a party. By disseminating his work and destroying it, Casas poses Zelarayán as a model for new authors; Borges' important but inflated role is rightly assigned to another. All the same, not all emerging authors rebel against the canon; their principle objective is often to define their position within the canon.

EMERGING AUTHORS

Emerging authors, not only those tied to Eloísa, have been recognized as representing the *Nueva Narrativa Argentina*.³² While many critics are still unsure of this label, it is notable that all of these authors were born in the 1970s, Argentina's emerging authors barely remember life under dictatorship. While the literary works of the 1980s and 1990s were profoundly marked by the issues of memory, trauma and the disappeared, the later-day authors are profoundly marked by a different trauma: Carlos Menem's neo-liberal experiment that partially led to the 2001 economic crisis. They were affected by an impossibility to publish their work and, more importantly, by the particular way it deconstructed their citizenship. Paradoxically, it also gave them an opportunity to express themselves in various forms of art. Consequently, many of these writers view themselves as multi-performative, bilingual, and multi-racial *artists*. Gabriela Bejerman, for example, is a published poet but also produces and sings pop albums under the name of Gaby Bex. Fernanda Laguna is an established visual artist, known for her installations and multi-media performances in MALBA (Museum of Latin American Art in Buenos Aires) who publishes both under her own name and the pseudonym of Dalia Rosetti ("or is it the other way around?" she would probably note). Dani Umpi is a Uruguayan photographer, singer and writer who has been assimilated into the Argentine literary scene.³³ While publishing pornographic sonnets under the pseudonym of Ramón Paz, Pedro Mairal explains that this pseudonym gave him "a lot of freedom. It allowed me to write, without modesty, sonnets filled with sexuality in which my lyricism and vulgarity could explode. It allowed me to take my own poetic voice to faraway places that almost ceased to be mine but without complete surrender."³⁴ As Ksenija Bilbija explains, Washington Cucurto is the paradigm of the postcolonial notion of the subaltern subject who, as a self-educated writer, reached the status of the bestselling author in Argentina.³⁵

Another identifying characteristic of these emerging authors concerns the canonization of their texts within various Argentine anthologies. The impetus to represent numerous emerging figures leads to several successful anthologies published between 2005 and 2007.³⁶ Eloísa Cartonera joined this endeavor in 2007, publishing the anthology *No hay cuchillo sin Rosas: Historia de una Editorial Latinoamericana y Antología de jóvenes autores* sponsored by a German publishing house cooperative, Merz & Solitude. In this book readers will find the names, short biographies and narratives of Argentine writers such as Inés Acevedo, Leandro Avals Blacha, Gabriela Bejerman, Timo Berger, Fabián Casas, Washington Cucurto, Cuqui, Francisco Garamona, Juan Incardona, Fernanda Laguna, Juan Leotta, Cecilia Pavón, Ramón Paz, Ricardo Piña, Damián Ríos, Alejandro Rubio, Eugenia Segura, Dani Umpi and Ricardo Zelarayán. All of these authors have at least one title published by this house.

The anthology breaks with traditional literary canonization because, rather than proposing criteria for selected authors, Cucurto and his friends choose to narrate the beginnings of Eloísa Cartonera publishing house and its innovative modes of book production, followed by photos of workers and concluding with the writers' texts. The possible 'anomaly' of this structure can be explained by Eloísa's new focus on targeting a foreign market. The anthology can be purchased on the Merz & Solitude's website and the publisher is linked to the Akademie Schloss Solitude, an institution promoting young and gifted artists via residence fellowships and the organizing of its residents' public performances, readings and concerts. This institution sponsored the anthology because Cucurto was one of the fellows in the Academy in 2005/06. Another anomaly in this particular book is the disappearance of the *cartonero* visual narrative from the cover. While some of the copies feature a *cartonero*-painted cover, all are adorned with a mass-produced book jacket. This printed cover, designed by co-founder/artist Javier Barilaro, contains the image of a boy in a T-shirt and shorts holding up a book, the very same anthology we are about to read. To his right there is a table stacked with already-published titles by consecrated authors; *Cerebro musical* by César Aira, Ricardo Piglia's *Pianista*, an anthology of poems by Enrique Lihn, the aforementioned anthology *Brasil 70* and Néstor Perlongher's story *Evita vive*. The boy is static but smiling; is he selling us the book or purchasing one himself? The jacket illustrates an attempt, both visual and conscious, to insert these narratives into the Argentine and Latin American literary

canon. After all, in this new network they now coexist under many titles published by this alternative press.

We must remember that this book is also intended for foreign consumption, in this case, within the European market. The paper quality is superior and the book even features some color photographs. Does this explain why the *cartoneros* have visually disappeared from the book covers and are only briefly mentioned in the introduction? Is it inevitable then that, when two marginalized groups fight for representation one is always further marginalized? Given that the emerging authors-*cartoneros* press alliance and the network function on deeper levels of production and meaning, and that both groups appear from the same shared trauma of the economic collapse in 2001, this appears to be a one-time exception.

This shared trauma—the economic collapse and its consequences—is inextricably intertwined in the writing of emerging authors and becomes a common and discomforting theme haunting their texts. Thus, their fiction becomes mainly concerned with questions of deconstructed identity as writers and citizens. While some enjoy exploring the new possibilities (Laguna and Pavón), others delve in the (im)possibility of regaining and maintaining power over the text by exposing the failure of a post-crisis society to recognize them as productive and docile bodies (Umpi, Rubio, Ríos, Garramona). Social marginality becomes the prevailing dystopian condition of the human experience. In this category of texts, one expects to find auto- and metafictions that explore the writer's identity in a contemporary society. Both genres, however, play with the relationship between the writer as an individual and a literary personage as the defining elements of these genres.

Autofictions

Alejandro Rubio, Damián Ríos and Fabián Casas, among others, deal with various aspects of growing up in Argentina and the significance of authorship today. Alejandro Rubio's short story *Autobiografía podrida* is noteworthy as it provides, right from the start, subjective insight into an individual's life; we are forewarned that this is a fragment. A first person narrative relates Rubio's childhood but later focuses on an elderly neighbor. We later discover that this geriatric grocer is actually a talented sculptor, reduced to selling vegetables to survive because his art is too expensive to

purchase. The narrator/Rubio learns this only once a television crew has come to interview the old man. The narrator becomes upset when he realizes that the sculptures are “equally good as [the] work of García Márquez” but that the artist will receive only five minutes of fame in a local news program. Demonstrating a multifaceted narrative capability, the fragment focuses on the artist’s position in a global community and implicitly questions the relationship between power and authority in today’s society. The old man will remain marginalized because he lives in a poor neighborhood of Buenos Aires, but ironically, will live his few brief minutes of fame on a local newscast.

Artists do not encounter dangers solely because of their marginalized social position. One of the defining characteristics of this generation of authors is the vast technological accessibility that surrounds and threatens them. These authors benefit from options previously unavailable; the Internet and blogging have widened their readership. Some authors blog and post work online (Pavón, Paz, and Cucurto), even using chat transcripts in their text (Laguna and Bejerman). Nevertheless, they are deeply concerned with the dangers of completely displacing (even deleting) the author/writer from their position of power. Juan Leotta’s short story *Con las armas* perfectly illustrates these fears. When a virus attacks a writer’s computer, he seeks help from a technician who manages to recover the important file containing his best short story yet, conveniently entitled *Imborrable*. The technician then asks if the writer wants revenge upon who or what attacked his PC. He decides not to pursue this search since he does not really have enemies; he is only a writer. However, he grows paranoid realizing that he is no longer a master of his own narrative in a world where virtual violence becomes more threatening than physical violence. He then believes the technician to be his enemy. When asked about his profession, he now lies and replies that he is a shooting instructor. Aware of his displacement from an authoritative position, the protagonist can regain control only by constructing a personal fiction or lying. Leotta’s emblematic story unmasks the powerlessness of a conventional writer in a hypertechnological society. Leotta opens an important debate that goes beyond the question of the writer’s position in the age of globalization. He is more concerned with the writer’s impotent stance once we realize that the enemy is a virtual one and consequently, (not) any one.

Rubio, Casas, and Ríos use autofictions to stress the writer’s position in the cultural production of post-crisis Argentina as a discomforting

condition while discursively maintaining narrative power. And in Leotta's case, the cultural context is not only contemporary Argentina, but also globalized societies of the cyber age. Nevertheless, Eloísa Cartonera assures these writers that the alliance created between author, text, and publisher can never be replaced by technology, thus maintaining the supremacy of the written text in *cartonero* book form. The paradigm of this alliance brings us to the question of the second dominant genre that marks emerging authors – metafictional texts by mainly female authors³⁷ including Fernanda Laguna, Dalia Rosetti and Cecilia Pavón.

Metafictions

Fernanda Laguna publishes under both her own name and that of her alter ego Dalia Rosetti. What complicates this paradigm is that Dalia Rosetti also appears as a character in Laguna's writings. In the Laguna-penned *Bailemos igual*, Dalia is the main character, planning to attend a book release party for her *Me encantaría que gustes de mí*, a book Laguna had published the previous year under the Rosetti pseudonym. At the party, she is, of course, a star and meets a fan, Alaska, who requests an autograph. Alaska informs her that while they may have different names, they are indeed the same person. This liberating statement sparks the eruption of carnavalesque glee once Dalia and Alaska begin to dance identically and the former feels desired and wanted as a writer. The desire of Dalia's auto-reflexive narrative, heightened by this recognition, becomes even more explicit in Rosetti's *Sueños y pesadillas*, a collection of short stories that appeared individually in four different volumes published over two years. Rosetti's first-person narrative recounts its eponymous content: the narrator/author's dreams and nightmares. Dalia Rosetti's (auto)biographical construction and the embodiment of a biofictional author/narrator/writer continues when she tries to further encompass the imagined writer in her story *Durazno reverdeciente*, a futuristic glimpse of a 65 year-old Dalia in search of same-sex romance. When conventional methods prove futile, she turns somewhat desperately to the joys and possibilities of the Internet where she realizes the irreversible shifts in physical intimacy. Cecilia Pavón manages to continue Rosetti's development as a fictional author, writing a sequel to Rosetti's autobiography, *Durazno reverdeciente 2*. In this re-imagining of her fictionalized future Rosetti, rather than a middle-aged lesbian, is finally a successful, popular writer of bestsellers. A friend's husband who openly despises her writing confronts her, deeming it irresponsible. She

writes, he says, merely for the sake of writing, producing missing texts: “the Form, the only truth in Literature, the Form is the only space for communal redemption, for emptiness of bourgeois I, and scope of the impersonal, the Form is the only operation where the aesthetic becomes political.”³⁸ The husband, as an authoritative critic, has misread what is precisely the ambition of these young female authors. They want to be confined to the aesthetic (fictional) because it is the only way to maintain the authorship of written texts over the threats of the political, economic, and technological realities that endanger writers’ identities.

We encounter within all of these authors’ texts a production of meaning on various levels. First, the tracing and construction of Dalia Rosetti who is a writer/author/narrator/character is itself a task in metafiction creativity. Linda Hutcheon argues that postmodernist metafiction tends to play with the plurality of possible meanings as it demonstrates the impossibility of imposing a single, close reading of the text. It does so “by [an] overt, self-conscious control by an inscribed narrator/author figure that appears to demand, by its manipulation, the imposition of a single, closed perspective.”³⁹ She further argues that at the same time it tries to subvert all chances of attaining such closure. This is precisely what Rosetti as a fictional construction attempts to do, to subvert a closed perspective since we are still awaiting another chapter in Dalia’s life. Additionally, the subversion of a definitive close reading lies in the hands of the readers. The reader is actually the one with the ultimate power to reconstruct, tracing the formation of Dalia Rosetti as imaginary, fictional, and above all, a successful and in-demand writer. This is not new to literature. Portuguese modernist Fernando Pessoa invented nearly thirty alter egos—heteronyms—with his literary and poetic work, all of them with fixed biographies. What we see in the case of Rosetti is quite the contrary. It is the reader who willingly constructs this biography simply by realizing that Dalia Rosetti jumps from one text to another. As readers, we create her position as a successful writer because our reading enables for her fictional yet real construction.

The implications of these metafictions are even more complex as related to Eloísa Cartonera. The bridge of communication between the reader and Dalia’s construction is actually the former *cartonero* who paints the covers of the book. If we were once concerned about his/her (in)visibility, the moment a new generation of authors takes over the scene, here s/he becomes crucial to Dalia’s existence. Her embodiment is

relied on the *cartoneros* who physically assure that she will exist in book form. If the *cartonero* is removed from this paradigm, Dalia's fictitious universe fails in its intent to embody and construct her in the physical reality. Thus insisting upon the *cartonero* as a necessary subject—one who assures the text's existence, in addition to the reader and the writer—we have a more complex paradigm. This model now consists of another network of reliance and alliance, one much stronger than those previously created by well-known authors. What is new in this particular alliance is the *simultaneous* existence and visibility of both these groups; *cartoneros* and emerging authors contemplate the socio-political contexts of the reality that inevitably formed their identities. Furthermore, this inter-reliant relationship maintains the supremacy of the printed text in the Internet era. The irreducibility of the written text remains secure because of the complex relationship created between *cartonero*, writer and reader. Leotta's fear thus finds its answer in the physical space of the Eloísa Cartonera publishing house in Buenos Aires. In this new paradigm, where authorship is still granted to the writer, the Internet and new technologies can never compete with this powerful alliance.

POPULAR CULTURE

Not all emerging authors are concerned with the same problems or themes. One such group of writers currently deals with the immediate surrounding reality as reflected in popular culture. Gabriela Bejerman and Cuqui, female poets and writers, as well as Washington Cucurto are mainly concerned with the representation of the underground, marginalized landscape of Buenos Aires. Bejerman's and Cucqui's poetry depict female subjects entirely constructed by urban aesthetics and participation in underground metropolitan culture where characters are immersed in night life, parties, drugs, and sexual pleasures. Cucurto has already been labeled a writer who elaborates the aesthetic of slums and cumbia using tropes similar to Bejerman and Cucqui.⁴⁰ Are these the writers that López Seoane and Deymonnaz have previously identified as "illegal?" Consequently, these are also names that would appear as representative of the editor's notion of "border" and avant-garde. Thus, they are praised as alternative for exploring a younger generation's social reality and sexual transgressions. Nevertheless, these somewhat camp poetry and narratives

are not widely accessible to all audiences since they primarily target a reader already immersed in the same reality, as presupposed by the use of contemporary urban and youth slang. Furthermore, as they continue publishing, their writing becomes highly repetitive, potentially leaving other readers, the ones not immersed in the urban slang, uninterested in yet another episode of transgressive nocturnal encounters.

UNPUBLISHED AUTHORS

One of the reasons this category is under that of emerging authors is because Eloísa grants the visibility to unpublished authors as well as the equality within the catalogue. First time published authors on print media become visible in the literary scene due to the publishing house. They consequently become emerging authors. Such was the case for Leandro Avalos Blacha, born in 1981, one of the six winners⁴¹ of Eloísa's prize contest, *Premio Sudaca Borders* and soon after included in the mentioned anthology as an emerging author.

In 2005, Eloísa created a prize contest with judges such as Ricardo Piglia and Fabián Casas where previously unpublished authors were to compete to publish their first texts. The six winners of the prize presented texts dealing with similar themes of decentralized identity and the powerless position of individual in dysfunctional, post utopian society. Emblematic is *Serialismo* by Leandro Avalos Blacha, a short story about an educated man, Anthony James, with an unconventional hobby: killing women and saving their teeth as a symbol of fascination and perfection. One day he decides to create the perfect writer, requesting that his victims write down what they were experiencing while he was "taking care of them" or he would kill them. After extracting their teeth, he will use their bones and create *objets d'art*. Soon he meets Marta, who has previously heard about him and became his biggest fan. She starts promoting his work, even displaying it at MALBA (Museum of Latin American art in Buenos Aires) and Anthony James is officially named "the creator of 'serialism', the first aesthetic avant-garde of serial killer."⁴² This vanguard becomes enormously popular in museums and the government decides to finance students exploring his work, eventual followers of 'serialismo.' Students start killing communists, then homosexuals, and finally the poor. Anthony James becomes completely depressed about the fact that

his singular project has been exposed and, after killing Marta, he creates his final project, an exhibition of her bones in New York City. After the protagonist dies, artists begin to debate who is going to turn his body into a work of art.

The bizarre story by Avalos Blacha is a powerful commentary on the state of affairs in contemporary Argentine as well as global society and the commodification of the art world. His premise that the ‘only’ original concept left to explore in art today concerns turning physical violence into art is an attempt to unmask the institutions of power: museums and government who exploit art for their own gains. As human bodies become commodities, the government appropriates “art” for political reasons as a way to confront the marginalized. In an extreme example, Avalos Blacha turns the issue of originality of art work -what is considered to be avant-garde and who decides what and how it is going to be used- into the main question to be addressed for future generations of authors and readers. It is no surprise that a story like Avalos Blacha’s would find its way into Eloísa Cartonera since it is similar to the questions posed by emerging authors about marginality of the writer in today’s society.

Since 2005, Eloísa has kept this competition open all year long. In other words, unpublished authors could submit their texts whenever they chose and they would be published instantly as long as Cucurto accepted the text. On their website, there is an ad that invites everyone to submit their texts. This step by Eloísa granted visibility to unpublished authors and opportunity to be associated with the names of emerging authors.

(AGAINST) THE CANON?

The texts of those emerging authors discussed here all share various characteristics. While employing original narrative techniques, auto-and metafictions, these authors are particularly concerned with the position of the writer in twenty-first century society. This society is not defined only by a purely nation-state identity but also encompasses society defined as globalized space. The question of the writer’s position in contemporary society is, to a certain extent, the assimilation and continuation of a literary tradition. Debate over the intellectual position of the literary author has existed within Latin American culture since colonial times. Many critics, starting with Ángel Rama,⁴³ assert that throughout Latin

American history, writers have had an enormous socio-cultural influence in forging the nation. Simultaneously we see an alert and a nostalgic cry over the loss of this privileged position. Thus, their texts inform the readers that in today's society the only productive space for a writer as a constitutive member of a nation and globalized society is the world of fiction. In this world, authors can imagine themselves as desired (Laguna and Pavón) or claim any authority over the written text (Rubio, Ríos and Casas) since neo-liberal society fails to recognize them as productive bodies. In addition to this preoccupation, the growing and threatening nature of technology attacks the writer's authorship and identity.

The implications of emerging authors' attitudes are political because they posit serious and legitimate questions about writers' intellectual positioning in a nation's cultural field. By warning readers that the place of a writer in today's society is not a mere literary trope, they open this question to a wide debate. In doing so, these authors inevitably try to insert themselves into the established canon of literary works since it is the only possible space that will grant this debate. Their insertion into the canon, at this point, is not in any way subversive or rebellious since the canon is the only field that can define these writers as desirable.

This brings us back to the question of rebelling against the canon previously proposed by Casas and Cucurto. Both fall into their own traps. Their desire to rebel is, in fact, an act of recycling the canon, just like their cardboard-made books. One would imagine that the effort to subvert the canon and rebel against it would be evidenced by emerging authors' texts. The idea would be to demonstrate to the readership that there actually has been a break with literary figures and tendencies. Readers would assume that there is indeed an 'avant-garde' of emerging authors that would follow Casas and Cucurto in their mission to revise the canon. Nevertheless, this turns out not to be the case. Moreover, as Casas and Cucurto seek to revive the figure of Zelarayán and kill the haunting spirit of Borges, they never seem to question the existence of the canon. We also have to keep in mind that Casas' short story is dedicated to an already prominent figure and writer, Rodolfo Fogwill. Their endeavor is simply based on their own desire to replace one canonized literary figure with another while posing as a new literary authority. For example, an advertisement for Cucurto's book *El curandero de amor* depicted a woman holding one book by Cucurto and another by Borges

with a question: Guess which one I enjoyed more? Bilbija has noted that, while the question might seem ambiguous, the answer is quite obvious. Her choice can only be Washington Cucurto.

Then López Seoane and Deymonnaz' argument of "not giving a damn" about the canon is inaccurate because it is precisely the status of the consecrated literary figure that these narratives are trying to reach by opening a debate on their position and place within the canon. In this particular context, both Cucurto and Casas should be rewarded for daring to imagine a different canon. Paradoxically, it is precisely the contradictory nature of their argument that allows this debate to exist. Cucurto's and Casas' power to imagine a break from literary traditions is evidenced by the existence of Eloísa Cartonera as a publishing house which grants this power. By recycling the traditional canon made out of Latin American literary figures, Eloísa inevitably concedes the visibility to emerging authors and allows various debates to be opened.

SPECULATIONS

It is too early, then, to speculate whether these emerging writers are indeed representatives of an "avant-garde." Furthermore, such speculation problematizes what could be considered avant-garde in the twenty-first century. This question is still to be theorized. The first step in forming this theory contemplates the taxonomy of the works previously examined and the ways in which these writers form alliances and networks within the publishing house.

The foundation of Eloísa Cartonera was conceived as a space that would creatively respond to defying poverty. Cucurto and his friends dared to imagine a space that would make a difference in people's lives. Thanks to the support and presentation of prominent figures of Latin American literature, the visibility of Eloísa's venture was granted. Once this visibility was assured, it also affected the emerging authors that could now share their voice and narratives with readers. However, the authors were not alone in sharing their voice. *Cartoneros* made sure that the relationship between the publishing house, editor, *cartonero*, writer and reader created a new textual alliance in which various narratives were represented simultaneously and by the telling of stories that begin with the book cover itself.

Representing a departure from traditional publishing paradigms with unique, hand-painted visuals, the covers are created by citizens who have had experiences similar to the texts' authors and protagonists. This interdependent relationship is a new and exciting development in an age in which electronic reproduction has easily minimized the human experience. It is indeed avant-garde and representative of a revised literary canon that likewise represents multiple and previously unexplored facets of the human experience.

And so the (hi)story goes, "Never judge a book by its cover."

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NOTES

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20. Tomas Bril, "Profile of Eloisa Cartonera," *New Internationalist*, 336, April 2004, <http://www.newint.org/columns/makingwaves/2004/04/01/eloisa-cartonera>.
21. Elsa Drucaroff, "Hay un espíritu más o menos anarco que nos abarca a todos," *Página/12*, June 3, 2008, <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/espectaculos/2-10245-2008-06-03.html>.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Published works by Eloísa include: Enrique Lihn, *Por fuerza mayor* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2004); Enrique Lihn, *La aparición de la virgen* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2006).

25. <http://www.elortiba.org/cucurto.html>.
26. This is not to say that Lihn is not considered to be an established author. Numerous books and studies have taken him into account as one of the most respectable authors in Chile. However, my qualifier of a “lesser known poet” is in a relationship to the wide readership in Latin America where he has not been regarded as bestselling author. See C. M. Travis, “Beyond the Vanguardia: The Dialectical Voice of Enrique Lihn,” *Romance Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (2002): 61–74.
27. Roland Barthes, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 5.
28. He is a renowned author in Argentina’s literary circles who has published five works. *La obsesión del espacio* (1973), *Traveseando* (1984), *La piel de caballo* (1986), *Roña criolla* (1991).
29. <http://www.elinterpretador.net/29NancyFernandez-CucurtoYZelarayan.html>.
30. <http://www.diarioperfil.com.ar/edimp/0317/articulo.php?art=11311&ed=0317>.
31. Ksenija Bilbija in her article traces the paradox of Cucurto’s writing. She argues that while Cucurto tries to kill Borges as the literary authority, he inevitably falls into Borges’ trap and recycles his ideas. Bilbija, “What is Left in the World of Books.”
32. Elsa Drucaroff. “Hay un espíritu más o menos anarco que nos abarca a todos,” *Página/12*, June 3, 2008, <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/espectaculos/2-10245-2008-06-03.html>.
33. His short story appears in the anthology of Argentine young authors *No hay Cuchillo sin Rosas* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, Stuttgart: Merz & Solitude, 2005).
34. Pedro Mairal. Interview by author. E-mail. Madison, United States, July 14, 2009.
35. Bilbija, “What is Left in the World of Books,” 27.
36. *La Joven Guardia* edited by Maximiliano Tomas in 2005 and *Una Terraza Propia* edited by Florencia Abbate in 2006.
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38. Dalia Rosetti, *Durazno Reverdeciente* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2005), 33.
39. Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (New York: Methuen, 1984), xiii.
40. Bilbija, “What is Left in the World of Books,” 11.
41. Dante Castiglione, *Cacho el más Macho* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2005); Marcelo Guerrieri, *El Ciclista Serial* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2005); Juan Leotta, *Luster* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2005); Pedro Nalda Querol, *Palomas que no son pájaros* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2005); Gonzalo Alfonsín, *El Sr. Velázquez y el Licenciado Ramírez* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2005).
42. Leandro Ávalos Blacha, *Serialismo* (Buenos Aires: Eloísa Cartonera, 2005), 14.
43. For canonical texts on this topic see: Ángel Rama, *La Ciudad Letrada* (Hanover: Ediciones del Norte, 1984); Doris Sommer, *The Foundational Fictions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Jean Franco, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City: Latin American and the Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); and Francine Masiello, *The Art of Transition: Latin American Culture and Neoliberal Crisis* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

Uncovering the Body of the Book: Some Histories of *Cartonera* Productions

LAUREN S. PAGEL

“En el arte no puedes amar a nadie.
Solo en la vida real amas a alguien.”
Ulises Carrión

“Pero a veces la poesía debe llegar más lejos que el amor
y más lejos que todo
Y romper cosas.”
Montserrat Álvarez

In 1982 historian Robert Darnton created a diagram for what he identifies as *the communications circuit*,¹ which offers fellow book historians a model for the course of a book’s lifespan and the various groups of people involved with the book: authors, publishers, booksellers, readers, binders, printers, shippers, suppliers, libraries, purchasers, among others, who are influenced by intellectual, economic, political, social, cultural, and public stimuli. Ten years later in 1993, Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker proposed an alternative model to Darnton’s communications circuit along with a new diagram identified as *the whole socio-economic conjuncture*.² Darnton responded in 2007 with, “What is the History of the Book? Revisited,”³ where he succinctly identifies the conflict between his model and the one proposed by Adams and Barker:

In place of the six stages in my diagram, Adams and Baker distinguish five “events”: publication, manufacture, distribution, reception, and survival. By doing so, they shift attention from the people who made, distributed, and read books to the book itself and the processes through which it passed at different stages of its life cycle. They see my emphasis on people as a symptom of my general approach, one that derives from social history rather than from bibliography and is aimed at the history of communication instead of the history of libraries, where books often find their ultimate resting place.⁴

Together these models illustrate two common concerns: how do people relate to the book object? And how should people in relation to the book object fit within book history? This concern pertains not only to the realm of the book historian but also to discourse about visual culture in general as theorist W.J.T. Mitchell writes about, “[t]he subjectivity of

objects, the personhood of things [...] Pictures are things that have been marked with all the stigmata of personhood: they exhibit both physical and virtual bodies; they speak to us, sometimes literally, sometimes figuratively. They present, not just a surface, but a face that faces the beholder.”⁵ As an object that employs both image and text to communicate, “the book” easily embodies the traits that Mitchell identifies with “the picture,” and indeed these traits are worn by the book on an even more literal level. Terminology for the parts of the book assign books a head, a foot, a spine, a face, even a tail.

Ulises Carrión, a book artist and theorist, in his essay “The New Art of Making Books” writes,

[i]n the old art you write ‘I love you’ thinking that this phrase means ‘I love you’. (But: what does ‘I love you’ mean?). In the new art you write ‘I love you’ being aware that we don’t know what this means. You write this phrase as part of a text wherein to write ‘I hate you’ would come to the same thing. The important thing is, that this phrase, ‘I love you’ or ‘I hate you’, performs a certain function as a text within the structure of the book. In the new art you don’t love anybody. The old art claims to love. In art you can love nobody. Only in real life can you love someone.⁶

As W.J.T. Mitchell’s comment emphasized the image, here Carrión foregrounds the text although in his essay he does not configure a dichotomy between image versus text, rather, he uses image, text, and the book-object as signs or mediums that are all equally relevant to the meaning of “the book”. As the terms used to define the book are often identical to those used for a person’s body, “personhood” can be read on the body of the book, however, there is something essentially of the person or human that remains outside of the book. This separation echoes the concern highlighted by the differences between *the communication circuit* and *the whole socio-economic conjuncture*: how should people relate to the book object in the history of the book? In order to address these concerns within the tradition of book history, I will consider books published in the beginning of this century in Lima, Peru by Sarita Cartonera.

Since 2003 there has been a “publishing boom” and local alternative, independent, and small presses and editorials have altered the scene of the book in Lima. Sarita Cartonera was one of the first press-

es to foster this trend in local publishing. According to the copyright pages on the inside of the front cover of their books, Sarita Cartonera is “an eccentric editorial project whose principal objective is to diffuse Latin American literature by changing the conventional mode of production.” They achieve this by publishing books that are bound and painted by hand with cardboard covers that the *cartonera* publishing houses, which are analogous and part to the alternative press movement, like Eloísa Cartonera in Buenos Aires, Dulcinéia Catadora in São Paulo, Brazil and La Cartonera in Cuernavaca, Mexico, to name but a few,⁷ have been fostering a literary and artistic movement that unites art with society. The writer Santiago García Navarro offers his perspective: “the group seem to be working on a basis that goes something like this: for literature—and the visual arts—to be able to dissociate itself from a narrow elitist specialism, there must be some form of social and material change and even an aesthetic movement away from the materials and production techniques with which literature is traditionally associated. Ultimately this requires not the kind of discussion that takes place at a privileged level but a more cooperative form of thinking and production.”⁸ The *cartonera* publishers offer a multi-disciplinary assault on literary, artistic, and social traditions. The *cartonera* publishing practice is not reducible to one definition, nor do their books pertain to one history. The history of the *cartonera* book therefore requires a multi-perceptual book historian who can open a field of discourse where the *cartonera* books “speak” with us.

THE MEMORY OF THE BOOK IN PERU: FROM *QUIPU* TO PRINT TO *CARTONERA*

Antonio Rodríguez-Buckingham writes that the printed book was an “icon of power” and a “foreign object” in Peru where *quipus* had been used to record information for hundreds of years until they were destroyed in the sixteenth century alongside the printed books arrival. As an “icon of power,” the book has been not only a vehicle for text and image but also a powerful sign itself. According to Rodríguez-Buckingham, Antonio Ricardo, “the first and only printer in South America until his death in 1605,”⁹ produced the first imprint in Lima, Peru in 1584. Peru’s first printers were confronted by censorship from the Spanish Church and State, were required to have a license for the books that were to be

printed,¹⁰ faced a list of objectionable books, and several printers were tried for heresy, accused of being Lutheran, or attacked by the Inquisition and yet, “[c]learly, the traffic of books was difficult to control.”¹¹

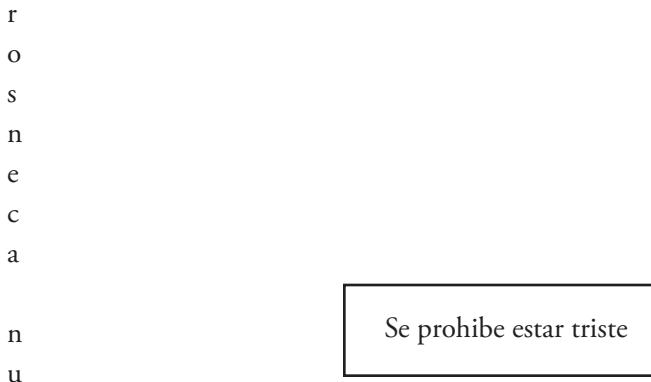
I want to leap from the sixteenth-century world of *quipu* destruction and the emerging printed book in Peru to the twentieth-century and the publication of one of Lima’s first *libros objetos* or *book-objects*. In 1927, Carlos Oquendo de Amat made his only book of poems and avant-garde typography titled *5 metros de poemas* (5 Meters of Poetry). La Editorial Minerva finished printing it on 31 December 1927. Several different publishing houses have since reprinted the book, the latest edition by Editorial Universitaria at the University Ricardo Palma. This re-edition is a facsimile of the original publication. It has a soft wrapper cover made of cream-colored paper that is printed with a woodblock of text for the title, the author’s name, and four theatrical masks or faces.



Figure 1. Photograph of the front cover of *5 Metros de Poemas* by Carlos Oquendo de Amat. Lima: Editorial Minerva, 2007. Photograph by Lauren Pagel.

The book has a completely non-adhesive binding; the wrapper holds a signature of sheets in accordion folds that open as a concertina that is, of course, five meters long when completely stretched out. There are two phrases printed in the front matter: a dedication, “I dedicate these insecure poems like my first spoken words to my mother,” and an instruction, “open this book like someone peeling a fruit.”¹² The typography used in the book is not only an integral element to the book but to the poems themselves, which traverse back and forth across the page on diagonals and verticals to scatter traditional boundaries and to break into and out of modes of concrete or visual poetry. Influenced by cinema, the

words have horizontal, vertical, diagonal, backward, and forward movement that is black and white like the flicker of a black and white film. Image converges with content:



This cooperative performance by image and word echoes through the book-object to the reader. The reader interacts with the physical experience of the book, and must “peel” the book. Oquendo de Amat was not just a writer but also a typographer, a graphic artist, a bookmaker, or a book artist. As book artist Oquendo de Amat had control not just over the text but also over the production of the book-object itself. Like Oquendo de Amat, the reader interacts as much with the structure of the book as with the text, in a holistic experience of the book as a sign that is not just static but rather a process of communication exchange, much like a theatrical performance. This leads me to another concern for the book historian: Adams and Barker write that the “text is the reason for the cycle of the book: its transmission depends on its ability to set off new cycles” (Adams 53), but *5 metros de poemas* shows that as text and image both create significance, and furthermore, the interaction between the book-object and the reader is also invested with meaning.

Sarita Cartonera confronts the traditional “iconic power” of the book by reconstructing the meaning of the book in a way that echoes the participatory nature of the book created by Oquendo de Amat. Joseph Beuys’s concept of *social sculpture*, where society is regarded as one large work of art, is embedded in Sarita Cartonera’s publishing practice. In 2006, the editorial established Libros, un Modelo Para Armar (LUMPA). With LUMPA, Sarita Cartonera used this same logic to establish a relationship between the reader and the book-object. LUMPA was a pedagogical

program where teachers and students from the school Colegio Parroquial Nuestra Señora de las Mercedes, in Lima, participated in workshops about literary criticism with the publishers and writers from Sarita Cartonera. The teachers and students wrote their own stories, designed the covers, painted, and constructed their own *cartonera* books. The intention of this process was to address and break down the inhibitions students held about books and reading by fostering an active and personal connection with books. The student's participation in the process of making a text, an image, and then a book, transforms the book into an object that is accessible. This process of active reading situates the reader in the space of the critic, the author, the publisher or bookmaker. The meaning of the book is thus converted into a dynamic interaction that is a process instead of a static, fixed artifact. I do not have a copy of one of the books created by the students and professors who participated in LUMPA because all of the books remained with their creator. This reiterates the importance of the book within the specific context of its creation. The book-object is not prioritized as an end in itself. Rather, the power of "the book" resides in the relationship between the creator and the book-object, which is an intimate act of creation that generates empowerment and understanding. In this case, the value or meaning of "the book" is embedded in the exchange between the bookmaker and the book-object, making Adams and Barker's call to focus the discourse of Book History on the book-object instead of the social context surrounding it problematic as the two exist dynamically together. Curiously enough, neither Darnton nor Adams and Barker included the book historian in the lifespan of the book. In the following analysis, I will position my stance as a *cartonera* book historian to uphold the significance of the book as demonstrated by LUMPA to emphasize this interaction between book-object and book historian, and to show how the books published by Sarita Cartonera breakdown the barriers between the public and the book.

THE HAND THAT WRITES AND THE BOOK STRIPPED BARE

In 2004 a collection of poems written by Montserrat Álvarez was published in Lima during the second year of Sarita Cartonera's life.¹³ I bought my copy of the book at Librería ContraCultura, a bookstore in Miraflores, Lima in 2008. The book has a cardboard cover made of two separate cardboard pieces that are joined together by orange muslin. There is a

“found image”, part of a hollow metal sculpture of the world, incorporated into the cover’s design. The title of the book and the author’s name are hand painted and run vertically and diagonally across the book’s face.

These handwritten letters are flaking off to reveal parts of the original writing beneath, leaving both layers equally fragmented and dislocated. This cardboard book is a post-modern palimpsest: it is a medium that has been stripped of its original significance (as a box for a Hewlett-Packard laserjet printer), and then rewritten not just as text but also as a “rewritten” object that has evolved from box to book. Barbara A. Bannon writes,



Figure 2. Photograph of the front cover of *Nerópolis* by Montserrat Álvarez. Lima: Sarita Cartonera, 2005. Photograph by Lauren Pagel.

Five hundred years ago, Eisenstein claims, the invention of rigid metal type helped to stabilize texts, and thus ideas, in the emerging modern world; today, I propose, the unfixing of typography creates an opposite movement, a destabilization of text. Fluxion, and not fixity, is the salient characteristic of the digital revolution.¹⁴

To date and with reason, the use of cardboard as a medium has been the most obvious characteristic that researchers, the press, and the *cartonera* publishers themselves emphasize when talking about Sarita Cartonera. However, this copy of *Nerópolis* exemplifies another essential tool used to create part of the book as the pages of text inside were printed on laser printers. With access to pirated software for self and desktop publishing programs like *InDesign* and *Publisher*, Sarita Cartonera has

depended as much on the cardboard support as on the laser printer and pirated software.

The copyright page in the book's front matter attributes the exterior design of this book to Pepe La Rosa, Diego Muñoz, and Shylla Marcos, three youth from Callao, to the west of Lima. These three are a few of the members of Sarita who cut the cardboard, paint the covers, and bind the books on Saturdays at Sarita Cartonera's workshop. In 2008, during my interview with Shylla Marcos she explained that hand painting the letters made her feel calm and relaxed.¹⁵ In her essay *What is a Letter?*, book artist, visual theorist, and cultural critic Johana Drucker discusses handwriting and the letter:

The self as product and construction, inherent and cultivated, is nowhere more significantly charged than in the economy and legislative attention to forgery. Here, the letterforms enter into a system of currency, and the self as marked in that system is conceived within the act of making those rote forms with enough significant difference to be identifiable as unique, distinct, and individual. So, the letters, those templates of consistent regularity, become the instrumental means for marking uniqueness.¹⁶

Sarita Cartonera confirms in the front matter of this book that the hand-painted letters on this cover are indeed marks of uniqueness, "[t]he covers integrate the plastic element with the book, they are written with tempera and by hand, giving each volume the condition of being unique: although they share the same title, every copy is singular and different from all of the others." As marks of "uniqueness," the letters on the cover of this book document a specific process: Shylla's moment of calm where she, as bookmaker, encountered the materials, the cardboard, and transformed what was garbage into a book. Once the book is separated from its creator, what researcher Craig Epplin identifies as "graphic traces"¹⁷ of creation remain on the book-object. This process contests the commodity fetishism that Marx identified within the capitalist system. The significance of the book evolves depending on the person who is interacting with it. The meaning of the book is constantly being reconfigured because the *cartonera* book generates a unique moment of exchange between the book and the individual where value is determined depending on the context of the encounter between the two.

One of the exercises that LUMPA developed deals with the unique encounter that every individual has with the book and the text. This exercise has been adopted by Professors from Harvard University in a program called Amiga Cartonera.¹⁸ Doris Sommer emphasizes the power of creative interpretations:

The hands-on workshop that Milagros facilitated during the Harvard Cartonera week developed a few demonstrations of the recycling process. For example, we used the description of characters in Edgar Allan Poe's "Man in the Crowd" to draw portraits, but indirectly. The drawings were intentionally mediated by a partner's description of the character. The results, after we taped the portraits on the "gallery" wall, made visible the range of interpretations and re-interpretations of the same literary characters, showing that it is impossible to read or draw without adding original details. We could not clearly distinguish between reading and writing, reception and production.¹⁹

This statement leads into my interpretation of another book published by Sarita Cartonera in 2007; a collection of short stories entitled *Peruvians Do It Better* by Alejandro Neyra.²⁰ The title story is narrated by a woman who recounts her life from her childhood in Lima to her career as a "porn star" in Los Angeles and then to a director of pornographic films although she insists that it, "isn't pornography. It is the gaze of God upon us, the gaze of love."²¹ The cover of the book is made of plain cardboard and then layered with three serigraphy printed images. First there is a foundational or background image of what appears to be a yellow fingerprint. As a fingerprint, it is a mark of identity and of the individual but on the book covers it is a repeated "printing" of a dislocated individuality that is mass produced, the body of each book dressed in silk, serigraphy, but again and again. On top of this is the red outline of a woman's body, torso, thighs, breasts, belly, pubic bone, and legs. Her body has no arms, no feet, and no head, and it is a decapitated, limbless, fragmented body that suggests the division of the body from the person as it is a body that is nothing but (female) sex.

These images were printed and created layer by layer: the yellow thumbprint was designed on a computer program like Photoshop and printed, the body of the woman was drawn by hand, and the text was hand lettered. These pieces were then transferred to the mesh serigraphy screen and the red, yellow, or black ink pulled across the top of them

with a fill bar. These pieces are negatives of the image that is printed. The letters are actually a mix of all three of these layers. Because the first component was a negative, the letters are outlined in black ink and then open or transparent to show whatever they are printed upon. If they had been printed on top of a plain piece of cardboard the letters would be the color and material of plain cardboard. In the specific case of this book, the letters are made of cardboard, the image of the fragmented female body and the fingerprint. To push this thought one step further, the letters, which we can be read as made from cardboard, body, and identity, simultaneously reduce these images to abstraction, or undress the body of the book, revealing the construction of the image and the letter as nothing but the composition of colors and line.

In conversations with editors from Sarita Cartonera, Milagros Saldarriaga told me that the book's cover was not intended to have a fingerprint but an eye.²² I imagined that the closer that I got to the origins of the book (to the bookmakers) the closer I would get to the eye of the book. However, after talking about this image with other editors from Sarita who also thought that it looked like a thumbprint, I have finally come to rest with the eerie feeling of a book that has an eye that I can't see, of a book that is watching me. I can't see the book's eye but can the book's eye see me?

Alexis Amore, the narrator of *Peruvians Do It Better*, explains, "one grows up feeling observed. Even when you are alone you believe that there is someone at your side...God is always watching. God is on all sides and we can't escape from him."²³ Alexis Amore shifts from the position of the pornstar to the position of the director of porn films, so within the text her perspective and her body moves from the position of the body being watched to the body that is watching. Her greatest accomplishment is achieving the gaze of god within a film titled *Peruvians Do It Better*: "I began to experiment with diverse forms of filming so that we could see through the ABSOLUTE gaze of God himself."²⁴ *Peruvians Do It Better* is narrated by a frustrated narrator. Alexis wants to see everything at once, from every perspective, to be both object and subject, and her voice oscillates between an internal and an external perception. As the director of her films she has enough control to construct herself as an omniscient narrator, as an "eye" that understands and sees all. At the same time, she remains trapped within the specificity of the "I" of her language, within her own subjectivity.

Figure 3. Photograph of the front cover of *Peruvians Do It Better* by Alejandro Neyra. Sarita Cartonera, 2007. Photograph by Lauren Pagel.



FACE TO FACE WITH THE TAIL OF THE BOOK

In November of 2008, eight of the *cartonera* publishers²⁵ released for the first time a collective co-edition, *Respiración del Laberinto* by Mario Santiago Papasquiaro. The initiative began with Mexico's La Cartonera and Sarita Cartonera released their edition in Spring 2009. This book, like almost all of the other books published by Sarita Cartonera, has a cardboard cover. The text in this book, however, was printed not on a simple laser-jet printer but instead on a semi-professional machine. The text is clear and clean and the pages of this book are not falling off of the cardboard like they are in the books discussed above. Yesterday, July 20, 2009, when I went to another bookstore in Miraflores in Lima I was surprised to see the book being sold for twenty soles each (approximately seven U.S. dollars) in contrast to the Sarita books that I purchased last year for about seven soles each (approximately two dollars and fifty cents). The text is printed on white paper. The cardboard cover has been painted white and on top of this there is a stencil and air-brushed image in red paint of Mario Santiago Papasquiaro's face. The most striking element of this cover is that there is no text at all, no title or author's name, only the silent gaze of M.S.P. with a furrowed brow, and downcast eyes lost in thought. It challenges me, it taunts me to open up the book, to open up his head, to see what is behind the book's face, to look into its mind, into an other's mind.

And so, I conclude with this image: cerebral, intellectual, almost cold, with no handwriting and no reference to the specific person who made the book. It is an image of his head, a silent image of a man who is lost in his thoughts:

“If 1 mirror came close to my brains /
it would see its own mirror without brains”²⁶

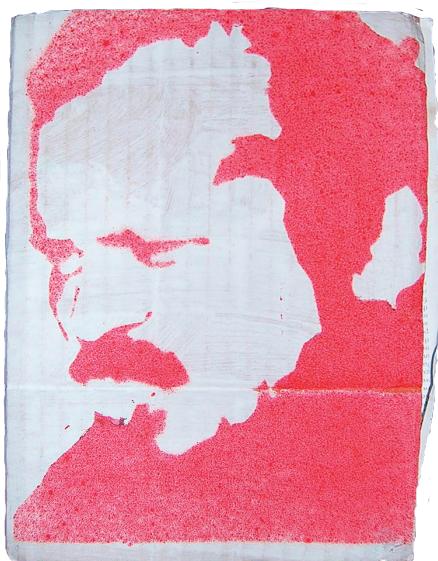


Figure 4. Photograph of the front cover of *Respiración del Laberinto* by Mario Santiago Papasquiaro. Sarita Cartonera, 2008. Photograph by Lauren Pagel.

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2. Thomas R. Adams and Nicholas Barker, "A New Model for the Study of the Book," in *The Book History Reader*, 2nd edited by David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery (New York: Routledge, 2006), 47-65.
3. Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books? Revisited," in *Modern Intellectual History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 495-508.
4. *Ibid.*, 504.
5. W.J.T. Mitchell "What Do Pictures Really Want?" October, 77 (Summer 1996): 71-82.
6. Ulises Carrión, "The New Art of Making Books" in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, edited by Joan Lyons (Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., Peregrine Smith Books, 1985), 31-43.
7. To date (16 June 2009) there are approximately twenty-two "cartonera" projects: Eloísa Cartonera in Buenos Aires, Argentina (2003); Sarita Cartonera in Lima, Peru (2004); Animita Cartonera in Santiago, Chile (2005); Mandrágora Cartonera in Cochabamba, Bolivia (2005); Yerba Mala Cartonera in El Alto, Bolivia (2006); Dulcinéia Catadora in São Paulo, Brazil (2007); Yiyi Jambo in Asunción, Paraguay (2007); La Cartonera in Cuernavaca, Mexico (2008); Katarina Kartonera in Florianopolis, Brasil (2008); Felicita Cartonera in Nemby, Paraguay (2009); Nicotina Cartonera in Santa Cruz, Bolivia (2009); Otracosa Cartonera (2009); Santa Muerte Cartonera in Mexico City (2009); Matapalo Cartonera in Riobamba, Ecuador (2009); MBurukujarami Kartonera in Luque, Paraguay (2009); Textos de Cartón in Córdoba Argentina (2009); Mamacha Cartonera (2009); Patasola Cartonera in Colombia (2009); Cartonera Solar in Argentina (2009). This list is temporary.
8. Santiago García Navarro, "Title deeds," *Frieze Magazine*, June-August 2007, http://www.frieze.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/issue/article/title_deeds/.
9. *Ibid.*, 219.
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11. Antonio Rodríguez-Buckingham, "Change and the Printing Press in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America," in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 216-237.
12. Carlos Oquendo de Amat, *5 metros de poemas* (Lima: Editorial Universitaria de la Universidad Ricardo Palma, 2007).
13. Montserrat Álvarez, *Nerópolis* (Lima: Sarita Cartonera, 2005).
14. Barbara A. Brannon, "The Laser Printer as an Agent of Change: Fixity and Fluxion in the Digital Age" in *Agent of Change: Print Culture Studies After Elizabeth L. Eisenstein*, edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron, Eric N. Lindquist, and Eleanor F. Shevlin (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 353-64.
15. Shylla Marcos in conversation with the author. July 15, 2009.
16. Johanna Drucker, "What is a Letter?" in *The Education of a Typographer*, edited by Steven Heller (New York: Allworth Press, 2004), 90.
17. See Craig Epplin, "New Media, Cardboard, and Community in Contemporary Buenos Aires," *Hispanic Review* 75, no. 4 (Autumn 2007): 385-98.
18. <http://www.worldfund.org/cultural-agents-initiative.html>.
19. Doris Sommer, "Classroom Cartonera: Recycle Paper, Prose, Poetry," in this volume.
20. Alejandro Neyra, *Peruvians Do It Better* (Lima: Sarita Cartonera, 2007).
21. *Ibid.*, 7.
22. Milagros Saldarriaga in conversation with the author. July 15, 2009.
23. Neyra, *Peruvians Do It Better*, 9.
24. *Ibid.*, 19.
25. The participating publishers for this co-edition were Eloísa Cartonera, Animita Cartonera, Sarita Cartonera, Yerba Mala Cartonera, La Cartonera, Yiyi Jambo, Mandrágora Cartonera, Dulcinéia Catadora.
26. Mario Santiago Papasquiaro, *Respiración del Laberinto* (Lima: Sarita Cartonera, 2009).

La rumba y el rumbo: Editoriales cartoneras y edición independiente en Latinoamérica

JAIME VARGAS LUNA

“Estoy harto de mi madre, de mi hermana, estoy harto.
No de mi hermana, tampoco de mí madre.
En realidad no estoy harto”
Charly García

“The world is yours
But I am mine”
Uriah Heep

HISTORIA MÍNIMA

Debe haber sido entre marzo y abril del año 2004 cuando Tania Silva y Milagros Saldarriaga me mostraron por primera vez un libro cartonero. Recuerdo sólo dos cosas al respecto: que la editorial que lo había publicado se llamaba Eloísa Cartonera, y que, esa primera vez, no entendí la simplicidad y precariedad de la manufactura. Para entonces ellas, junto a Julio César Vega, ya habían puesto en marcha Sarita Cartonera, un proyecto que planteaban análogo a Eloísa, nacida en Buenos Aires meses antes. Poco después, tras la salida de Julio César del proyecto, Tania y Mili me invitaron a participar y fui parte de Sarita desde ese septiembre u octubre hasta casi finales de 2008.

Dos años después, en 2006, Roberto Cáceres, amigo boliviano a quien conocí en 2002 en un congreso de estudiantes de Literatura en La Paz, me contó que abría una editorial cartonera en El Alto llamada Yerba Mala Cartonera. Luego supimos que se había abierto otra en Brasil. A principios de 2007, estudiando en España con Ximena Ramos, ella me dijo que poco tiempo antes había creado junto a otras chicas una cartonera en Santiago de Chile: Animita Cartonera. Y un año después, Gabriela Falconí, ecuatoriana residente en Lima, me contaba que había convencido a unos amigos de su ciudad natal, Riobamba, para iniciar allá un proyecto similar: Matapalo Cartonera, cuyos primeros libros se publicaron a inicios de este año. Entretanto, en Lima habíamos mudado varias veces de taller, pasado temporadas de trabajo intenso y otras de trabajo escaso o nulo, habíamos sido parte de un corto y emocionante proceso de dinamización del circuito cultural local, habíamos creado un proyecto educativo, participado en exposiciones de arte, ferias de recicla-

je, ferias del libro, etc. Casi sin darnos cuenta habían pasado cinco años. En Lima, como en cada ciudad en la que había una editorial cartonera, cada quien estaba trabajando en su propio proceso, bajo su propia lógica, y como varios somos amigos, a veces nos enterábamos de algunas de las cosas que se estaban haciendo en Santiago o La Paz, por ejemplo, manteniendo además el antiguo sueño de un encuentro cartonero, hasta ahora no realizado (quizá porque nunca tuvimos muy claro qué haríamos en él, de qué se trataría).

Ahora, a poco más de cinco años del principio, resulta que hay más de una quincena de editoriales cartoneras alrededor de Latinoamérica, y que éstas han provocado (sobre todo Eloísa, la fundadora) reportajes e investigaciones académicas en Europa y Estados Unidos¹, casi siempre concentradas en el fenómeno sociológico que implicó la creación de una editorial cartonera en el contexto de la crisis argentina de principios del milenio, y los ‘epígonos’ que produjo y sigue produciendo alrededor de América Latina². Aunque hay quienes se han orientado más bien a la propuesta plástica, al trabajo colectivo y/o solidario, o a la inclusión del reciclaje (más bien reutilización) en la propuesta. Paradójicamente, se ha dicho poco del rol editorial de las cartoneras, de su lugar en la edición contemporánea en general, de cómo se relacionan con la edición convencional y con el lugar actual de la edición independiente (no cartonera) en Latinoamérica.

Este trabajo, en consecuencia –hecho un poco desde dentro y un poco desde fuera–, se ocupará de revisar el lugar que ocupan las editoriales cartoneras o el *fenómeno cartonero* en la edición independiente latinoamericana actual y su problemática, desde categorías como el consumo cultural, la biodiversidad y la ciudadanía global para, finalmente, postular o imaginar el rumbo de la edición cartonera para los próximos años.

LIBROS Y PODER

Uno de los libros que más claramente sitúa la función que puede alcanzar el libro en la sociedad es *Imagined communities*, de Benedict Anderson, que señala al *print-capitalism* como uno de los factores centrales en la construcción de las conciencias nacionales, que nosotros podemos extender a la construcción de imaginarios colectivos, nacionales o no. Anderson señala que:

Antes de la invención de la imprenta, Roma ganaba fácilmente todas las batallas contra la herejía en Europa occidental gracias a que siempre tuvo mejores vías de comunicación interna que sus enemigos. Pero cuando en 1517 Martín Lutero clavó sus tesis en la puerta de la capilla de Wittenberg, éstas se imprimieron en traducción alemana y ‘quince días después circulaban por todo el país’. Entre 1520 y 1540 se publicaron tres veces más libros en alemán que en el periodo 1500-1520, una asombrosa transformación en la cual Lutero fue absolutamente central.³

¿Qué hubiese sido sin la existencia de la imprenta en esos años? ¿Hubiese habido Reforma? ¿Cuál hubiese sido su impacto? El libro se evidenciaba como instrumento de poder: poder de subversión o de dominación, depende.

De la invención de la imprenta hasta nuestros días, el lugar del libro en la sociedad se ha modificado. Desde las imprentas sometidas a la censura de la Inquisición española hasta la autoedición digital que promueven en nuestra época empresas como Lulu.com⁴, muchas cosas han cambiado: ahora existen (o deberían) bibliotecas públicas; textos escolares que, promovidos por los estados o por editoriales privadas llegan a grandes masas de lectores en formación (obligados a leerlos como parte de los currículos escolares); subsiste la censura estatal en algunos países y en otros los libros circulan sometidos únicamente a las leyes del mercado (con gran perjuicio de los lectores, en ambos casos). Han aparecido medios de comunicación bastante más masivos y eficaces: la televisión, la radio, Internet. En esta era digital, muchos contenidos a los que antes solo se accedía a través de medios impresos, ahora están disponibles digitalmente (y la mayoría de veces a costos mucho menores o gratuitamente), aunque sin hacer peligrar seriamente el futuro del libro⁵.

Por su perdurabilidad, su prestigio, y su capacidad por crear comunidades (pequeñas, medianas o gigantescas), el libro sigue cumpliendo un rol fundamental en la construcción de los imaginarios colectivos y, más aún en la construcción de ciudadanos. Ciudadanos subversivos o dominados, depende. Pero si ha cambiado el lugar del libro en la sociedad, ésta ha cambiado bastante más. Mientras Anderson dedica su libro a la formación de las conciencias nacionales y, en consecuencia, el rol que el libro ocupa allí es el de ser parte fundamental en la formación de ciudadanos de estados-nación, hoy asistimos a lo que Hardt y Negri denominan

una demanda mayor: la de la formación de ciudadanías globales en un sistema que ellos llaman *imperio*, en el que habría que ver el rol del libro, de los editores independientes, y de las editoriales cartoneras.

La lógica del capitalismo estimuló la existencia y expansión de la industria editorial desde hace cinco siglos. Ahora está concentrando la producción de esa misma industria en pocas manos, amenazando la biodiversidad y modificando radicalmente la lógica del consumo cultural y, con ello, de la producción cultural, con enormes consecuencias en la educación, en las demandas culturales y, finalmente (y de esto se trata todo) con enormes consecuencias en el goce.

En esta nueva y cada vez más aguda problemática, se transforma el rol de los editores, aparecen o asumen tareas cada vez más politizadas y solidarias los editores independientes, y aparecen las editoriales cartoneras. Revisemos la problemática.

CONSUMO CULTURAL, BIBLIODIVERSIDAD Y CIUDADANÍA GLOBAL

En su estimulante libro *Empire*, Michael Hardt y Antonio Negri sostienen que, tras la caída de los últimos regímenes coloniales y el fin del comunismo, los “factores primarios de producción e intercambio –el dinero, la tecnología, las personas y los bienes– cruzan cada vez con mayor facilidad las fronteras nacionales, con lo cual el estado-nación va perdiendo poder para regular esos flujos y para imponer su autoridad en la economía”⁶. En consecuencia, “la soberanía ha adquirido una forma nueva, compuesta por una serie de organismos nacionales y supranacionales unidos por una única lógica de dominio. Esta nueva forma global de soberanía es lo que llamamos «imperio»”⁷. La globalización, por lo tanto, no sería el proceso de dominación global desde un centro territorial imperial en el que insisten quienes dicen que ésta comenzó con la llegada de los europeos a América a finales del siglo XV, pero tampoco sería el intercambio horizontal, fluido y armónico de todas las naciones de la Tierra. Más bien:

[E]n contraste con el imperialismo, el imperio no establece ningún centro de poder y no se sustenta en fronteras o barreras fijas. Es un aparato *descentralizado* y *desterritorializador* de dominio que progresivamente incorpora la totalidad del terreno global dentro de sus fronteras abiertas y en permanente expansión. El imperio maneja identidades híbridas, jerarquías flexibles e intercambios plurales a través

de redes de mando adaptables. Los colores nacionales distintivos del mapa imperialista del mundo se han fusionado y mezclado en el arco iris del imperio global.⁸

Este nuevo panorama es interesante porque basa su noción de imperio sobre una característica fundamental: el imperio no tiene límites y actúa como un biopoder⁹, controlándolo todo, de modo flexible y complejo, además. Según señalan Hardt y Negri: “[n]uestra tarea política [...] no es meramente resistir a estos procesos; también es reorganizarlos y redirigirlos hacia nuevos fines”¹⁰. Ahora bien, esta “tarea política” a la que se refieren, le corresponde a la multitud, que es definida por oposición: es el conglomerado de voluntades que, por un lado, sostienen el funcionamiento imperial y, por el otro, deben estar *en contra* de éste y sus mecanismos de dominación.

La multitud afirma su singularidad invirtiendo la falsedad ideológica de que todos los seres humanos que pueblan la superficie global del mercado mundial son intercambiables. Soportando la ideología del mercado sobre sus hombros, la multitud promueve con su trabajo la singularización biopolítica de los grupos y conjuntos de la humanidad, a través de todos y cada uno de los nodos del intercambio global.¹¹

La singularidad de la multitud radica en la no-intercambiabilidad de los sujetos; la diversidad cultural, por lo tanto, le es esencial al imperio.

La sociedad global contemporánea, el imperio, posee como característica fundamental situar todas las dimensiones de la vida en una lógica comercial, transformando a las sociedades en mercados y a los ciudadanos en consumidores: consumidores de alimentos, de religión o de cultura. Además, en un mundo cuyas fronteras y sentidos nacionales están siendo (o han sido) desbordados, las ciudadanías nacionales van perdiendo vigor, con lo que los nacionalismos van dejando paso, o bien a los regionalismos, localismos y fundamentalismos (étnicos o religiosos), o bien, desde lados más prácticos, (como las exigencias de los millones de migrantes ilegales del mundo) a la demanda de una ciudadanía global. Según Hardt y Negri:

[P]odemos ver [...] un primer elemento de un programa político a favor de la multitud global, una primera demanda política: *la ciudadanía global*. Durante las manifestaciones realizadas en 1996 por los

sans papiers, los extranjeros indocumentados residentes en Francia, las banderas exigían «Papiers pour tous!». Permisos de residencia para todos significa, en primer lugar, que todos deberían tener derechos plenos de ciudadanía en el país donde viven y trabajan. Ésta no es una demanda política utópica o poco realista. Sencillamente implica que se reforme la condición jurídica de la población al ritmo de las transformaciones económicas de los últimos años.¹²

Es interesante que hoy se incorpore la demanda de una ciudadanía global en un mundo en el que nunca se alcanzaron las ciudadanías nacionales plenas, pasando a coexistir ambas demandas en muchos lugares y de muchas formas. Ahora, esta demanda hecha desde los sujetos es por el *ejercicio* de ciudadanía, en tanto la demanda por mejores políticas públicas (nacionales e internacionales) culturales y educativas y está centrada en la *formación* de ciudadanos, es decir, de sujetos con la suficiente capacidad crítica como para decidir su propia singularidad, su propio goce. Porque lo realmente amenazado en el imperio es la capacidad de elección, central en el ejercicio ciudadano.

Esta pérdida de capacidad de elección, en el ámbito cultural, está directamente relacionada al fenómeno de concentración empresarial y, con él, a los cambios en la lógica del consumo (y de la producción) cultural. Hoy en día, buena parte de la industria editorial global está en manos de pocos grupos empresariales,¹³ quienes, bajo la lógica de la máxima rentabilidad, han transformado una industria tradicionalmente cultural y poco rentable en una industria que busca niveles de rentabilidad equivalentes a los de otras, para lo cual debe concentrarse en productos masivos y de alta rotación: *best-sellers*, reduciéndose al mínimo la producción (distribución y exhibición) de libros minoritarios, por ejemplo, los de poesía.

En su libro *La edición sin editores*, André Schiffrin señala que: “[l]a causa profunda de la transformación de la edición tal y como la hemos conocido es el paso de una rentabilidad del 3 o 4 por ciento, que era la norma tanto en Estados Unidos como en Francia, a exigencias del 15 por ciento e incluso más”¹⁴. André Schiffrin, editor franco-estadounidense e hijo de un importante editor alemán vivió, como señala Pablo Harari: “[e]se proceso de concentración –absorción y muchas veces desaparición de editoriales– [...] en Pantheon Books, que terminó en manos de Random House que cambió netamente su orientación editorial y terminó desmantelándola.”¹⁵

Bajo esta lógica, la oferta cultural y, particularmente, editorial se ve obligada a producir en masa, buscando a su vez la industrialización del gusto. Por su parte, los consumidores culturales, inmersos en la misma lógica de mercantilización, consumen en función a los dictámenes de un gusto oficial, o bien a apuestas culturales (de lo que será gusto oficial en algunos años o, cuando menos, tendrá un valor más alto en el mercado). Ante la dicotomía entre lo nuevo y lo viejo en el arte, según la cual lo nuevo es lo innovador y lo viejo es lo decorativo, aquello cuyo sentido primario ha sido absorbido hasta poseer solo valor mercantil. Tiene razón Juan Acha al señalar que:

[H]ay que distinguir entre vivenciar una obra vieja y una nueva y actual. Cuanto mayor es la ruptura de esta última menor será la posibilidad de tener códigos con que leerla y cuanto más esté comprometida con nuestro tiempo, menores las facilidades de percibir su carga estética. La obra actual opera con todo su valor sociocultural, pues responde a condiciones sociales que nosotros vivimos y ella nos contraviene hábitos o nos sitúa en terrenos nuevos. Ella exigirá, en consecuencia, mayor actividad sensitiva e intelectual al consumidor, tanto en el rechazo como en el asombro o deleite con que él responda. No en vano los planos ideológicos soslayan muchas veces el sensitivo.¹⁶

El problema es que si bien, desde una perspectiva cultural debe estimularse la producción de *obras nuevas*, desde una perspectiva comercial, una obra nueva supone un riesgo económico mayor. Mientras menos exija la obra de arte o el libro al consumidor cultural, será más fácil de vender ya que, para la lógica del imperio, el consumidor de *innovaciones* culturales es siempre una minoría y a lo que hay que apuntar (al menos desde los grandes grupos) es a las mayorías consumidoras, a la industrialización del gusto. La culminación de este proceso ha transformado la lógica del consumo cultural, bastante más mercantilista que antes, y donde el sistema absorbe con mucha mayor rapidez los productos de las sub y las contraculturas. Un consumo cultural masificado y, por lo tanto, intercambiable, amenaza la singularidad de la *multitud*, la no-intercambiabilidad de los sujetos, la diversidad cultural expresada en el mundo de los libros a través de la bibliodiversidad.

Aquí hay que hacer dos precisiones para no parecer maniqueos: la primera es recordar que la estimulación de la bibliodiversidad presenta

el problema de llevarnos hacia la existencia de *los demasiados libros*, de la biblioteca infinita e ilegible, pero es un problema que hay que asumir¹⁷; la segunda es que la bibliodiversidad está amenazada por la concentración editorial y por los mecanismos actuales de consumo cultural, es decir, por los lectores (y la falta de los mismos).

Actualizadas las tareas pendientes: transformar la lógica actual de consumo cultural, recuperar y/o promover la bibliodiversidad y contribuir a la construcción de ciudadanía; quedan señalados los actores responsables naturales de cumplirlas: el Estado y *la multitud*. Pero en la lógica del imperio, no será el Estado quien asuma ese rol, al menos no sin presión de la multitud.

LOS INDEPENDIENTES

En marzo de 2005, un pequeño grupo de editores limeños de libros y revistas (entre los que figuraba Sarita Cartonera) nos agrupamos bajo el ostentoso nombre de Red Peruana de Editores, para acceder a un stand colectivo en la también pequeña Feria del Libro de la Universidad Católica de Lima. La Red duró lo que la feria pero marcó el inicio de un espíritu colectivo que, incorporando a algunos otros editores, pasó ese mismo año a convertirse en Punche Editores Asociados y, dos años después, en la Alianza Peruana de Editores. Reinhard Huamán, que dirigió en los primeros años del siglo la revista literaria *Ginebra Magnolia* y formó parte tanto de la RPE como de Punche, escribió en 2006 una ácida crónica al respecto (bastante antes de la formación de la Alianza Peruana de Editores):

Incluso, se generaron asociaciones y alianzas entre editoriales y algunas revistas del medio limeño. Una de estas asociaciones fue la Red Peruana de Editores, cuyo fracaso supuso el nacimiento de Punche Editores Asociados, pero luego de un esperanzador inicio todo regresó al vacío cotidiano. A pesar de no cumplir con los objetivos trazados inicialmente, se lograron pequeñas victorias como entrar a una cadena de librerías con tarifas reducidas, y tener mayor presencia en medios. Además, Punche cumplió una importante participación en la última Feria Internacional del Libro de Lima, en donde organizaron mesas de discusión sobre la actual problemática editorial y contó, además, con un stand en donde sus ediciones competían pal-

mo a palmo con grandes editoriales internacionales y locales como Norma, Planeta, Peisa y Alfaguara.¹⁸

Para cuando comenzamos la Red Peruana de Editores, ninguno de los que la integrábamos alcanzaba los treinta años de edad, nadie había trabajado nunca en una editorial que no fuese la propia ni teníamos ninguna formación como editores. En consecuencia, no sabíamos bien qué era ser un editor independiente (de hecho, ni usábamos el término), ni nos preocupaban las ciudadanías globales, ni la bibliodiversidad (términos que tampoco empleábamos), ni el imperio.

En el proceso que llevó de la Red Peruana de Editores al contexto actual, sin embargo, se integraron editores con más experiencia y conocimiento, los nuevos aprendimos, viajamos a ferias internacionales, estudiamos, etc., y fuimos constituyendo un núcleo de editores independientes, primero con una agenda local y luego, sin renunciar a ella, adhiriéndonos a una tendencia que nos precedía en el mundo: la del asociacionismo solidario e internacional de los editores independientes.¹⁹

Mientras tanto, paralelamente al incremento de la concentración editorial en el mundo, los editores tradicionales –aquellos que estuvieron siempre más interesados en publicar por amor al libro y al desarrollo de la cultura que por amor a los niveles de rentabilidad–, pasaron a llamarse editores culturales en contraposición a los editores comerciales o corporativos; y finalmente, a llamarse editores independientes, porque sus decisiones editoriales dependen del criterio de los editores y no de departamentos financieros situados en alguna casa matriz al otro lado del planeta. Bajo este nuevo rótulo, fueron viendo cómo se iba reduciendo el tamaño de sus empresas (algunos casos emblemáticos son Era en México y Peisa en el Perú), pasando de haber sido editores medianos o incluso grandes a nivel local a convertirse en pequeños editores; viendo cómo las librerías iban cediendo paso a las grandes superficies y, en consecuencia, cómo las secciones de poesía o filosofía iban siendo reemplazadas por secciones cada vez más amplias de –por ejemplo– autoayuda. A esto se sumó la desaparición masiva de librerías en las ciudades pequeñas y pueblos; el aumento en los porcentajes de comisión por distribución, etc. En respuesta, los editores independientes comenzaron a agruparse bajo los principios de la altermundialización, asumiendo un rol de participación y resistencia mayor frente a la globalización cultural.

En el año 2000 se realizó el Primer Encuentro de Editores Independientes de América Latina (paradójicamente, en Gijón, España). En 2002 se creó la Alianza Internacional de Editores Independientes (hoy auspiciada por el Ministerio de cultura francés), y paulatinamente fueron creándose en paralelo (como en el caso peruano) o como consecuencia de estas iniciativas internacionales, alianzas y redes de editores independientes en todo el mundo, nacidas fundamentalmente para evitar la reducción de la bibliodiversidad.

Como se sostiene en la *Declaración de los editores independientes del mundo latino*, realizada en el marco de la Feria del Libro de Guadalajara en 2005, los editores independientes buscan comprometerse “en acciones de promoción de la lectura” además de “promover acuerdos comerciales solidarios, particularmente suscitando y desarrollando procesos de co-edición, traducción, difusión común entre editores del Sur, editores del Norte y editores del Norte y del Sur [...]”, respetar una ética común, puesto que nos negamos a entrar en prácticas que debiliten una relación de fraternidad e igualdad entre editores y que debiliten también nuestro compromiso de agentes culturales; que por otra parte perviertan el mercado. Deseamos poner en tela de juicio cierta sobreproducción que beneficia sobre todo a los principales difusores y distribuidores. Nos declaramos solidarios.”²⁰ Esto porque, como se dijo en la *Declaración de los editores independientes y solidarios* de 2003 en Dakar, la responsabilidad del sector editorial: “es esencial en la difusión de las ideas, en el análisis y en las proposiciones que permitan afrontar los grandes desafíos de nuestra época”, ya que el libro es fundamental “en los procesos educativos y en el desarrollo social y en la construcción tanto de la ciudadanía como del imaginario colectivo”.²¹

Como se ve, al parecer todos los caminos llevan a Roma: mientras en Lima se miraba con esperanza y atención a un periodo de singular dinamización del circuito editorial²², en otras capitales el debate entre la edición independiente y la corporativa era bastante más álgido; sin embargo, si bien las jóvenes editoriales limeñas fueron luego integrándose al discurso de las alianzas y redes editoriales ya existentes, sus prácticas específicas, su *no-intercambiabilidad*, siguió intacta, aquí y en todas partes. Eso debe llevarnos a equilibrar lo dicho antes porque, si bien las alianzas y redes de editores independientes establecen proyectos comunes de resistencia, reorganización y redirección (como querrían Hardt y Negri), los catálogos que sus miembros publican y la circulación que éstos tienen es

absolutamente diversa e incluyen libros políticos, filosofía clásica, poesía concreta y libros de arte tanto como guías turísticas, manuales de caza de animales o libros de autoayuda. Es decir, todos los caminos llevan a Roma pero, a la vez, Roma, el imperio, está en todas partes. Así de complejo y perverso es el biopoder.

LAS CARTONERAS

Es complicado, si no imposible, intentar explicar el lugar que ocupan las editoriales cartoneras en la edición independiente latinoamericana actual cuando, como es mi caso: *(i)* no se tiene claro el panorama de la edición independiente latinoamericana actual; *(ii)* no se conoce ni a la mitad de las editoriales cartoneras; y *(iii)* me es difícil explicar la existencia de la única a la que he pertenecido, Sarita Cartonera. Así que solo intentaré relacionar lo dicho antes acerca de la ciudadanía global, el consumo cultural, la bibliodiversidad, el imperio, la multitud y la edición independiente, con lo que conozco de los procesos de las editoriales cartoneras en tanto manifestaciones contraculturales. Para ello, parto retomando un término que he mencionado sin explicar en las páginas previas: el goce.

En su libro *Ce qui fait insigne*, Jacques Alain Miller, relaciona el concepto de *faire insigne* (que confunde voluntariamente con *faire un signe*) con el de goce, en el sentido lacaniano del término. Para él, el sujeto debe provocar hacer insignia, hacer un signo, y sin embargo, inmediatamente después de conseguirlo debe renunciar a la insignia puesta sobre uno: al hábito. Así, Miller decide examinar la relación del sujeto con el goce y oponerla al significante que surge de esta relación, a partir de lo cual sostiene que Lacan, al final de su enseñanza, intentó introducir “una sola escritura para nombrar lo que colma al sujeto del significante y al sujeto del goce.”²³ Pero esta equivalencia entre sujetos sólo es posible en la huida: el sujeto (una editorial independiente, digamos) busca hacer insignia (inventar o expandir o integrarse a un apelativo que sea a la vez un significante nuevo, una insignia: *cartonera*, digamos) e inmediatamente después de conseguido esto, debe rehuir al hábito, a la insignia sobre uno, a la responsabilidad del significante *cartonera* que el sujeto mismo ha creado. El goce, siguiendo a Miller, estaría en la búsqueda del significante, de la insignia, y en la huida de las responsabilidades que éste le generen. Además del goce como placer

en su acepción más alta –fundamental en la práctica de las editoriales cartoneras–: de goce como simple y puro disfrute.

Desde su primera época Sarita Cartonera se pensó como un espacio de goce en los dos sentidos mencionados. Queríamos difundir literatura, trabajar en un proyecto solidario, recorrer la ciudad, llamar la atención de la gente: queríamos gozar. Es decir, producir significantes, huir de las insignias, producir nuevos significantes y, como consecuencia de ese proceso, pasarlo bien. Así pasamos de publicar autores peruanos jóvenes y desconocidos a publicar autores latinoamericanos, muchos de los cuales tenían renombre en sus países; de ser una editorial artesanal y sin acceso a librerías a ser la primera editorial de nuestra generación en tener su propio stand en la Feria Internacional del Libro de Lima; de hacer libros a trabajar en comprensión lectora; de trabajar la lectura de textos escritos a intentar leer el mundo como texto y un largo etcétera. Por supuesto, este proceso de hacer insignia y huir del hábito nunca fue planeado, como nadie en los últimos cinco años planeó ni buscó la existencia de más de quince editoriales cartoneras en América Latina. Y así como Sarita Cartonera dio esos giros, Eloísa editó discos de música, generó Eloísa Costurera, se hizo cooperativa y ahora tienen planes de comprar una casa para una vida cooperativa más plena. Yerba Mala, por otro lado, pasó de impulsar la Otra Feria, en respuesta a la Feria del Libro de La Paz, a ser los encargados de producir el diario de la Feria ‘oficial’, sin por ello transar necesariamente con la oficialidad: hacer insignia y huir del hábito, he ahí la clave del goce cartonero. En *El imperio contracultural*, Luis Britto García sosténía que:

Para interferir en la subcultura, el sistema 1) se apropiá los símbolos de ésta, los adopta, los comercializa y los produce en masa. Se logra así 2) la universalización del símbolo, a través de la cual lo que era el vínculo de identidad de un grupo marginado particular pierde todo valor distintivo, ya que pasa a ser de uso general; con lo cual ocurre 3) una inversión del significado del símbolo: al separarse del grupo marginado que lo creó, el símbolo niega su contenido.²⁴

Esto pudo haber pasado con la edición cartonera cuando –si es cierta la anécdota contada alguna vez por la gente de Eloísa– Hugo Chávez, tras conocer el trabajo de Eloísa Cartonera, mostró interés en hacer libros cartoneros masivamente. De alguna manera, pasada la sorpresa por el material o el sistema de trabajo, las ciudades en las que las editoriales car-

toneras aparecieron, terminan por aceptarlas, se termina por universalizar el símbolo *cartonera*, se termina por borrar la diferencia. Es ahí donde se hace fundamental huir del hábito.

Ahora bien, como todo es clasificable, comenzemos por guardar a las editoriales cartoneras en los dos cajoncitos que le corresponden: el de la edición independiente y el de la contracultura. Sobre esto último dice Britto:

La idea central de la contracultura es la del antiautoritarismo. Como concepción, puede ser rastreada hasta los anarquistas; quizá, hasta Diógenes Cínico, enemigo de todo gobierno. Los embates libertarios han tenido poco éxito en limitar los crecientes poderes del Estado; sin embargo, han hecho mella en las declinantes fuerzas de los padres y de la escuela, a medida que los unos resignan la labor educativa en la otra, y ésta finalmente es opacada por los medios de comunicación de masas. No es extraño, por ello, que sus grandes voceros hayan sido pedagogos²⁵.

Esto arroja una primera señal, curiosamente clara: en las editoriales cartoneras conviven el espíritu libertario y la voluntad pedagógica, lo que, a la vez, las situaría a la izquierda de buena parte de los editores independientes ‘convencionales’ y a la derecha de los movimientos anarquistas. Esto, por supuesto, no puede ser cierto para todas las editoriales cartoneras (porque debo aclarar aquí que mientras cumple mi tarea de cubrir de insignias a las editoriales cartoneras, soy perfectamente consciente de que su valor está, precisamente, en escapar a esas insignias, a esos hábitos), pero ha sido parte de las prácticas tanto de Sarita, a través de su metodología de lectura, como de Animita (y su proyecto de recuperación del patrimonio literario chileno tanto como su colección infantil) y Yerba Mala (con sus talleres literarios, por ejemplo).

Ahora bien, según las definiciones de editorial independiente dadas más arriba, las editoriales cartoneras son, claramente, editoriales independientes. Algunas incluso, como Sarita y Animita, son miembros activos de las alianzas de editores independientes de sus países. Sin embargo, tienen como diferencia fundamental con las editoriales independientes convencionales el trabajar menos en la elaboración de propuestas de políticas para discutir a nivel macro o el reclamo por exenciones tributarias para la exportación del libro y más en hacer todo eso, de modo más artesanal y –a mínima escala– efectivo. Así, las editoriales cartoneras no exportan

sus libros, circulan virtualmente sus catálogos y así reeditan sus títulos; venden directamente en las calles o en las ferias o en los colegios; generan nuevos modelos de trabajo que, si no resultan, son transformados una y otra vez. Son parte del sistema y, sin embargo, se conservan al margen.

Esto merece ser matizado, ya que de otro modo podría parecer que las cartoneras son el modelo que las demás editoriales independientes deberían seguir. En primer lugar, las editoriales cartoneras no se manejan con los mismos criterios de sostenibilidad de una editorial convencional, ya que en algunos casos parte del trabajo no es remunerado (el de los autores y el de los editores suele ser trabajo voluntario, es decir, de costo cero). Además, se realizan tirajes mínimos de las publicaciones, en un sistema de impresión artesanal (o fotocopiado) bajo demanda, y reduciéndose costos gracias a subvenciones (bajo la forma de donaciones, financiamiento estatal, cooperación internacional o pago diferenciado por los libros según nacionalidad del comprador). Y finalmente, el radio de acción de las editoriales cartoneras (número de trabajadores, número de lectores y niveles de circulación y facturación) parece ser menor al impacto mediático o académico que han generado.

Lo anterior, sin embargo, no debe desilusionarnos. Quizá, por el contrario, en términos de construcción de una ciudadanía global o de transformación del consumo cultural, el impacto mediático y académico sean más efectivos que el impacto directo, pues contribuyen a multiplicarlo. Así, tanto quienes han hecho reportajes o investigaciones sobre el *fenómeno* cartonero, quedan convertidos –consciente o inconscientemente– en parte de él. ¿Total?, así funciona el biopoder. El valor simbólico de las editoriales cartoneras, su insignia mayor sería, por lo tanto, el haber llamado la atención y, en consecuencia, la reflexión, tanto sobre la necesidad de construcción de ciudadanía, como sobre los mecanismos de consumo cultural, en gran medida gracias al interés mediático y académico. Queda ahora ver qué se ha conseguido en términos instrumentales.

Es indudable que las editoriales cartoneras contribuyen a la bibliodiversidad. Al ser sus costos de producción y distribución más bajos que los de las editoriales convencionales, suelen publicar más títulos que el promedio de las editoriales pequeñas de sus países. En casi todos los casos, además, estos títulos mezclan autores de diversas nacionalidades, edades y nivel de fama, colaborando claramente a la bibliodiversidad. Es interesante, también, ver la relación entre la construcción de ciudadanía y las editoriales cartoneras. Por un lado, el intercambio de catálogos y la

voluntad de un encuentro entre ellas (además de los contenidos de muchos de sus libros), evidencian un interés por contribuir a la formación de una ciudadanía global o, cuando menos, latinoamericana. Por el otro lado, el énfasis en la publicación y promoción de autores locales evidencia un proyecto de colaborar en la construcción de ciudadanías nacionales, o de alcanzarlas plenamente. Esto, sin embargo, se relaciona más con el impacto simbólico de las cartoneras (su lado solidario, la heterogeneidad de sus catálogos, sus posiciones ante la prensa, etc.) que con el alcance real de sus libros que, como se dijo antes, dados sus tirajes y sus espacios de circulación, es reducido.

Un punto álgido pero central de la situación de las editoriales cartoneras en el circuito de la edición independiente es su relación con el consumo cultural. Según señalamos antes, el mercado actual rechaza los productos *nuevos* (en el sentido que le da Juan Acha). Los editores independientes, que quieren transformar el consumo cultural desde el interior de la lógica del mercado suelen optar por la convivencia entre los libros *nuevos* y los *viejos* en sus propios catálogos. Como dice Harari: “[e]sas editoriales que privilegian el carácter cultural de sus publicaciones buscan el necesario equilibrio económico con obras que por sus rápidos resultados comerciales compensan los lentos rendimientos de otras.”²⁶ La mayoría de los editores independientes entiende que sólo bajo la lógica del equilibrio en sus propios catálogos podrán ser sostenibles, pero confían en que lo nuevo terminará por influir en la transformación de las sociedades. Las editoriales cartoneras, en cambio, se presentan no como productoras de objetos nuevos, sino como objetos nuevos en sí. Las editoriales cartoneras son *lo nuevo*. Al menos hasta que la insignia que ellas mismas han creado termine por cubrirlas y deban huir del hábito para sostener su goce.

Ante esto surgen dos escenarios posibles: la restricción del consumo de lo cartonero a las minorías que, según Acha poseen “mayor actividad sensitiva e intelectual” y pueden estar a la altura de las exigencias que presenta lo distinto, lo nuevo; o que el sistema apropiándose de los símbolos de la contracultura cartonera la haga desaparecer en tanto tal, con lo que ésta alcanzaría o masificaría su proyecto de democratización de la lectura. Para responderse esto (siempre parcialmente), habría que preguntarse ¿quién compra los libros cartoneros? La respuesta no asoma muy revolucionaria: los consumidores culturales habituales de *lo nuevo*: universitarios de humanidades y artes, los seguidores de los autores publica-

dos, los interesados en el valor del proyecto. A diferencia de las ediciones populares, baratas (muchas veces bastante más que un libro cartonero) y masivas, el rol de transformador social de las editoriales cartoneras parece ser más simbólico que instrumental, parece ejercer más influencia sobre los modos de producción y reflexión de la cultura, que sobre su consumo y sus consumidores. Más que democratizar la lectura o integrar a sectores tradicionalmente excluidos a un trabajo más digno y solidario, las editoriales cartoneras parecen cumplir el rol de evidenciar la necesidad de alcanzar esos objetivos, y de hacerlo permanente, insistentemente.

Esto nos regresa al goce y a la relación entre hacer insignia y huir del hábito. Si efectivamente este grupo de editoriales construyeron el significante *cartonera*, ligado a la solidaridad, a las respuestas ciudadanas en contextos de crisis,²⁷ a la idea de escultura social, etc.; si además esto se ha convertido luego en una insignia a partir de la cual se las juzga en función a cuánto respetan hoy de su ‘sentido original’; y si efectivamente el goce cartonero consiste –tras la invocación del significante– en la huida del hábito, cabría preguntarse si las editoriales cartoneras efectivamente huyen de su insignia o más bien la transforman en consigna, a partir de la cual se va articulando un *movimiento cartonero*, internacional, que exija permanente, insistentemente algo, lo que sea: la democratización de la lectura, por ejemplo, o la defensa del trabajo solidario. Podría preguntarse entonces, como alguna vez planteó un profesor universitario boliviano (cuestionando y exigiendo): “si la actividad cartonera agrega aspectos sustanciales a la literatura, [...] si existe una propuesta estética”.

EL RUMBO, LA RUMBA Y EL GOCE

Como debe ser evidente a estas alturas, pienso que no hay –felizmente– ningún *movimiento cartonero*, y que el fenómeno cartonero como algo articulado, con principios comunes y una lógica plenamente (o incluso medianamente) compartida a lo largo de diversas ciudades latinoamericanas, es más una proyección o un deseo exterior que una realidad. Eloísa Cartonera plantea sus propias búsquedas, distintas a las que se plantea Sarita Cartonera, que a su vez son distintas a las de Yerba Mala, La Cartonera, Textos de Cartón, o las demás. Y así, felizmente, fue siempre. Del mismo modo en el que Sarita Cartonera se planteó ‘importar’ el modelo Eloísa, (nacido en medio de la crisis argentina y que involucraba a uno de

sus íconos: los cartoneros, en una de las ciudades más lectoras de América Latina), a una ciudad como Lima, sin crisis social específica (solíamos decir, cuando nos preguntaban al respecto, que habíamos decidido iniciar Sarita porque el Perú es un país en crisis permanente), sin una gran tradición lectora y donde, por ejemplo, a los recicladores de cartón no se les llama cartoneros sino caladores, de ese mismo modo, las siguientes editoriales cartoneras fueron también desarrollando sus propias especificidades, algunas incluso, como en el caso de Mandrágora Cartonera, en abierta contradicción con los rasgos comunes de las demás.²⁸

Lo dicho recién aclara que no hubo nunca un ‘sentido original’ de las editoriales cartoneras. Cada una tuvo *su* sentido original, casi siempre en constante transformación, además. Por lo que algunas cosas dichas antes, como que, de ser aceptadas y absorbidas por el sistema (a través de la masificación de producción y circulación de libros cartoneros por parte del Estado, por ejemplo), alcanzarían su proyecto democratizador, o que buscan, como el resto de las editoriales independientes, contribuir a la formación de ciudadanías y a la transformación del consumo cultural, deben leerse en su real dimensión: hay que usar el lenguaje del imperio para hablar de la multitud. Las editoriales no tienen un proyecto común sino sentidos comunes y relaciones rizomáticas. Su singularidad radica en su no-intercambiabilidad. Yerba Mala y Eloísa Cartonera o Yiyi Jambo no son intercambiables porque no son lo mismo. Desde esta perspectiva, las editoriales cartoneras no se plantean un horizonte colectivo definido, un rumbo. Plantean un aporte significativo a la defensa de la bibliodiversidad para la actual edición independiente latinoamericana. Y en términos de formación de ciudadanía y transformación del consumo cultural, plantean, más que una propuesta, un ejercicio.

Situadas en la posición del goce, su singularidad radica en la acción de huir del hábito. Resistirse a la consigna colectiva. Al dejarse significar, catalogar, las editoriales cartoneras podrán ser comprendidas, su significado y sus propuestas se harán clasificables, replicables, moldes, fórmulas, anécdotas, pasarán a formar parte de la Historia. Lo contrario, reinventarse constantemente, huir del hábito, de la clasificación, de la insignia, mantener su no-intercambiabilidad, ser multitud, evidencia en cambio un ejercicio de resistencia, reorganización y redirección, aunque sea en mínima escala. Por lo tanto, hay que negar el rumbo, hay que cambiarlo—como de hecho lo hacen las editoriales cartoneras—por el goce, por la rumba.

NOTAS

1. Además de haber una gran cantidad de artículos y reportajes disponibles en línea, se ha filmado un documental sobre la editorial Yerba Mala y la Universidad de Wisconsin ha creado una colección digital llamada Latin American Cartonera Publishers Database, disponible en: <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/Arts/subcollections/Eloisa-CartAbout.html>.
2. Aunque los procesos de las editoriales cartoneras son autónomos y distintos, y responden a circunstancias particulares en cada contexto, la visión mayoritaria de la prensa y algunas investigaciones académicas al respecto, es la de considerar a todas las editoriales cartoneras surgidas después de Eloísa, como epígonos de ésta.
3. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (Londres/Nueva York: Verso, 1983), 39.
4. Lulu.com es la más exitosa de las empresas de autoedición con el sistema de impresión bajo demanda: el autor envía su manuscrito en Word y la empresa lo maqueta, le pone una cubierta simple y pone el libro disponible a la venta en su catálogo web, de tal modo que cada lector que quiera comprarlo solo tenga que seleccionarlo para que la empresa imprima y envíe cada ejemplar pedido a cualquier lugar del mundo. La única obligación del autor es comprar a la empresa el primer ejemplar impreso.
5. Al respecto, señala Alejandro Katz en “¿Qué es el libro hoy?” en Leandro de Sagasti-zábal y Fernando Esteves Fros (comp.), *El mundo de la edición de libros* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 2002), que el libro (impreso o digital) puede cumplir fundamentalmente tres funciones: la de soporte de información, en la que el soporte digital parece llevarle bastante ventaja en eficacia al libro impreso; la de medio de entretenimiento, en la que el libro impreso le lleva una ventaja insuperable al digital; y la de herramienta de conocimiento, en la que ambos soportes conviven, al menos por ahora.
6. Michael Hardt y Antonio Negri, *Imperio* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2002), 13.
7. Ibid., 14.
8. Ibid.
9. El término ‘biopoder’, acuñado por Michel Foucault, *La volonté de savoir* (París: Galignani, 1976) se refiere a las múltiples prácticas de control y explotación de los estados modernos sobre la población. Hardt y Negri adaptan este concepto a su idea de imperio, convirtiendo las prácticas en una lógica múltiple de control ejercida ya no solo por los estados, pero por el imperio.
10. Hardt y Negri, *Imperio*, 16.
11. Ibid., 358-359.
12. Ibid., 362.
13. Como anota Pablo Harari en “Un riesgo para la diversidad cultural”, *Brecha*, 3 de octubre de 2006, <http://www.editoresindependientes.com/informacion/un-riesgo-para-la-diversidad-cultural.pdf>: “si en el mundo de habla inglesa el 80 por ciento de las ventas de libros corresponden a cinco editoriales, en el de habla francesa cuatro empresas dominan el 75 por ciento de las ventas; en España cuatro grandes grupos publican el 50 por ciento de los títulos (Planeta sola controla más del 30 por ciento del mercado), el 4 por ciento de las empresas edita el 70 por ciento del total. En Italia, Mondadori tiene el 31 por ciento del mercado (y aliada a Bertelsmann posee 15 editoriales de habla hispana, entre ellas la “argentina” Sudamericana y la “española” Plaza y Janés)”.
14. André Schiffrin, *La edición sin editores* (México, Era: 2001), 94.
15. Pablo Harari, “Un riesgo para la diversidad cultural”.
16. Juan Acha, *Arte y sociedad: Latinoamérica: sistema de producción* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1979), 71.
17. Gabriel Zaid en *Los demasiados libros* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1996) muestra claramente cómo hay cada vez más voluntades de escribir que de leer, con lo que se complica –por exceso– la problemática de la bibliodiversidad.
18. Reinhard Huamán, “Panorama editorial y literario de la literatura peruana actual”, *ParaleloSur Revista de Literatura* N.º 4. Diciembre de 2006, http://www.paralelosur.com/revista/revista.dossier_024.htm.
19. En *Los demasiados libros*, Gabriel Zaid, hablando de la circulación del libro sostiene que: “Lo deseable para todos los libros no es que tengan millones de lectores, sino su público natural: utópicamente, el que pudiera alcanzar si la distribución fuera perfecta y el precio indiferente, de manera que todo posible lector interesado tuviese la oportunidad de leerlos” (46). Entonces nos enfrentamos a uno de los problemas centrales de la circulación del libro: que la distribución es cada vez más imperfecta ya que, mientras los grandes grupos controlan muchas editoriales, librerías y distribui-

doras y publican títulos pensando casi siempre en públicos masivos que sostengan las inversiones y los gastos de estructura de estos grupos, los pequeños editores y los editores independientes, que manejan inversiones más reducidas y publican libros menos masivos encuentran cada vez mayores dificultades para llegar a las librerías y otros espacios de venta y, si llegan, tienen grandes dificultades para aparecer y permanecer un mínimo tiempo en las mesas de exhibición. Encima, las librerías en Latinoamérica se concentran en las grandes ciudades y los demás puntos de venta están cada vez más copados por *best-sellers*, reduciendo drásticamente la posibilidad de que un libro llegue a su público natural.

20. *Declaración de los editores independientes del mundo latino*. En Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara (noviembre de 2005), <http://www.editoresindependientes.com/informacion/declaracion-de-los-editores-independientes-del-mundo-latino.pdf>.
Punche, de la cual era miembro Sarita Cartonera, tomó parte de esta declaración.
21. *Declaración de los editores independientes y solidarios*. Realizada en Dakar e 2003, <http://www.lom.cl/html/declaracion.htm>
22. Al respecto, ver el artículo de Francisco Izquierdo Quea, “Nuevas editoriales (el caso peruano de un boom remecedor)”, *El Hablador*, 16, <http://www.elhablador.com/editoriales.htm>
23. Jacques Alain Miller, *Los signos del goce* (Buenos Aires: Paidós, 1998), 241.
24. Luis Britto García, *El imperio contracultural: del rock a la postmodernidad* (Caracas: Editorial Nueva Sociedad, 1994), 33.
25. Ibid., 96.
26. Harari, “Un riesgo para la diversidad cultural”, 2.
27. Se ha resaltado mucho la importancia de que Eloísa Cartonera aparezca en Argentina en el contexto de la crisis que este país sufriera a principios del siglo, sin embargo, el que hayan seguido apareciendo editoriales cartoneras alrededor del continente evidencia que, además de ligarse el origen de Eloísa al contexto de crisis argentina, habría que ligar el origen de todas las cartoneras a un contexto mayor y más relacionado con su actividad específica; el de la crisis global de la industria editorial.
28. Mientras la mayoría de los impulsores de las editoriales cartoneras mantienen algunos ideales comunes, cercanos al socialismo, al cooperativismo o a la heterogeneización de la cultura, además de integrar en los proyectos a marginados económicos o sociales de la sociedad, Mandrágora, en Cochabamba es bastante más tradicional: se enfoca en la publicación de textos “canónicos”, no cree en el potencial transformador de los libros cartoneros, se plantea en abierta oposición al gobierno de Evo Morales y trabaja con marginados sociales por razones físicas (discapacitados), no sociales ni económicas.

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Classroom *Cartonera*: Recycle Paper, Prose, Poetry

DORIS SOMMER

I learned to say that literature is recycled material from listening to the upstart publishing house of Sarita Cartonera of Lima Peru, to be precise from Milagros Saldarriaga, one of the founding members. “Sarita Cardboard Picker” is named after Sarita Colonia, the heroically chaste and childish Patron Saint of the poor residents in Lima, mostly Andean immigrants. Milagros had come to Harvard University to speak and lead workshops, along with visual artist Javier Barilaro, a founder of the original Eloísa Cartonera of Buenos Aires. That initiative was the model for Sarita to launch its parallel project of making books from used cardboard and unpublished literature. The week-long *cartonera* activities, sponsored by Harvard’s Cultural Agents in March 2007 included talks and workshops that convened participants from Harvard and from a range of schools throughout Cambridge and Boston. We learned how to make beautiful books from discarded materials and, with Milagros, how to use them in the classroom.

This was a moment of truth for me and for other language and literature teachers crouched on the floor to cut cardboard and hunched happily over tables made invisible by the mess of cuttings, tempera paints, scissors, string, and all kinds of clean junk to add decorative value to the books we were making. Until then, Cultural Agents had focused outward. We had convened, and continue to convene scholarly seminars on major thinkers who inspire Cultural Agents (Antonio Gramsci and Hannah Arendt, among others) and we promote a broad range of artists who understand their work to be interventions in public life. Even before the major event of Augusto Boal’s workshops and presentations of Theater of the Oppressed in December 2003, Cultural Agents seminars featured photographers who teach desperately poor children to take new perspectives and reframe their lives. (Nancy McGirr’s Fotokids in Guatemala is exemplary, as was Martín Cohen’s Ph 15 in Ciudad Oculta on the fringes of Buenos Aires). The series culminated in two conferences on “Visible Rights” that gathered practitioners and theorists from Bogota to Bangladesh to reflect on the dynamics of teaching photography from the perspectives of children’s rights, art, and economics. Another special event, in 2005 showcased “The Jewish Latin Mix: Making Salsa” with a conference, master-classes and concert that featured the mostly unsung

collaborations among Latino and Jewish musicians and filmmakers, a testimony to the socially binding effects of mutual admiration among artists who depend on one another to make music. Larry Harlow, Martin Cohen, Marty Sheller, and Leon Gast starred on that occasion. We hosted related seminars on the power of student dance troupes (such as Bajucol in East Boston) to consolidate communities of youth and to keep them from dropping out of school. Muralists who direct crews of teenagers to occupy public space and to promote a sense of ownership that amounts to safeguarding that space also figured among our guest speakers. These events and explorations have had some notably lasting effects (see for example the case of Boal's workshops).

Nevertheless, from my perspective as a teacher of language and literature, the admirable cases we pursued represented other people's work, fascinating as examples to be theorized and even as techniques to appropriate for effective teaching. I am the beneficiary, along with students and colleagues, of many creative contributions by cultural agents outside the language and literature classroom. These include two brilliant Harvard College students, Amar Bakshi and Proud Dzambukira, who were determined to stem the drop-out rate of young girls in Mussoorie, India, the home town of Amar's mother. They established Aina Arts to implement an after-school arts program that required girls to stay in school if they wanted to stay in the arts sessions. The self-sustaining success there meant that by the next year Aina Arts was also working in Proud's native Zimbabwe.¹ I hoped to replicate a version of this inspiration in the Boston-Cambridge area, university-rich, but public-school poor, where drop-out rates are alarming and youth violence a growing concern. My version is a course for area teachers called "Youth Arts for Social Change" offered through Harvard's Extension School. Now in its fifth year, the course engages a range of local artists (in dance, music, painting, theater, photography, etc) to direct a series of workshops that train teachers to incorporate creative techniques their classrooms.² I had imagined that this would be my culminating effort as a cultural agent, incorporating lessons I had learned from our seminars, conferences, and workshops to bring art back into schools, not isolated in elective classes, but as the motor and medium for any engaged learning.

But the Cartonera at Cultural Agents was a personal turning point for me. Literature came back to the center of my teaching and writing, newly energized as adventures in recycling, and open to unexpected re-

combinations in my own work and in that of my students. The “Youth Arts” course, for example, became a forum for developing the Cartonera (called the Paper Picker Press in English) as the hub of many arts. A single literary text throughout the semester becomes the pretext for a range of artistic interpretations through visual arts, dance, music, theater. As readings of the selected text broaden and deepen, participants also develop an array of readings by going “off on a tangent” each week, searching for a text that they can relate to the shared reading. The combination of focus on the inexhaustibility of interpretation and on the wealth of literature to be perused and selected from the participant’s own criteria creates a dynamic culture of reading even among the initially reluctant or indifferent. And the “Foundational Fictions” course I regularly teach with graduate students now offers an alternative final project to the standard “publishable essay”: an outline and one full chapter of one’s own “nineteenth century novel” along with an essay to reflect on the construction. The resulting chapters and reflections show a superior depth of historical imagination and sensibility.

To acknowledge, in good faith, that teachers of the humanities are cultural agents—perhaps the fundamental agents for Gramsci’s organic cultural revolution – is to assume the risks that characterize any creative activity. Among the significant burdens of humanist teachers, after all, is to train taste, hardly a minor responsibility. Taste is another term for the judgment that civic life depends on. Although judgment is an innate human faculty, to follow Kant, it needs to be exercised through training by examples, which is why Aristotle insisted that the virtue of practical wisdom was not governed by rules but by the development of judgment through habituation.³ Judgment is different from reason, not its irrational opposite. In fact, reason depends on judgment, which is of a different order, Kant will say in the *Third Critique*. It is rather like a grammar than like logic, in Stanley Cavell’s appropriation of Wittgenstein, so that usage in communication, not argument, develops a sense of right or wrong judgment.⁴ Intellectuals exercise judgment even when they mistake the activity for reasonable argument. And they can change their minds, learn a new grammar, Gramsci assured us, but the process is painfully slow for those intellectuals who identify as risk-averse professionals rather than creative agents. Real teachers take risks; Paolo Freire encouraged us with a quote from Hegel at the beginning of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. “It is solely by risking life that freedom is obtained. . . the individual who

has not staked his life may, no doubt be recognized as a Person; but he has not attained the truth of this recognition as an independent self-consciousness.”⁵

RECYCLED WORDS

Literature as recycled material, it had never before occurred to me. The *cartonera* book covers made of recycled cardboard were fitting invitations to consider the material inside as recycled too. This was my simple summary of Milagros Saldarriaga’s rich presentation, and she graciously appropriated the analogy. It cuts through much of what we have learned and taught as sophisticated literary criticism with its daunting words such as intertextuality, traces, iteration, point of view, and focalization. The technical terms become user-friendly by losing their elite edge and gaining a broad accessibility when readers can abstract the particular functions to arrive at a general principle about literature being made up of cuts and pastes and pastiches. The hands-on workshop that Milagros facilitated during the Harvard Cartonera week developed a few demonstrations of the recycling process. For example, we used the description of characters in Edgar Allan Poe’s “Man in the Crowd” to draw portraits, but indirectly. The drawings were intentionally mediated by a partner’s description of the character. The results, after we taped the portraits on the “gallery” wall, made visible the range of interpretations and re-interpretations of the same literary characters, showing that it is impossible to read or draw without adding original details. We could not clearly distinguish between reading and writing, reception and production. I had never experienced so effective and painless a lesson in deconstruction and in reader-response theory. It was positively fun, and I have repeated the activity many times with similarly profound and pleasurable results. When the participants are graduate students or colleagues, an extra measure of satisfaction comes from reflecting on the theoretical principles involved and appreciating their significance for interpretation (One of my brightest graduate students commented after Milagros’ initial workshop: “I don’t hate narratology any more!”) By now, the *cartonera* is part of Harvard’s training program for new teachers of foreign languages, Linguistics 200.) And when we work with primary school children, the technical terms do not figure in the reflection. But in all cases, the lessons are as

clear as they are welcome: Each participant is an author and an authority of the work produced; interpretation exercises critical and creative faculties; and the range of plausible interpretations is worthy of admiration for oneself and for fellow interpreters. Admiration is the glue of voluntary societies such as democracies, Antanas Mockus taught me, not toleration, which suggests one citizen's largesse in the face of other, implicitly inferior subjects.

It is obvious, ¿isn't it? that books and plays and poems are made up of words, motifs, plots, characters, grammatical structures, elements that already exist in other contexts and that authors borrow and recombine to produce arresting new works. Novelty is in the poaching and the recombination, not in the material, which, logically, must already have been used if the new creation hopes to communicate with a public of readers or listeners. Wittgenstein wisely dismissed the possibility of private languages. For example, everyone knows that Cervantes played on chivalric and picaresque sources to write *Don Quijote*, although he claims shamelessly to have pillaged even more directly, lifting an entire manuscript written by an Arab author. And Shakespeare is notoriously not the author of his plots in great plays, but the genius re-writer of appropriated stories. To introduce students into writing through an appreciation of the liberties that great writers take, with recycled words that can be endlessly recombined, is to demystify the classics as products of human interventions and to free young people to try their own hands at altering texts with every new reading. Through play, participants know that the classics of high culture and higher education are within their audacious reach.

The recycled character of literature is apparent and almost laughably simple to understand. Yet the observation is surprisingly profound. The combination of surprise and profundity elicits the chuckle or wink from students and teachers of literature that signals a good joke. Thanks to the good humor of Sarita Cartonera, we can be more effective and inclusive promoters of higher order thinking and the pleasures of the text.

MAKE READERS

As far as I know, of the dozen *cartoneras* that have followed the lead of Eloísa, only Sarita Cartonera promotes a pedagogy that uses the beautiful little books it produces as "material" for making readers. It would be

foolish, Milagros commented, to try to sustain a publishing venture in a city like Lima, where people do not read much, without developing a public of readers as potential customers for books. That development project is called LUMPA (*Libros, un modelo para armar*) to play on a popular title by Julio Cortázar. The Buenos Aires of Eloísa Cartonera was different. During the worst moments right after the markets crashed in December 2001, haunting pictures show residents as they look longingly into bookstore windows or while away the time with some reading material in hand. Just over a year after the crash, Eloísa was responding to the hunger for new books among readers starved by the dearth of imports and by the lack of local production. Poet Washington Cucurto and painter Javier Barilaro invented an alternative to the failed market, by using and re-using available materials, pre-owned cardboard and first rate new literature. At their storefront publishing house, the two artists began to buy cardboard from practically destitute paper pickers at a price almost five times the rate of recycling centers and then they proceeded to incorporate the *cartoneros* into the production of individually decorated cardboard books. The artisanal covers call attention to the original content, new literature donated by Argentina's best living writers. Ricardo Piglia and César Aira were among the first, soon joined by Mexican Mar go Glantz, Chilean Diamela Eltit, and many others. By now, Harvard's Widener Library has more than 90 titles from *cartonera* editions. Several of the recycler book-makers continued their careers in editorial positions at standard publishers; others returned to finish high school; and all managed to survive the economic crisis with a sense of dignity.

The replication that Eloísa Cartonera inspired in Lima was the first in a series that continues to multiply.⁶ But Lima continues to be a special case. There, economic crisis was a familiar condition rather than the shock it had been in Buenos Aires. The lack of money together with a richness of writers and a surfeit of poor paper pickers gave Lima something of a kinship with distressed Buenos Aires and seemed to guarantee the parallel success of Sarita Cartonera. Yet the new publishing project encountered an obstacle more stubborn than poverty: In Lima the low-literacy rate made it difficult to establish and to sustain the enterprising publisher. Clearly, it was not enough to make cheap and beautiful books; Sarita had to create a public who would buy and read them.

The brilliant response of the young directors—Milagros Saldarriaga, Tania Silva, and Jaime Vargas Luna—was to link publishing to pedagogy,

to teach teachers how to use the books to turn teenagers into lovers of literature. LUMPA treats texts as incentives for endless creativity in a program that offers workshops for high-school language and literature classrooms and supplies a teachers' manual organized along the standard classroom concepts used in Peru and much of Latin America to teach literature in the most conventional way. Sections of the manual are dedicated to author, plot, and characters, in order to cover standard material and thereby to allay teachers' anxieties about adopting an unconventional approach. But instead of merely summarizing a plot, students are challenged to distinguish it from the story, to recognize that a narrator may be lying (what a clever way to underline the nature of fiction) and to choose an alternative narrator from among the characters of a story. They are encouraged to re-write demanding classics or new stories from an alternative point of view, from different times and places, and in various genres. Literally becoming authors of variations that compete with the found text, students master the technical and conceptual materials they play with. Creativity is the incentive to mastery, because choosing to change a text requires readers to focus on the existing details and mechanisms in order to contest them with alternatives.

During the summer that followed the Cartonera workshops at Harvard, from June through August 2007, Cultural Agents explored Sarita's pedagogical lead and developed a multi-arts approach that incorporates our experience with the "Youth Arts" course to recognize all arts as potential media for interpreting literature. The arts, after all, do more than "express" ideas or emotions; they interpret the world and other works of art. Northrop Frye famously quipped that it was by no means clear if mimesis means imitation of nature; but he was quite sure that it means imitation of other arts.⁷ In our variation on Lima's lessons, readings of a literary text explode through a broad sampling of different art forms, so that participants are absorbed in the passionate activity of art-making and hardly suspect that they are learning difficult texts and sophisticated interpretive concepts.

That first summer, we benefitted from an "Idea Translation" grant received by one of our associates, Nathalie Galindo, from Harvard's Professor David Edward's class on creative entrepreneurship, "Idea Translation," Engineering Sciences 147. With this seed money, Nathalie and Emily Ullman, who had volunteered their talents as teacher and actor, launched three pilot programs in the Boston area (with the Brazilian

American Association in Framingham, the Boys and Girls Club in Chelsea, and Zumix out-of school music center in East Boston). The lessons we taught and learned have by now developed into a replicable program in higher order literacy that adjusts with the site-specific sensitivity we learned from Boal's Theater of the Oppressed. Local arts and artists along with texts chosen by the instructors (as long as they are moderately difficult to slow down perception and break out of habitual uses, to remember Schklovsky's formalist characteristics of art) provide the elements of the particular program. We bring an approach, as Boal did, and an invitation to play.

At a time when reading and writing skills, along with critical judgment, are in profound crisis throughout underserved areas of public education, it is crucial to recover an interest in reading, in literature, in arts in general and thereby in creative living. The Paper Picker Press is one initiative that facilitates intellectual curiosity and self-authorizing interventions among today's children and youth so that they can make judicious choices for themselves and for fellow citizens. The workshops for teachers and artists are meant to be examples that can be modified and adapted with participants' particular talents and goals in mind. Because instructors participate in the activities that they ask students to explore, practicing creativity and taking the corollary risks, they can expect—and learn to recognize—original work of students.

PLAY WITH ME

Children and youth learn best through guided play with materials, including literary material. I am convinced that this is true for adults as well, since life-long playfulness distinguishes human beings from other living species. Learning through creativity is not new to education. Over a century ago in Italy Maria Montessori formulated an arts-based pedagogy that managed to prepare poor retarded children to score above average grades in national standardized tests. Like later reformers, including Brazilian Paolo Freire, French Jacques Rancière, and North American rogue teachers like Albert Cullum who found little institutional support,⁸ Montessori's guiding principle was respect for the self-educating capacity of students. Teachers show, they don't explain: "The task of the teacher becomes that of preparing a series of motives of cultural activity,

spread over a specially prepared environment, and then refraining from obtrusive interference.”⁹ Sequels or parallel projects, such as the Waldorf Schools¹⁰ and the Reggio Emilia project in early childhood education¹¹ confirm Montessori’s evidence of superior results through art even for challenged children. It is clear that engaging children in creativity demonstrably enhances their disposition to learn a range of intellectual and social skills by cultivating concentration and discipline through pleasurable, even passionate, practices. Yet Montessori and Waldorf schools are now more common among privileged classes than in public schools. Skeptics about the declared mission of public schools to educate active citizens, as opposed to preparing obedient workers, will not be surprised by this uneven arrangement of resources and philosophies.¹² Poor districts, overcrowded classrooms, and deflated expectations all conspire against children’s creative explorations. To compound the problem, beleaguered public school teachers under pressure to produce passing grades on standardized tests suppose that engaging artistic play is a distraction from academic work. Ironically for the teachers and tragically for the children, this sacrifice of play for standardized instruction fails on both counts of performing on tests and producing the pleasure that sustains learning.

The Paper Picker Press recovers some lessons in creative learning and invents others for a targeted literacy program. The fundamental principle is to encourage students to use literary masterpieces as grist for their own creative mills. Desacralized classics become tool kits that offer up useful vocabulary, clever grammatical turns, and a knack for literary figures. Students exercise their critical faculties both as they poach elements for their own writing, intervene in the classics, and also as they learn to admire the found text as well as the variations of their peers. Facilitators show what to do; they do not tell students what lessons to derive from the creative practices. The students themselves are encouraged to derive meanings from a workshop, for example in painting portraits of a character whose visual image changes with each iteration, or from a performance of human sculptures that represent literary figures of a shared text. To explain activities to students who have already experienced them is to pre-empt their interpretive capacities. I learned from my Montessori trained daughter that pre-emptive explanation, “stealing one’s learning,” is the dreaded error in this child-centered pedagogy; it is well known but seldom experienced because of its magnitude.

Teachers or *maestros* are not explainers, but those who show or indicate, as Spanish makes clear in the verbs *enseñar* and *mostrar*. To teach is to show. [Jacques Rancière develops this, Montessori and Freire-like, non-authoritarian, and empowering, principle of education in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, a book-length biography of Jean Joseph Jacotot. The French Revolutionary professor of philosophy who urgently needed to leave France after the Restoration accepted a teaching position in Holland, though he knew no Dutch. There, Jacotot found that his Dutch students could teach themselves French by pouring over a bilingual edition of a popular text that he supplied.]¹³ Our week-long training in the Paper Picker Press models the same respect for participant youth-leaders and artists. First, we facilitate an activity and then invite reflections on the effects and on the pedagogical principles at work. The first few answers, however brilliant, will not exhaust the question. We wait for more reflection as an exercise in stretching the critical imagination and in patience with one's peers.

Some skeptics question the urgency of literacy training today, when communication depends increasingly on audiovisual stimuli. They contend that insisting on a literary grounding for culture will continue to plague society with asymmetrical performance and expectations, because socio-economically disadvantaged populations lack the background and the access to training in literature. On the other hand, they allege, audiovisual culture levels the field between the rich and the poor. Our response is to aim above the current base-line and to strive for a higher common denominator. Language skills remain the foundation for critical thinking, social resourcefulness, and for individual psychological development. And levels of literacy continue to be reliable indices for poverty, violence, and disease. Without mastery of at least one spoken and written language, youth have little hope either of self-realization or of active citizenship.

To favor training that downplays literature in the name of democracy is, ironically, to reinforce unequal social structures by denying higher-order literacy to economically disadvantaged youth. Therefore, rather than compromise the personal and inter-personal contributions of literary education by turning a skeptical ear to the centrality of reading and writing, the Paper Picker Press develops the educational contributions of good literature for everyone, no matter what cultural background or tastes he or she may bring to the workshop. Even children who cannot read are

engaged in the activities because they begin with making books while the text is read aloud. The range of interpretive arts and styles will depend on the youth and on their local instructors. But the incitation to make art is a constant in the Paper Picker Press, and it turns texts that might appear elite or irrelevant into the raw material of student creations.

CIVIC SELF-EFFICACY

The Paper Picker Press has worked in after-school programs, summer programs, and out of school with young people at all levels, from kindergarteners to graduate students. Among the benefits of the program, the most significant is surely its effective development of literacy among youth towards both lower and higher-order thinking. But the corollary effects for their development in general and for broad civic development are also worth appreciating. Instructors who embrace creativity as a valued human faculty promote the self-reliance and resourcefulness that can help young people become active citizens. And sites that engage artists to help educate their youth identify the arts as social resources, thereby acknowledging that creativity is a foundation for free societies. Without creativity, the meaning of citizenship loses a sense of active participation, because participation depends on the freedom to adjust laws and practices in light of ever new practical and ethical challenges. Without art, citizenship would shrink to a notion of compliance that treats society as if it were a closed text that we read for facts about “what is,” rather than reading society as a work in progress that invites us to make adjustments and to explore the “what if.” Towards that constructive exploration, the following particular objectives direct our program:

1. To encourage ownership and authorship of the texts, participants learn to interpret creatively. Ownership of language and authorship of narrative empower young people to become active agents of their own lives and to participate in public life.
2. To enable young people to connect stories with their own lived experience. All texts thereby become “relevant” so that instructors need not choose texts that they consider to be appropriate, which may limit the range of reading for youth. Instead, the range becomes limitless when participants re-write good literature through their

own imaginary frames. This way, the broad range of cultural production remains open to youth.

3. To reveal that no text is immune to creative intervention, since reading necessarily intervenes in a text and produces as many variations as there are readers. Literature is seen as a dynamic negotiation rather than an imposition.
4. To demonstrate that reading and writing are two moments of the same process, so that reading cannot be passive but instead affords opportunities for creative co-authorship.
5. To experience language itself as an artistic medium, a trigger for the range of other artistic activities, since the same literary text can serve as inspiration for painting, dance, theater, music, printing, etc.

Conventional teaching has favored convergent and predictable answers to specific questions as the first and sometimes the only way to engage young people in learning. This cautious approach privileges data retrieval or “lower order thinking.” Critical and creative “higher order thinking,” on the other hand, has seemed like an extra and sometimes infinitely delayed luxury for struggling students. But this first-things-first procedure that gets stuck in the given facts without exploring possible interpretations has been stifling for students because it rarely reaches the transition to a second level that would develop their mental agility. Paradoxically, as we have learned, a lower order focus on factual information seldom leads to critical thinking, while attention to detail can *follow* from higher order creative manipulations that highlight particular data in the found material.

Consider what happens when we engage youth to treat texts as pre-texts for improvising alternative plots, for re-framing characters, or changing the register of language. The challenge to change a text leads young readers to engage their critical faculties to explore the structure and details of the original text so that they can intervene or create alternatives. Critical readers in training learn to mine the original piece for lexical, grammatical, and structural, elements in order to replace and to redesign existing arrangements. Original elements become dramatically visible for young iconoclasts who read with a creative purpose, demystifying literature into usable stuff that can be appropriated in ways that make practically any text “relevant.” There is no need to select customized reading materials and thereby to limit the exposure of particular readers

to appropriate texts, because youth can authorize themselves to customize their own irreverent versions of the original. Young creators develop mastery of a text so that they can refuse its ultimate authority.

Our approach assumes the risks and the rigor inherent in any creative process. As in María Montessori's Italy and Paolo Freire's Brazil, The United States, and other states worldwide need to address underprivileged schools that resentfully submit to standardize testing, where teachers have been understandably risk-averse. They stick to basic skills through a first-things-first approach: first the factual details of a text and then interpretation, if there is any time left. Teaching for testing this way produces unhappy pressures for everyone. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents all generally surrender to a perceived requirement to focus on facts alone. But the irony has been that this cautious approach to literacy keeps the test scores down, because young people who don't explore creative interpretation score badly on questions of interpretation and therefore on ratings of higher order, critical thinking.

The Paper Picker Press offers an antidote by inverting the pyramid of lower to higher order activities, initiating youth into the apex of creative interpretation as an incentive to plumb the details that will enable compelling variations on found material or pre-texts.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Paper Picker Press is not a detailed recipe for implementation; it is a toolkit to construct a customized program. Years ago, Freire warned us against pedagogical packages that urge innovation and then deliver exhaustive instructions to follow. Instead, we train instructors to liberate their own creativity through variations on activities that we have developed, and through their own new experiments. Youth-leaders and collaborating artist-instructors need to "own" their particular version of the program in order to model the independence and good humor about mistakes that we encourage among youth. In that spirit we continue to take liberties with existing practices and to generate new activities with each new site and every artist who has donated his or her talents to contributing a new art of interpretation.

Ideally, creative collaborations throughout the ten-week session of the Paper Picker Press will include classroom teachers, each assigned to

one group of students, and artists who rotate through the classrooms to bring both technical expertise and variety to each group. *Alternatively*, if resources are too limited to engage artists in addition to the classroom teachers, the teachers themselves can create a collaboration that pools their particular talents to vary the arts employed in class. Three to five teachers who adopt the Paper Picker Press can plan to rotate among the classrooms in order to direct the particular activities in which they excel. This arrangement satisfies the principle of artistic variety and exposes the students to several adult mentors without incurring the costs and administrative complexity of hiring another team of artists. In either case—the ideal collaborations among teachers and local artists or the effective compromise of teacher collaborations—we train the instructors together during a week-long workshop in order to learn from one another and to model the opportunities for admiration that we will share with students.

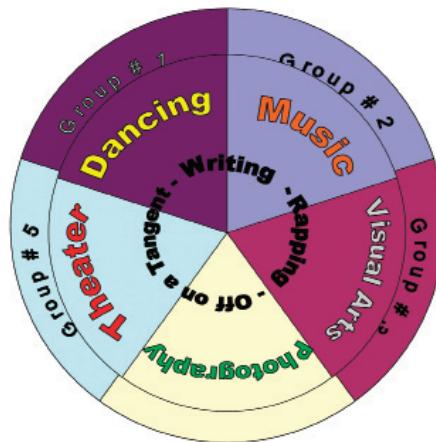


Figure 1. Training tool for Paper Picker Press workshops.

The compelling reason to work with a distribution of arts is to make good on the principle of “multiple intelligences,” coined by Howard Gardner who emphasized visual arts rather than the range of creative practices, and to develop each youth with attention to his or her particular talents.¹⁴ Once a young person is acknowledged as someone who can paint, or rap, dance, or act, etc., he/she gains the recognition and self-esteem that encourage the risk in other arts. Healthy risk-taking is the necessary bridge to bring the youth to reading and writing. Perhaps he or she can thrive as an adult without mastering one or another of the arts in our workshop. But the skills of literacy, critical thinking, persuasion, and deliberation are necessary for the development of each youth; and they are basic for any commitment to social justice.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Warm-ups. These are lucid exercises designed to relax inhibitions and create a core spirit of trust and cooperation among participants. Many of the exercises are described in Augusto Boal's *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, New York: Routledge, 1992 as well as in the *Habla* website: <http://www.habla.org/es/blog/?p=14>.

Book-making. Even before any literature appears in the program, participants begin to make book covers by choosing recycled materials prepared for them, or brought in by participants. They design ways to intervene in printed/used cardboard as a preamble for intervening in printed texts. The handiwork engages students in design challenges and also enhances their attention once an oral reading begins.

Reading aloud. A facilitator reads the chosen text in a clear and moving voice while participants continue to make their individual books. The act of reading aloud while others listen intently as they engage in manual labor has a long and distinguished tradition throughout the Caribbean in the practice of cigar manufacture. Skilled workers could insist with factory owners that readers were free to read even revolutionary tracts during work hours, simply because the labor of good tobacco rollers was irreplaceable. Recent studies have corroborated the relationship between heightened levels of attention to speech and manual activities, overturning conventional assumptions that students are inattentive when they play with handiwork.¹⁵

Question the text. After hearing the text read, the facilitator may ask participants to develop a question to ask of the text, signaling that the literature is the object of investigation, not the youth. Asking a question of the text also reveals that it is a product of decisions to include some details, and only suggest others; the piece becomes vulnerable to manipulation as soon as participants notice that the story could have been told in different ways. Perhaps an important detail is missing from the text, or maybe an inconsistency arises. Instead of putting students on the defensive, by asking if they have understood or noticed relevant information, this activity puts the text on trial and invites participants to require more information.

Intertext. After participants formulate a question of the text, and share the questions orally, the facilitator invites the young writers to respond to their own questions, or to adopt another question, producing

an interpolated text that develops what had been a fuzzy or enticing opportunity in the original text.

Literature on the clothesline. Borrowing from a nineteenth century tradition especially popular in Brazil where poor poets had no other way to sell their work but to hang copies in the Public Square to be bought by passers by, participants hang their intertexts on a clothesline with clothespins for instant “publication.” The effects of displaying one’s own work and also reading the work of peers include pride in a good piece of writing, greater development of interpretive possibilities, and also admiration for others.

Portraits, back to back, an activity learned from LUMPA. Participants sit back to back while one describes a character from the text that all had heard in the oral reading and the other draws the description. After 10 minutes, they change roles. When each participant has drawn a portrait, we create a gallery and invite participants to the opening talk. Each participant is asked if his or her description was well executed by the partner. The results are always a combination of convergence and divergence, because each participant is actively interpreting as he or she describes, and also as he or she draws. This observation stimulates reflection on the relationship between reading and interpretation, shared experiences and personal differences, and in general social justice in a democracy that negotiates equal rights with cultural and personal differences.

Rap, Rhythm and Poetry. The contestatory energy and non-conformist wit of hip hop culture is a natural for youthful appropriations of classic texts. Spoken word artists are unfailingly the guides to explorations of literary figures and indirect communication that produces estrangement, a favorite signature of art in formalist criticism. One rapper commented on his use of metaphor that it did not give up the meaning too easily and therefore slowed down communication with the pleasurable tension of a riddle.

Movie music score. One way to develop interpretation along with music appreciation in the Paper Picker Press is to invite participants to develop a music score for the film they are preparing from the story used in the program. The facilitator may play about six one-minute fragments of either varied or related musical genres and ask participants to identify particular words or literary figures that should be accompanied by the musical fragment. Students will strain to listen to details and may find unsuspected resonances between elements that elicit the same musical

assination among the listeners. The very effort to enlist the music for one's own score encourages active listening, so basic to work in social justice. With interest and curiosity aroused about the musical fragments, the facilitator may offer some information and background for the pieces heard.

Point of view. Photography is an available technique in any area where participants may be able to use even a cellular phone in teams of two or three. Invite them to take pictures from a particular character's point of view, or to compose references to a theme. Then send the photos electronically to an email address, or download digital photos, to project them onto a screen for viewing and commentary. The activity makes lessons in perspective and composition immediately available for visual analysis and translates easily into otherwise difficult concepts in literary and social criticism. Without a notion of multiple points of view that one can occupy, social debates do not progress beyond signaling one's differences from another person.

Literary Figures Alive. Image theater is a practice developed by Augusto Boal to create human sculptures that capture a difficult dynamic and freeze it long enough to reflect on the conflict. The technique builds dramatic plots in forum theater for conflict resolution. But in the Paper Picker Press it can also be an invitation to embody literary figures in groups of three to five participants. Have them form groups and instruct the participants to locate an interesting literary figure in the text [the terms metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, simile, etc can be offered later to refine readings]. This activity is training for persuasive and effective communication. The Classics defined rhetoric as the political "art of persuasion." Often a participant or two in the group will not know what a literary figure is, but after working in the design of the sculpture that companions identify, they all learn to continue identifying more figures. After each sculpture is staged, participants from the other groups attempt to "read" the figure by locating it in the text. This "perform and response" activity turns a possibly abstract lesson in social rhetoric into entertainment that can be sustained long enough for everyone to master the power of rhetorical devices.

Forum Theater. Although this technique is less text-specific than our other activities, we often smuggle Boal's Forum Theater into the program as an opportunity to teach a creative and very effective exercise in conflict resolution. Apparently, intractable problems are located in the text,

and yet the very act of locating them indicates that readers recognize the problem and may well sense a local and intimate connection. Then skits are prepared to represent each of the two or three problems chosen by groups of students. After each skit is performed, the facilitator invites the spect-actors in the audience to intervene, one after another, in ways that can derail the tragedy. The cumulative effect of multiple interventions demonstrates, *pace* Aristotle whose intention was to diffuse rebelliousness, that the socially active definition of tragedy is a lack of imagination. Active citizens create variations on stage that avoid crisis and disaster.

Grandmother Tells the Story. The Paper Picker Press can seamlessly develop into a bilingual arts program by adding activities that depend on a language other than the one used in the target classroom text. Since the program multiplies approaches to interpretation, it will not seem foreign to ask participants to re-tell the story from the point of view and the language of a non-English [or Spanish, etc.] speaker. Students will display their virtuosity by performing well in another target language; they will validate the contributions of family members and/or neighbors who do not speak the hegemonic language and who may be illiterate. Language specific genres of speech can enrich the range of interventions. For example, a story can morph into the popular poetry of décimas, or rancheras, etc.

Off on a Tangent instructs participants to browse widely in libraries, bookstores, homes, cultural centers, etc to find a literary sample that can in some way be related to the core text of the workshop. If the connection is far-fetched, participants will engage in the amusing mental agility of justifying the link. The only specific instruction is that the found text have at least one word that the youth imagines his or her classmates do not know. This activity is the only activity repeated in each of the five modules to encourage participants to read widely among challenging works. By the end of the ten week program, we will have trained curious readers who enjoy a challenge.

Intervention is the theme of each activity, everything from changing the look of used cardboard to interpolating an intertext and adjusting the course of a play. It is also the principle of activities in social justice, enabled by the combination of risk taking and rigor that undergirds all aspects of the Paper Picker Press.

A LO CHALCO

Chalco is one of the poorest neighborhoods of Mexico City, far enough away from the center along the traffic-clogged highway to Puebla to feel isolated as well as arid. There, migrants from several indigenous and mestizo communities settle alongside one another in precarious constructions and arrangements. Though the government of the Federal District has begun to construct an administrative infrastructure in Chalco, the unpaved streets are still lined with makeshift dwellings put together from any available materials, including cardboard. The arts of recycling are no news here. But before the *cartonera* came to town, no one had yet made books from found material.

In July 2008, Doris Sommer and José Luis Falconi—directors of Cultural Agents—were hosted by Worldfund to train a team of educators in Chalco's admirably dedicated but rather rigid Catholic school “Mano Amiga.” Mostly local artists worked with us here, as elsewhere, to insure sustainability of the collaborations they establish with the regular teaching staff of a school or an after-school setting, but we also invited Pedro Reyes to create a new activity for the *cartonera*. Preparation of the block-type poster he developed with students of Mano Amiga is now featured on the cover of the Cultural Agents brochure. Pedro had worked with Cultural Agents before—including the exhibit “*ad usum*” inspired by the creative Mayor Mockus of Bogota and shown at the Carpenter Center at Harvard University during the Fall of 2007 before it showed at the Americas Society in New York. Pedro continues the inspiration now by inventing brilliant works of art-solutions to apparently intractable problems. See for example his “Palas por pistolas” (Swords into plowshares) in the same brochure.¹⁶

Cultural Agents had brought the Cartonera to other sites in Mexico, including the Museo Amparo in Puebla and the University of Guadalajara. We had also collaborated with the Secretary of Education in Puerto Rico, where Maestro Antonio Martorell was part of the Cultural Agents team of facilitators for the week-long workshop, with Caribbean University in Bayamón, Puerto Rico, invited by resident artist Anaída Hernández. We trained teachers and artists in Bogota’s main library, the Luis Angel Arango where workshops will resume in August 2009; and even before we ventured out, Cultural Agents implemented the Paper Picker Press in six struggling grade schools in the Boston-Alston area, invited

through Harvard's Achievement Success Initiative in collaboration with Boston's City Government. Most recently, a city-wide project in "Culture for Change" engaged Cultural Agents to develop the Paper Picker Press for youth at risk in several sites throughout Boston.

In Puebla, the Fundación Amparo hosted the week's training especially to support its Proyecto Roberto in developing communities. At Puebla's beautiful Museo Amparo, we benefitted from the participation of two distinguished artists, Paloma Torres (who happens to be a student of Martorell) and Betsabé Romero who invented new activities to take advantage of the admirable pre-Colombian collection at the Museo; and we enjoyed the collaboration of Puebla's office of public education. The enthusiastic responses to the ten-week implementation at the Museo Amparo that followed the training and lasted through Fall semester of 2008 include a city initiative to expand into new sites of the school system and also to establish Cartoneras in market places to benefit residents at large. Similarly, at the University of Guadalajara, the privileged precinct of the Arts Academy was an ideal site for training already sophisticated arts educators. At the following International Book Fair in Guadalajara, November-December 2008, we directed a workshop for over 120 (literacy coaches) with generous help from Cultural Agents abroad, including Mayor Antanas Mockus, Angela Pérez, Cultural Coordinator for Colombia's Banco de la República, and Doris Moromisato, Peruvian poet and Director of the International Book Fair in Lima. Sequels planned for the City of Guadalajara include an expanded workshop, or Institute, to scale up the program for area schools. But nowhere has the success of the Cartonera been more stunning than in Chalco.

Maybe it is the intensity of dedication by the Director of the Mano Amiga School, Lilia Garelli, and of her devoted faculty that determined the exceptional achievement of the Cartonera in Chalco. Maybe it is also the refreshing contrast of a creative—even iconoclastic—approach to teaching in an otherwise traditional Catholic school where convergent responses had been the standard value, and where divergent responses tended to be unsolicited and undervalued. For example, when on the first day of the week-long workshop we asked the ten teachers and ten artists to say what came to mind after listening to "Los dos reyes y los dos laberintos" by Jorge Luis Borges, all but one gave the moral of the story, convinced that coherence was a sign of understanding. The only outlier, a young Oaxacan painter who took time to warm up to the group, asked

refreshingly, “What color is the sand?” But by the end of the week, everyone was taking brilliant risks and multiplying the possibilities of the one-page story. Later, throughout the ten-week implementation and up to the present they have been inspiring innovation in their students. [See the weekly photographic reports from Chalco on the culturalagents.org website.] Maybe too the success there owes to the everyday practices of recycling in a poor but resourceful neighborhood making the *cartonera* a natural and giving this scarcity-induced resourcefulness a new legitimacy as art and interpretation.

In her delicate, almost girlish, but unflinching voice, Director Garelli would typically address a challenge that required more resources than those available. The good results would follow from deciding to do whatever was needed *a lo Chalco*. Room darkening window shades were an out of the question luxury, but dark crepe paper worked just as well and looked elegant against the clean brick of the new school building. Salaries for five artists, in addition to the five teachers to be paid in these extra-hour collaborations, stretched the school’s purse to the tearing point, so two mothers of children at school were invited to donate their skills in photography and in music to complete the design of multiple arts that rotate through the classrooms from third to seventh grades. However one describes the combination of personal, economic, and pedagogical factors, they came magically, or providentially, together in “Amiga Cartonera” at Mano Amiga. It is to date our most inspiring success and also our inspired instructor for new developments of the *cartonera*.

Doris Sommer is director of the Cultural Agents Initiative at Harvard University, and professor of Romance Languages and Literatures, and African and African American Studies. Among her books are *Foundational Fictions: The National Romances of Latin America* (1991); *Proceed with Caution When Engaging Minority Literature* (1999); and *Abrazos y rechazos: Cómo leer en clave menor* (2006).

NOTES

1. http://pioneersofchange.net/ventures/aina/document_view.
2. www.extension.harvard.edu/2008-09/courses/syllabi/.../stare130.pdf.
3. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), xxiv. Charles Larmore, “Moral Judgment” in *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics: Themes from Kant and Arendt*, edited by Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 48.
4. Stanley Cavell, “Aesthetic Problems of Modern Philosophy” in *Judgment, Imagination, and Politics: Themes from Kant and Arendt*, edited by Ronald Beiner and Jennifer Nedelsky (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 42.
5. Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 20. Quote from Georg Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (New York, 1967), 233.
6. See essay by Johana Kunin <http://johanakunin.blogspot.com/>. The one in Cuernavaca, for example, is called simply La Cartonera and dedicates itself to publishing local authors who would otherwise not have public outlets.
7. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 158.
8. See *A Touch of Greatness*, <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/touchofgreatness/teacher.html>.
9. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maria_Montessori#cite_note-search.ebscohost.com-4.
10. Developed by Rudolf Steiner in 1919, Waldorf Education is based on a profound understanding of human development that addresses the needs of the growing child. Waldorf teachers strive to transform education into an art that educates the whole child—the heart and the hands, as well as the head.” http://www.whywaldorfworks.org/02_W_Education/index.asp.
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12. Basil Bernstein et al.
13. Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, translated by Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991; originally 1987).
14. Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).
15. Reference from Klare Shaw.
16. <http://palasporpistolas.org/node/3>.

Animita Cartonera: the Body and Soul of Literary Production in Contemporary Chile

JANE D. GRIFFIN

“[I]n the economic and socio-cultural conditions brought about by the dictatorship, either books become integrated into the mechanisms of the culture industry or they run the risk of becoming marginal products, and even having to be recycled into raw materials.*
Bernardo Subercaseaux, *The History of the Book in Chile. Body and Soul*[†]

In 2006, Jaime Collyer, an internationally read Chilean writer, published a short novella titled, *El abismo todos los días* (*People on the Prowl*). This text stands out within Collyer's well-respected oeuvre, not necessarily because of the erotic and fantastical prose that audiences have come to expect of his work, but rather because of the unusual material form in which the text is published. The book is made of a recycled sheet of cardboard that has been carefully cut into three sections that form the book's front, back, and spine, all of which have been hand-painted to display a colorful and completely unique cover design.

Upon opening this non-traditional book, the reader sees a piece of copy paper containing the text's bibliographic information hand-glued to the inside front cover. It reads:



Figure 1: Photograph of Jamie Collyer's book *El abismo de todos los días* (front cover). Santiago: Animita Cartonera, 2006.
Photograph by Nélida Pohl.

Artistic object created and hand-painted with the help of trash collectors and young people. First Edition, 2006, Santiago, Chile. Chilensis Collection. Animita Cartonera Editions is a social, cultural, and artistic project that seeks to contribute to society in a creative way. Responsible persons: Ximena Ramos, Fernanda Arrau, Tanya Núñez. We thank the author for his cooperation, authorizing the publication of this text. Contact: www.animita-cartonera.cl. N° 157.894. ISBN 956-8625-00-3.²

At the bottom of this copyright page the reader sees the press' signature logo, a hand-drawn picture of a small house with the words "Animita Cartonera" printed beside it.

The material body of this book provides an interesting story about the past thirty years of Chilean print culture. Animita Cartonera opened its doors in 2005, fifteen years after democracy was reinstated in Chile. Yet the press' unique editorial techniques draw an immediate connection to many experimental practices innovated by young writers and artists

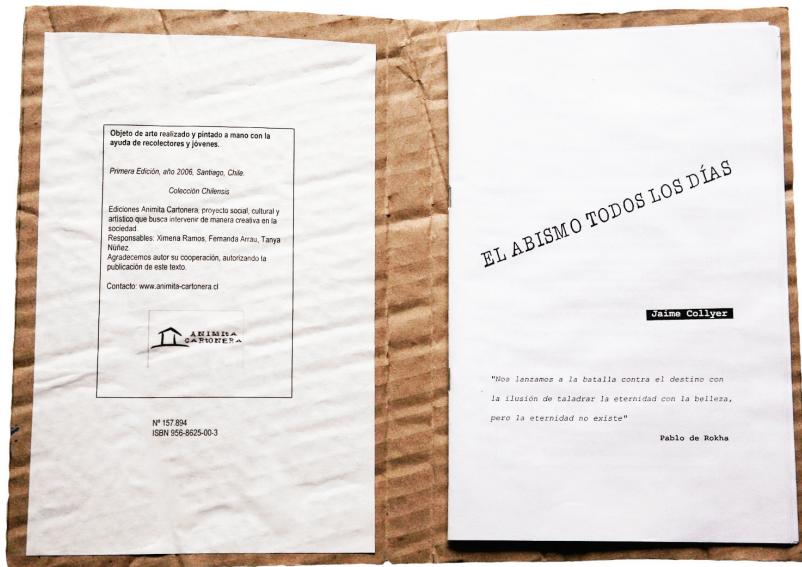


Figure 2: Photograph of copyright and title page of Jamie Collyer's *El abismo de todos los días*. Santiago: Animita Cartonera, 2006. Photograph by Nélida Pohl.

of the dictatorship years (1973-1989). The military state's cultural policies of censorship, along with its implementation of neoliberal economic policies directly attacked book production in general, and literature in particular through state policies that censored literary and editorial activity and placed books at an institutional disadvantage over other cultural

products. From the view of the authoritarian state, book production was ‘dangerous’ due to the symbolic power that writing has to produce social critique and political descent.³ Likewise, the economic hegemony of neoliberalism during the dictatorship years (and since) has censored book production in Chile by weakening the power citizens have over the material production and distribution of national literature. Under neoliberalism, publishers print what will sell according to global market trends that typically favor “sensational” or “light” literature.⁴ In response to state and market censorship, young writers banded together to illegally produce their own publications without state authorization and independent of neoliberal publishing houses. They did so through clandestine and artisanal methods of literary production through which they hand-made books and literary journals out of the most convenient and cheap materials they could find, namely butcher paper, envelopes, bags, and other remnants of re-used materials.⁵

Animita Cartonera’s own artisanal method of book production shares many similarities with illegal and unsanctioned publishing trends of the dictatorship era, specifically its use of recycled waste materials in the hand-made production of non-traditional books. Like its dictatorial predecessors, Animita Cartonera also responds to the culture of editorial repression brought about by the military dictatorship by conflating the production of literature’s symbolic value with that of its physical construction as an economic good. It does so through an artisanal and community-based method of producing what it terms “book-objects.” Central to this editorial practice is the social space of the *taller*, or “workshop,” where marginal social actors become valued cultural producers through their material labor, hand-making books out of recycled cardboard, photocopy paper, staples, and poster paint. Through this artisanal technique of book-object production, Animita Cartonera effectively challenges the neoliberal hegemony that has dominated Chilean literary culture since the dictatorship years. The book-object critiques the way in which neoliberalism has privileged culture’s function as an economic good and attempts to erase a more anthropological definition of culture as a communal project of identity formation and meaning making. Instead, the press uses its workshop as a social space of identity formation via collective literary production. Specifically, by targeting underprivileged urban youth and trash collectors as its ideal laborers, Animita empowers the local working classes who, through the social space of the

workshop, come to identify themselves as active producers of Chilean national culture.

The similarities between Animita Cartonera and counter-cultural literary producers of the dictatorship era, however, end with their shared artisanal forms of material production and the communitarian and democratic effects they produce. For while the self-publishing writers of the 1980s and 1990s were marginalized by state and market institutions to the point of criminalization, Animita Cartonera occupies a dramatically different position within post-dictatorial literary culture as an integrated member of Chile's new democratizing program of "cultural institutionalization" and as a member of Chile's commercial editorial industry. Animita Cartonera's production of artisanal book-objects, while still marginal within Chile's post-transition literary culture, is decidedly legal; the press follows the state's new cultural policies to the letter of the law, making sure their books are fully legitimate in the eyes of the state. It also engages the market while still remaining independent of neoliberal economics through its sales of book-objects in local bookstores and its membership in organizations of local industry professionals. These stark institutional differences allow us to read Animita Cartonera's editorial project as a measure of Chile's democratic development over the past two decades of political reconstruction. The press' alliance with state and market institutions evidences Chile's democratic success in integrating types of cultural producers and cultural products that were once marginalized (even outlawed) by the dictatorship into the mainstream of national culture.

Indeed, Animita Cartonera's relationship with the state's new program of cultural democratization is evidence of the ways in which the state has both dramatically changed its cultural policy from dictatorship to democracy and the ways in which it has remained the same. As opposed to the state's institutional "punishment" of literature during the dictatorship years, Animita Cartonera is an example of the institutional support the newly democratic government has given to marginal cultural producers and, consequently, evidences the central role that culture and the margins have played in Chile's official plan for democratic reconstruction. The press is a product of Chile's official policy to democratize national culture—a policy that has taken shape through the state's "new cultural institutionalization" (NCI), a governing body composed of public and private institutions that promotes and regulates the nation's cul-

tural activity in the newly democratic period.⁶ What is most important about Chile's new cultural institutionalization is that it sees cultural development as a necessary element of democratic reconstruction, proving a stark contrast to the dictatorship's policies of cultural repression. More specifically, the NCI functions on the premise that neoliberalism, and globalization at large, threaten the unique diversity of Chilean national culture by imposing a dominant 'world culture' that erases local difference. Chile's NCI believes it can counter neoliberalism's homogenizing effect by implementing policies that strengthen the economic autonomy of Chile's local editorial industry.⁷

Animita Cartonera helps the NCI fulfill its democratic objectives. As a local press committed to publishing national authors for national readers, Animita helps strengthen the economic autonomy of Chile's domestic literary industry. Furthermore, the press' focus on marginal social subjects as literary producers helps enfranchise citizens who have traditionally been kept in the periphery of Chile's national cultural production. Because of these reasons, two separate agencies, both products of Chile's new cultural institutionalization, support the press: the National Council on Culture and the Arts (*el Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes*, CNCA) invests in the press financially while Balmaceda 1215 (a cultural center for urban youth, named after its physical address, number 1215 on Balmaceda avenue) allows the press to house its workshop in its building; in exchange Animita Cartonera offers writing workshops to Santiago's underprivileged urban youth through the Balmaceda 1215 program. Animita Cartonera fulfills the democratic mission of these state organizations by producing literature through a cooperative partnership with individuals, communities, and organizations across Chile's socio-political spectrum, from trash collectors on the street, to industry leaders and state officials, all of whom play an indispensable role in the editorial project of this press. Furthermore, as a 'minority' cultural producer, Animita Cartonera is evidence that the NCI has made it possible for certain marginal social actors to gain greater power in the struggle for hegemony in a newly democratic Chile; or, to use the words of the Chile's current Minister of Culture, Paula Urrutia, Animita Cartonera "expresses a conviction that [Chile's] growth be founded on the transcendence of marginality" (2007).⁸ Animita Cartonera has transcended the barrier of social marginalization to enter the mainstream of national culture as a minority literary producer within Chile's new cultural economy.

Such institutionalization and mainstreaming, however, comes at a price. Indeed, Animita Cartonera's institutional privilege helps us see the exclusionary and marginalizing tendencies of Chile's 'democratic' transition. In abiding by the NCI's new cultural policies on literary production and distribution, Animita Cartonera reproduces a category of marginal literature that lies outside the bounds of "legitimate" culture. The NCI's goal of defeating neoliberal hegemony and constructing a strong and autonomous national literary culture relies on an essentially economic definition of culture as private property, rather than a notion of culture as collective and public 'spirit.' In accordance with this definition of culture, Chile's NCI has passed numerous pieces of legislation to further protect intellectual copyright laws and criminalize cultural piracy. Animita Cartonera not only loyally abides by the state's new laws disciplining literary production and distribution, but it is a member of professional organizations of Chilean editors that have cooperatively worked with the state in authoring such legislation. These national cultural policies, like those of the military regime decades before, police the boundaries of what is considered "art" and what is considered illegal activity. Within the post-transition period, cultural pirates become the enemy of national culture in the same way that counter-cultural self-publishing authors of the dictatorship years were outlawed by the state. Once again, the idea of literature as creator of a collective identity, spirit, or national soul is threatened by culture's existence as an economic good capable of reproducing capital. Animita Cartonera participates in these exclusionary practices through its partnership with the state and the market; however, it also challenges them through its artisanal method of book-object production—a method that retains culture's material and economic existence without sacrificing its spiritual, i.e. social, function.

DEMOCRATIZING CHILEAN CULTURE THROUGH ARTISANAL BOOK PRODUCTION

The importance of Animita Cartonera's editorial production within the context of Chile's post-transition literary culture lies in its ability to use the material modes of literary production as the site of local identity formation and the construction of social meaning. Specifically, Animita's technique of artisanal book production deconstructs the distinction capitalism makes between culture's symbolic and material production,

and in so doing, directly challenges the neoliberal hegemony dominating Chile's local culture industry. For Raymond Williams, the spiritual, or anthropological definition of culture emerges in eighteenth century Europe during which time culture comes to be thought of as "the 'spirit' which informed the 'whole way of life' of a distinct people," or in other words, as the norms of behavior and beliefs that define one community as distinct from another.⁹ This definition casts culture as something that belongs equally to each member of a community, all of whom practice and reproduce it on an everyday basis. Williams differentiates this definition of culture with another, more tangible and material one that he describes as "the specific forms taken by its cultural manifestations."¹⁰ Thus he explains that the distinction between culture-as-spirit and culture-as-material form is a result of capitalist modes of production. Capitalism, Williams claims, differentiates between cultural production and that of the "general productive order" (meaning the production of non-cultural commodities); the later produces objects of "utility" whereas the former produces objects of "art." Capitalism has defined cultural production as distinct and separate from other kinds of material production since cultural production does not produce objects of "use." What emerges from this divide is the differentiation between 'art' (the symbolic) versus 'craft' (the material) in which only the later is "useful" in any practical sense.¹¹ The result of this spirit/body divide is that the value of art is seen as coming almost solely from its non-material matter—in other words, its symbolic or aesthetic content and not from the material form that manifests said content.

The definition of culture-as-spirit has become especially important within the context of post-dictatorship Chile. Chilean literary historian and critic Bernardo Subercaseaux argues that during the dictatorship period, the symbolic spirit of books came under attack by state censorship and neoliberal economics, both of which saw literature's spiritual value as a potential, or direct, threat to their hegemony. The devaluation of literature's social function was so great, claims Subercaseaux, that books became defined as almost purely economic, or material, goods. Subercaseaux claims this happened in one of two ways: "[E]ither books become integrated into the mechanisms of the culture industry or they run the risk of becoming marginal products, and even having to be recycled into raw materials."¹² What Subercaseaux means by this is that either authors conform the spiritual content of their texts to meet the demands of the

“culture industry” (by which Subercaseaux means the global market), or that books forfeit their symbolic constitution altogether and become recycled raw materials which are fed back into the modes of general production to produce objects of tangible ‘utility’ that are no longer ‘cultural’ products.

In the first scenario, literature loses its ‘soul’ because the neoliberal market silences its symbolic power to create social critique, identity, history, and difference. Chilean book-object publisher Pía Barros agrees with this interpretation of neoliberalism, proposing that under such a system “[s]ymbolic goods are valued, but not valorized.”¹³ In what she refers to as “mall culture,” the only books that count are those that enable quick, mindless consumption. During the 1990s in Latin America, Barros maintains that the logic of mall culture demanded books with easily accessible stories and rejected anything that profoundly questioned “the efficiency of the system.”¹⁴ Removing literature’s spiritual function in this way reduces critically thinking citizens to unreflective consumers, “incapable of ‘reading’ their surrounding and decoding them.”¹⁵

In the second scenario, those books not commodified by the global culture industry suffer the second consequence of Subercaseaux’s model, which is that they lose their material form as books, and thereby cease to be literary at all. “They are books that are destined to be chopped up, pulverized, and converted into raw materials. [. . .] This has to do with a kind of reverse resurrection *in which the soul of the book expires in order to resurrect its body, a body that is transformed into wrapping paper, napkins, and envelopes.*”¹⁶ Subercaseaux’s metaphor of “reverse resurrection,” and its intentional invocation of death, can only mean that he sees items such as wrapping paper, napkins, and envelopes as *non-literary* commodities. If literature ‘dies’ in order for these other material objects to ‘come to life,’ it must mean they are no longer ‘literary’ since what was literary about them, their artistic ‘spirit,’ is no longer present. Thus Subercaseaux’s logic understands literature’s spirit as solely residing in the text’s narrative content, which, in turn, is distinct from non-literary material objects, such as napkins and envelopes, that derive from the modes of general (and not symbolic) production.

Animita Cartonera offers an alternative scenario to the two provided by Subercaseaux. Its solution depends on the artisanal production that bridges the divide between ‘art’ and ‘craft’ and, therefore, between spiritual and material production. The deconstruction of such a divide takes

on particular political importance in Latin America, where “art” has become more synonymous with “high art” and societal elites, whereas “craft” is commonly associated with “low culture” and marginal social sectors. For instance, economist Javier Stanziola explains that during the era of national independence, Latin American governments believed the only way to legitimate the arts in their countries was to “spiritualize” them through cultural policies that associated ‘art’ with quiet contemplation (by elites) in cultural centers such as museums.¹⁷ This, claims Stanziola, privileged ‘high culture’ at the exclusion of indigenous groups and the cultural traditions that belong to them. Indeed, indigenous culture is at the heart of the symbolic/material divide in Latin American art. As García Canclini documents in his book, *Transforming Modernity: Popular Culture in Mexico*, ‘craft’ is traditionally associated with *artesanía* (artisanal cultural production). While García Canclini does not explicitly equate Latin American artisan crafts with indigenous culture, the logic of his research defines it as such, since the only artisanal production he analyzes is that of indigenous cultures. He claims that indigenous societies do not evidence the strict divide between symbolic and material production that has come to characterize industrialized capitalist societies. This is because indigenous artisanal production traditionally takes place in the family home, a domestic sphere strongly influenced by the family’s spiritual belief system. Thus García Canclini critiques the dominant view that artisanal crafts are more ‘material’ than ‘symbolic’ (due to their more practical use-value as everyday objects), and thus subordinated to ‘legitimate art’ or ‘high culture.’ Instead he argues that they embody a more cohesive and dynamic relationship between symbolic and material production, dissolving the division that separates them.¹⁸ It is this characteristic of artisanal crafts that make them uniquely capable of challenging the hierarchical social relations produced by capitalism. The use-value of artisanal crafts is their social value—their ability to create community, identity, and symbolic meaning through material production and consumption.

Through the social space of the *taller*, or workshop, Animita Cartonera resurrects the symbolic spirit of literature by returning to artisanal modes of literary production. The artisanal workshop is the body and soul of Animita’s editorial project and democratic contribution. Through the workshop, the press evidences its commitment to building community bonds through cooperative, locally-based, and non-industrial liter-

ary production. For instance, on its website, Animita Cartonera describes itself as “a press with a social, cultural, and artistic mission where we see artistic expression and creation as tools that integrate different members of society. Our principal purpose is to create a community consciousness that attends to the interests of various people since we believe that art is a tool that generates spaces of dialogue and the exchange of ideas and experiences.”¹⁹ This sentiment makes us question the extent to which the term ‘culture industry’ must equate ‘modes of capitalist production,’ for as we shall see below, Animita Cartonera is an installed member of Chile’s local literary *industry*; it is a for-profit business (“Sociedad de Responsabilidad Limitada”) and as such sells its books at industry fairs and through local bookstores. The press’ ability to actively participate in Chile’s national culture “industry” *without* industrializing its mode of production is one of the ways in which it brings literature’s social spirit ‘back to life.’ Through its hand-crafted production of book-objects in the workshop setting, Animita Cartonera rejects the first of Subercaseaux’s scenarios by refusing to integrate its editorial practice into the capitalist modes of production indicative of the neoliberal culture industry. We thus need to qualify Subercaseaux’s analysis to specify that while his claims are accurate, they only pertain to the context of the modes of cultural production controlled by the *global* culture industry and not those that function outside of it, either through the local industry or from its margins. Animita Cartonera explicitly demonstrates that it is possible to sell books on the market without sacrificing literature’s ability to generate social spirit and a shared way of life.

Furthermore, Animita Cartonera equally rejects the second scenario Subercaseaux describes, which is that books that are *not* integrated into the neoliberal publishing machine become recycled into raw materials and cease to be ‘literary.’ This rejection is evident in the fact that Animita uses the image of death as a staple motif in its material production. Specifically, through its very name as well as its logo, the press directly connects the dead body of literature (the primary materials used in its editorial practice) with the image of dead human bodies. For instance, the word “Animita” references “all those people who have died in tragic accidents and who are revered with candles on Chilean highways.”²⁰ The press’s logo, inscribed on all its book-objects, is a picture of the roadside tomb citizens erect throughout the nation’s highways in honor of their fallen citizens. The motif of death, while honoring the passing of fellow

citizens, equally serves as a metaphor for the death of locally based cultural production at the hands of neoliberal hegemony.

The second invocation of ‘death’ is of course the fact that Animita makes its books out of the material they are recycled into once they are no longer economically attractive to the dominant sectors of Chile’s cul-



Figure 3: (Left) Photograph of a cardboard “Animita” roadside tomb, hanging on the wall in Animita Cartonera’s Balmaceda 1215 workshop. Photograph by Jane Griffin, courtesy of Fernanda Arrau. (Right) Photograph of two Animita Cartonera book-objects with hand-painted “Animita” logos on their back covers. Photography by Nélida Pohl.

tural industry. Its very name *cartonera* (meaning “she who sells cardboard trash”) strategically calls attention to the text’s material form and signals literature’s physical body as part of its spiritual composition. In Chile, as in many other Latin American countries, the word *cartonero/a*, refers to individuals who make their living collecting and selling cardboard trash on the street. Animita Cartonera’s *raison d’être* depends on *cartoneros* and the cardboard they sell to the press, which they then use as the *materia prima* of their literary production. This is a prerequisite of carrying the “Cartonera” title. The four young women who founded the publishing house, Ana Moraga, Ximena Ramos, Tanya Núñez, and Fernanda Arrau (all in their twenties at the time) modeled their press after the original *cartonera* publisher, Eloísa Cartonera, founded in Buenos Aires in 2003 by Argentine writer Washington Cucurto and several other artists. In an interview, the young women explain that Cucurto gave them permission to open a Chilean *cartonera* press on the condition that they would respect the founding principle of the project, which is to buy the cardboard from *cartoneros* at a higher price than they typically sell it on the street and, thus, “work with the people who really need the money, giving them the freedom to express themselves artistically.”²¹ Respecting the communitarian spirit of *cartonera* publishing, Animita Cartonera explains how

its use of recycled raw materials deconstructs the division that separates works of ‘art’ from objects of ‘utility’: “We establish systems of receiving our cardboard supply from independent collectors with whom we create a mutual agreement in order to determine the price per kilo of material (generally 400% higher than the market price), with the goal of revalorizing the work of the cardboard collector and reusing the cardboard.²² [...] In this way, the book is transformed into an object of art, making each copy unique and exclusive.²³ This quote clearly demonstrates the focus Animita places on the material production of literature as an act of artistic production and cultural spirit.

In addition to community identity construction, Animita’s use of recycled trash also helps liberate the local printing industry from its subordination to transnational firms by finding a cheap way to make books. One of the reasons local publishers have a difficult time competing with global publishing and printing firms is because, as opposed to the later, they cannot afford the high cost of raw materials required for book production. This view is expressed by two leading voices in Chile’s local publishing industry, the professional organizations Fundación Chile Veintiuno (Chile Foundation Twenty-One) and Editores de Chile (Editors of Chile) who claim that “international presses benefit from important and sizeable economies and they can revel in the competitive sale of raw materials, particularly of paper, [whereas] the local publisher is faced with an oligarchy of paper [suppliers].”²⁴ Recycling cardboard trash provides a viable alternative to the high costs of production expenses that position local publishing houses at a disadvantage to their neoliberal counterparts. Thus Animita Cartonera’s use of recycled cardboard serves several democratizing purposes: it deconstructs the division between literature’s material value as an economic good and its symbolic value as the manifestation of a collective spirit, thereby resurrecting a definition of culture as communal property from its attempted annihilation at the hands of Chile’s military dictatorship and neoliberal economic hegemony. Additionally, the method of using recycled raw materials helps strengthen the autonomy of Chile’s national literary production from its domination by foreign capital. Both of these outcomes fit perfectly into the state’s policy of cultural democratization and explain Animita Cartonera’s intimate partnership with Chile’s new program of cultural institutionalization.

ANIMITA CARTONERA'S INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF MAINSTREAMING

As both a partner and product of Chile's new cultural institutionalization, Animita Cartonera directly contributes to the state's democratic project of incorporating the margins of Chilean society into the mainstream of national culture. The press has established institutional affiliations in two ways: the first is through its partnership with and financial reliance on state cultural institutions (specifically Balmaceda 1215 and the National Council on Culture and the Arts), and the second is through its commercial activity and membership in associations of local industry professionals (namely Editors of Chile). In the first regard, Animita Cartonera is dependent on the state's cultural institutions for its physical infrastructure and financial stability. Like many other small, independent cultural producers of the newly democratic period, Animita has had to find creative means of keeping its editorial project alive in a neoliberal economic environment that places local, independent publishers at a disadvantage in comparison to foreign-owned firms.²⁵ The coalition administrations that have governed Chile throughout its democratic transition have recognized this problem and attempted to address it by creating numerous cultural institutions, agencies, and organizations to aid local cultural production and distribution. As a minority cultural producer, Animita Cartonera is the ideal recipient of such institutional assistance, which it receives from the two organizations mentioned above, both of which have been created by Chile's program of new cultural institutionalization. In addition to its partnership with state cultural agencies, Animita equally establishes institutional power through its commercial activity and participation in the market. The decision to sell their book-objects for profit was a conscious choice made by Animita's founding editors and is a characteristic that differentiates this *cartonera* press from its Argentine predecessor, Eloísa Cartonera, which was not initially a legal business.²⁶ The fact that the press makes very little profit from their book sales makes their choice to sell books through mainstream circuits of capitalist exchange more symbolic than practical; it is a symbol of their legitimacy as minority cultural producer.²⁷

Its classification as a legal business has allowed Animita Cartonera to join Editors of Chile, a nonprofit organization that represents Chile's local editorial industry and advocates for the economic and political inter-

ests of its members. Organizations such as the Editors of Chile, and others like it (including Chile Foundation Twenty-One, the Chilean Bureau of Books, and the Chilean Copyright Society) have become extremely influential and politically powerful agents in Chile's new cultural institutionalization.²⁸ These organizations serve as some of the most prominent vehicles through which members of civil society have increased their political power and economic wealth during the transition period. This is somewhat ironic seeing as scholars typically describe these types of organizations as "non-profit;"²⁹ however, it is important to remember that within the context of post-dictatorial Chile, private non-profit organizations, such as Editors of Chile, are still capitalist in nature since their primary objective is to work with the public sector in securing greater financial gains for their members, including Animita Cartonera. I do not draw out this distinction in order to criticize these organizations for having capitalist interests. Within the oppressive neoliberal context of post-dictatorial Chile, it is no wonder that professional cultural producers have banded together to protect and advance their shared interests against the threat of foreign domination. The major difference is that as members of civil society, industry associations have flexed their increased power by partnering with the state and creating national cultural policies that benefit the economic interests of their members.

As a result of this partnership, Chile's NCI has focused its activity on strengthening the legal protection of intellectual property and criminalizing cultural piracy as two key efforts in its goal of democratizing national culture and defeating neoliberal hegemony. The emphasis on securing culture's economic profitability is not that surprising considering the participation of industry professionals in writing the state's new cultural policies. As Raymond Williams explains, "professional societies" historically emerge as a result of the need to protect copyright and anti-piracy laws. Moreover, Williams cites editorial and literary industries as typical in this respect due to the fact that the technology development of the printing press made copying a 'problem' for printed media before it became a problem for other art forms.³⁰ The fact that recent technological advancements make piracy a more immediate concern for the music and film industries does not mean that print piracy is not still a central issue in contemporary Chile. Indeed, despite the local industry's increased output during the transition period, illegal literary activity (typically in the form of photocopied reproduction) has risen.³¹ Agustín Squella reports

that piracy represents 25% of book market activity in Chile today, explaining the high-volume of anti-piracy rhetoric and legislation in Chile's new cultural institutionalization.³² Without denying that the "copyright industry" has become one of the principle factors of generating wealth in the era of globalization, the leaders of Chile's local editorial industry argue that anti-piracy policies do more than serve their own private economic interest; they also claim they serve the greater public interests of protecting the integrity of creative production, helping empower local small businesses, and fighting neoliberalism.³³

The first Chilean legislation passed on intellectual property and copyright was the Literary and Artistic Property Law in 1834, but it is the 1970 Intellectual Property Law that has shaped the current condition of copyright protection in contemporary Chile. This law has been modified twice, once in 1985 to specifically address the issue of piracy, and again in 1992 to establish the Chilean Copyright Society (SCD), the nonprofit organization that is now one of the country's leading authorities on this issue. In April of 2007, the CNCA presented new legislation to congress that would once again modify the 1970 copyright law. Piracy is at the center of this latest attempt at cultural reform. The proposed reform would increase the punishment for copyright infringement from three to five years in jail and increase the fiscal penalty 400 times. The reform describes piracy as "an urgent necessity and one of the principle desires of our artists, creators and culture industries," and it expands the definition of what counts as piracy to include a number of specified actions, including plagiarism.³⁴

In addition to intellectual property and copyright laws, in 1993 the state implemented the Promotion of Books and Reading Law (Law 19.227, Article 8), mandating that all books (and many other printed or published materials) register themselves with an International Standard Book Number.³⁵ As both a partner to and product of Chile's new cultural institutionalization, Animita Cartonera faithfully complies with the state's new regulations, specifically the ISBN requirement. The registered ISBN printed on every cardboard book signifies Animita's compliance with the state's new mechanisms of cultural regulation. More importantly, the number certifies the book-object's identity as a "legitimate" artistic object, recognized as such by international cultural institutions via the ISBN. The presence of the ISBN in all Animita book-objects is somewhat shocking considering the undeniable artisa-

nal quality of these books. The hand-made nature of these texts creates an individual uniqueness (or what Benjamin might have called *aura*) that cannot be attained through capitalist modes of production. The important role Animita Cartonera gives to the production of *difference* in its editorial techniques seems at odds with the ISBN enterprise that seeks to standardize global norms of cultural production and circulation.

This apparent paradox with regards to Animita's ISBN registration leads us to question the contradictions that arise when marginal social actors and/or cultural producers move into society's mainstream and gain institutional power. Indeed, when we look closely at the cultural policies and practices implemented by the newly democratic regime and its civil society partners, we see that they exhibit a number of exclusionary and marginalizing tendencies. In fact, there is reason to believe that the NCI's policies regarding the ISBN, intellectual property, and cultural piracy reproduce the logic of neoliberalism and non-democratic definitions of culture that were characteristic of the dictatorial period. Specifically, the questions of who counts as an artist and what forms of material production count as artistic is at the heart of the copyright debate. While Chile's NCI argues that intellectual copyright protection is a requirement for democratic advancement, many scholars question the ethics of national and international copyright laws and anti-piracy campaigns. One of the most frequently cited problems with these laws is that they reproduce the logic of nineteenth century liberal political theory and, as an extension, contemporary neoliberalism. To be sure, international intellectual property and copyright laws directly depend on liberal definitions of 'property' and 'the individual'.³⁶ Such definitions are problematic in the first sense because the liberal individual, while claiming universality, is actually a decidedly western and patriarchal historical construct.³⁷ Secondly, equating 'culture' to private property means that it no longer belongs to the whole community and cannot be democratically accessed by all. Rather, culture only becomes accessible to those who can afford it. Indeed, law professor Jessica Litman has argued that the desire of copyright owners to expand the protection over the ideas and information contained in their works conflicts with the democratic notion that those ideas and information be free for other to use.³⁸ Ronald Bettig agrees, arguing that defining culture as private property necessarily excludes others from using it.³⁹

Thus it would seem that such a definition of culture would defeat the NCI's goal of democratizing national culture since it would not make it freely and equally accessible to all.

More concerning than this, however, is the way in which the focus on intellectual property presents a seeming contradiction to the anti-neoliberal and pro-nationalist stance embodied by Chile's new cultural institutionalization. It is somewhat curious that the NCI would so fervently embrace stricter copyright legislation when historically intellectual copyright law has been used by global industrial powers as a means of ensuring their economic and cultural domination over the developing world.⁴⁰ Many scholars typically describe the international debate on intellectual property as emblematic of the North/South global divide. For instance, Laikwan Pang argues that copyright is a Western legal concept that secures current global hierarchies, ironically outlawing certain kinds of cultural practices in order to preserve the "diversity of culture."⁴¹ Like Pang, economists Stephen Richardson and James Gaisford argue that the intellectual property debate functions off a power division that divides the world into an antagonistic binary. They conclude that it is nearly unavoidable that "Less Developed Countries [sic] as a group will tend to lose from the worldwide standards on intellectual property protection."⁴² They will lose, according to communications scholar Ronald Bettig, because international copyright laws increase the hegemony of the global cultural industries (who own the majority of copyrights), which in turn furthers the homogenization of cultural products worldwide. Bettig claims that this, "in turn, fosters the erosion of national, regional, ethnic, and group autonomy, undermines democratic participation in cultural expression, and increases inequalities between people and nations."⁴³ Through this view we can see that the cultural policies Chile has adopted to economically strengthen its local literary industry and defend national difference actually endanger local identity and reinforce global homogenization.

Not only is copyright law thought to be non-democratic but there is also substantial academic literature supporting the view that copyright laws stifle artistic creativity more than cultural piracy does.⁴⁴ Representative of this view is the work of Laikwan Pang, which recognizes culture's inherent body/spirit divide as paramount to the intellectual property debate. Pang's research shows us that intellectual copyright protects against two separate kinds of cultural piracy: the first is "ideas copying," which

Pang defines as the copying of themes, styles, ideas, characters, or plots; the second she labels “plagiarism,” which is direct product copying or simply piracy.⁴⁵ This “idea-expression” dichotomy, as Pang calls it, is the same spirit/body, symbolic/material binary inherent in culture that we have been discussing here. While Pang argues that copyright discourse is more concerned in policing the *material* reproduction of cultural products over *symbolic* copying, she also strongly defends the notion that these two aspects of culture cannot be separated from one another. She argues that restricting the reproduction of cultural goods as material commodities equally limits our ability to copy ideas, which, according to Pang, is the driving force of cultural production and artistic expression. This suggests that the spiritual definition of culture depends on processes of copying, imitation, intertextuality, mimesis, and repetition, all of which are criminalized by the NCI’s official policies on intellectual property. We can therefore conclude that Chile’s new cultural institutionalization has drafted a policy of cultural reform that simultaneously enfranchises minorities (such as Animita Cartonera) while excluding those cultural producers it deems “illegal” (such as cultural pirates). In other words, Chile’s democratic cultural policy increases the rights of some cultural producers at the expense of revoking those of others. It marginalizes in order to mainstream the margins.

DIVERSIFYING GLOBAL CULTURE, ONE *CARTONERA* AT A TIME

While we have a good reason to critique Chile’s new cultural institutionalization, such a critique does not prevent us from acknowledging the democratic value of mainstreaming Animita Cartonera’s alternative style of book production. In fact, Animita, although complicit in the NCI’s marginalizing and disciplinary tactics, does temper those tendencies through its own community-minded and minority editorial activity. On a local level, we have seen how Animita empowers Santiago’s marginalized social sectors as valued artists, giving them an opportunity to produce unique cultural products and a shared cultural identity. On an international level, the press provides a possible solution to the problem of how local Latin American cultural economies can participate in globalization in a way that strengthens their individual differences rather than erases them. We see this in the fact that Animita is one piece of an international movement of recycled cardboard publishers that reaches

across the Latin American region.⁴⁶ Thus, we can agree with Subercaseaux's claim that Chile's literary industry has had to become more globally dependent as a result of its authoritarian past, but we do not have to share his view that this phenomenon need be predominantly oppressive. Rather, the *cartonera* movement constructs a transnational solidarity of community-based cultural producers that occupy their own place within the diversity of global culture. In Chile, Animita Cartonera evidences the important role minority cultural producers play in countering the exclusionary tendencies of the nation-state's democratic transformation. On a regional level, the *cartonera* movement might not need to enter the mainstream of the global editorial industry; rather it has the potential of becoming its own cultural institution whose social, political, and economic power is not derived from either the state or the market, but rather from the ordinary men and women who toil together in workshops, making art out of trash.

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NOTES

- * All translations of cited material are by the author.
1. Bernardo Subercaseaux, *Historia del libro en Chile* (Alma y Cuerpo) (Santiago: LOM Ediciones, 1993), 166.
 2. "Objeto de arte realizado y pintado a mano con la ayuda de recolectores y jóvenes. Primera Edición, año 2006, Santiago, Chile. Colección Chilenisis. Ediciones Animita Cartonera, proyecto social, cultural y artístico que busca intervenir de manera creativa en la sociedad. Responsables: Ximena Ramos, Fernanda Arrau, Tanya Núñez. Agradecemos autor su cooperación, autorizando la publicación de este texto. Contacto: www.animita-cartonera.cl. N° 157.894. ISBN 956-8625-00-3."
 3. For a thorough review of the military regime's political persecution of the book form, see Subercaseaux, *Historia del libro en Chile*.
 4. In an interview with Guillermo García-Corales, literary icon and published Animita author, Pedro Lemebel describes Chilean literature of the 1990s as "un poco light." Guillermo García-Corales, *Dieciséis entrevistas con autores chilenos contemporáneos: la emergencia de una nueva narrativa / [entrevistas realizadas por Guillermo García-Corales]* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2005), 155. Chilean writer and book-object publisher Pía Barros articulates a similar view in her unpublished essay "Movimientos culturales, industria cultural" (2005).
 5. While little scholarship exists on underground self-publishing trends of the dictatorship years, Horacio Eloy and Jorge Montealegre, both participants in this counter-culture, are the best sources of information on this topic. See Horacio Eloy, "Informe final: Revistas y publicaciones literarias editadas en dictadura, una historia por contar (1973-1990)," Santiago: Consejo del Libro y la Lectura, Beca Creación Literaria, (no date); Horacio Eloy "Revistas y publicaciones literarias durante la dictadura (1973-1990)," in Simpson 7: *Revista de la Sociedad de Escritores de Chile*. Vol. XII (Santiago, 2000). Also, see Jorge Montealegre, "Algunas notas (autocomplacientes y hasta nostálgicas) sobre La Castaña," *Revista de Crítica Cultural* 31 (June 2005); Resha Cardone., "Acting Up and Carrying On: Women Writers of Chile, 1945-2006" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Kansas, 2006).
 6. This governing body consists primarily of the National Council for Culture and the Arts; however, I use the term NCI since it includes other agencies and programs beyond the CNCA that are also part of Chile's official cultural program and that directly participate in Animita Cartonera's editorial project. For a detailed history of Chile's new cultural institutionalization, see, Agustín Squella, *El jinete en la lluvia: La cultura en el gobierno de Lagos* (Santiago: Aguilar, 2005).
 7. For a precise articulation of this logic, see Editores de Chile y Fundación Chile Veintiuno, *Una política de Estado para el libro y la lectura: Estrategias para el fomento de la lectura y el desarrollo de la industria editorial en Chile* (Santiago: Fundación Chile Veintiuno y la Asociación de Editores de Chile, 2005); Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, *Política nacional del libro y la lectura* (Santiago: Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, Consejo Nacional del Libro y la Lectura, 2006); and Eduardo Carrasco, Bárbara Negrón, and José Weinstein, eds., *Industrias Culturales: Un aporte al desarrollo* (Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones; Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2005).
 8. Paula Urrutia, "Palabras Ministra de Cultura: Firma Proyecto Modificadorio de la Ley de Propiedad Intelectual" Consejodelacultura.cl. (accessed April 12, 2009).
 9. Raymond Williams, *Culture* (Glasgow: Fontana Paperbacks, 1981),
 10. Ibid., 11.
 11. Ibid., 50.
 12. Subercaseaux, *Historia del libro en Chile*, 166.
 13. Pía Barros, "Movimientos culturales, industria cultural," Unpublished manuscript (2005), 2.
 14. Barros goes on to specify the type of books that dominate editorial production under a neoliberal order: "It is here that we find self-help books, books of prophecy, family sagas, biographic novels of a remote past where what matters are the love affairs of the celebrity of the day, novels of displacement, light feminisms, cookbooks. Nothing that profoundly questions the efficiency of the system." Ibid., 2.
 15. Ibid., 3.
 16. Subercaseaux, *Historia del libro en Chile*, 166-67 (emphasis mine).
 17. Javier Stanziola, "Neo-Liberalism and Cultural Policies in Latin America: The Case of Chile," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 8, no. 1 (2002): 23.

18. Néstor García Canclini, *Las culturas populares en el capitalismo* (La Habana: Casa de las Américas, 1982), 86.
19. Animita Cartonera, "Home," Animita-Cartonera.cl, <http://www.animita-cartonera.cl/> (accessed June 30, 2009).
20. Felipe Almazán Tepliski, "Libros de Cartón (y las editoriales cartoneras)," Felipealmazan.bligoo.com, <http://felipealmazan.bligoo.com/content/view/84588/Libros-de-carton-y-las-editoriales-cartoneras.html#content-top>.
21. Marietta Santi, "Animita Cartonera: Mosqueteras de la literature," *La Tercera*, 21 January, 2007.
22. Animita Cartonera, "Social," Animita-Cartonera.cl, <http://www.animita-cartonera.cl/>.
23. Animita Cartonera, "Nosotros," Animita-Cartonera.cl, <http://www.animita-cartonera.ra.cl/>.
24. Editores de Chile y Fundación Chile Veintiuno, *Una política*, 39.
25. Ibid., 41.
26. Rodrigo Alvarado, "Historias de cartón." *La Nación*, 4 November 2006, http://lanacion.cl/prontus_noticias/site/artic/20061104/pags/20061104190330.html.
27. Fernanda Arrau, Personal Interview, 27 April 2007.
28. See Agustín Squella, *El jinete en la lluvia: La cultura en el gobierno de Lagos* (Santiago: Aguilar, 2005); José Weinstein, "Discurso inaugural," *Derecho de autor: Un desafío para la creación y el desarrollo* (Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones; Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2004), 14.
29. Javier Stanzola, "Neo-Liberalism and Cultural Policies in Latin America: The Case of Chile," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 8, no. 1 (2002): 21-35; Lester M. Salamon, "Globalization and the Civil Society Sector" in *Globalization, Philanthropy, and Civil Society: Toward a New Political Culture in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Soma Hewa and H. Stapleton (New York: Springer, 2005).
30. Williams, Culture, 47 and 62.
31. Weinstein, "Discurso inaugural," 15; Editores de Chile y Fundación Chile Veintiuno, *Una política del Estado*, 52.
32. Squella, *El jinete en la lluvia*, 128.
33. Editores de Chile y Fundación Chile Veintiuno, *Una política del Estado*, 37; Santiago Schuster, "Sociedad del conocimiento, industrias culturales y propiedad intelectual," in *Industrias Culturales: Un aporte al desarrollo*, edited by Eduardo Carrasco, Bárbara Negrón, and José Weinstein (Santiago de Chile: LOM Ediciones; Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, 2005).
34. Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes y el Consejo del Libro, Consejonacionaldecultura.cl, "Proyecto de Ley," www.consejonacionaldecultura.cl.
35. Chilean Bureau of Books, "Agencia Chilena" Camlibro.cl. <http://www.isbnchile.cl/agencia.htm>.
- 36 Paul Steidlmeier, "The Moral Legitimacy of Intellectual Property Claims: American Business and Developing Country Perspectives," *Journal of Business Ethics* 12 (1993): 157-164.
37. Of course Carole Pateman is well known for her critique that Enlightenment political philosophy as an inherently sexist institution. See Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988). Laikwan Pang also cites Joan B. Landes (1988) and Miriam Hansen (1991) as feminist critics of the public sphere, Eric Clarke (2000) as claiming that the public sphere excludes gay and lesbians, and Oska Negt and Alexander Kluge (1993) as arguing that the public sphere is homogenized based on class. Laikwan Pang, *Cultural Control and Globalization in Asia: Copyright, Piracy, and Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 38.
38. Jessica Litman, "Copyright and Information Policy," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 55, no. 2 (Spring, 1992): 187.
39. Ronald V. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture: The Political Economy of Intellectual Property* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 20.
40. Paul Steidlmeier, "The Moral Legitimacy of Intellectual Property Claims: American Business and Developing Country Perspectives," *Journal of Business Ethics* 12 (1993): 157-164; Bryan W. Husted, "The Impact of National Culture on Software Piracy," *Journal of Business Ethics* 26 (2000): 197-211; and Lawrence Lessig, *Free Culture: How Big Media Uses Technology and the Law to Lock Down Culture and Control Creativity* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004).
41. Pang, *Cultural Control and Globalization in Asia*, 10.
42. James D. Gaisford and R. Stephen Richardson, "North-South Disputes over the Pro-

- tention of Intellectual Property," *The Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue Canadienne d'Economique*, 29 (April 1996): 376-381.
43. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture*, 226.
 44. Bettig, *Copyrighting Culture*; Lessig, Free Culture.
 45. Pang, *Cultural Control and Globalization in Asia*, 67-68.
 46. Other Cartonera publishing houses across Latin America include Sarita Cartonera (Peru), Yerba Mala Cartonera and Mandrágora Cartonera (Bolivia), La Cartonera (México), Dulcinéia Catadora (Brazil), and Yiyi Jambo (Paraguay) all of whom share the foundational communitarian spirit of the original press.

Dulcinéia Catadora: O fazer do livro como estética relacional

LIVIA AZEVEDO LIMA*

Dulcinéia Catadora é um coletivo formado por artistas plásticos, catadores e filhos de catadores que produz livros com capas de papelão, pintadas à mão, e, além disso, realiza oficinas, instalações, ocupações de espaços culturais, como bibliotecas, e intervenções urbanas.

O projeto derivou do coletivo Eloísa Cartonera, criado em março de 2003 pelo artista plástico Javier Barilaro e pelo escritor Washington Cucurto, em Buenos Aires, Argentina. Com intensa atividade editorial, o grupo argentino possui um catálogo com mais de 100 títulos, entre autores novos e consagrados. Conquistou reconhecimento artístico e social, cuja expressão pode residir no convite para participar da 27ª Bienal de São Paulo, em 2006, com curadoria de Lisete Lagnado, com título derivado da obra de Roland Barthes “Como viver junto”. Durante a Bienal, formou-se um atelier em funcionamento permanente. Ao grupo argentino somou-se a participação de catadores, filhos de catadores e artistas brasileiros, com mediação da artista plástica paulista Lúcia Rosa, que já trabalhava com material reciclado. A partir deste contato, e do envolvimento e trabalho de Lúcia Rosa, formou-se o projeto-irmão, Dulcinéia Catadora, que começou a funcionar no Brasil a partir de 2007.

O nome Dulcinéia Catadora é uma homenagem à catadora Dulcinéia, mas também é o nome da personagem feminina do livro “Dom Quixote de la Mancha”, de Miguel de Cervantes. O papelão usado na confecção dos livros é comprado da cooperativa Coopamare por R\$1,00 o quilo, valor cinco vezes maior do que o praticado usualmente para efeito de reciclagem. Os livros são feitos com miolo fotocopiado em papel reciclado; encadernação simples, grampeada ou costurada; colados na capa de papelão pintada à mão com guache. A diagramação é feita pelos artistas e escritores e a seleção dos textos, por um conselho editorial formado por escritores que colaboraram com o projeto e se alternam neste trabalho, como Carlos Pessoa Rosa, Rodrigo Ciriaco, Flávio Amoreira e Douglas Diegues, este último também colaborou para o coletivo Eloísa Cartonera e fundou, em 2007, a *cartonera Yiyi Jambo*, no Paraguai.

A seleção dos textos leva em consideração não apenas a qualidade literária e o conteúdo, como também o caráter sócio-político, priorizando aqueles que atentem para as minorias sociais. Os autores cedem os textos,

mediante autorização escrita e recebem, em contrapartida simbólica, cinco livros de sua autoria. Todos os livros podem ser traduzidos para o espanhol e divulgados por outras células do projeto na América Latina, (só elas): Animita Cartonera (Chile), Eloísa Cartonera (Argentina), Felicita Cartonera (Paraguai), Kurupí Cartonera (Bolívia), Mandrágora Cartonera (Bolívia), Nicotina Cartonera (Bolívia), Santa Muerte Cartonera (México), Sarita Cartonera (Peru), Textos de Cartón (Argentina), Yerba Mala Cartonera (Bolívia), Yiyi Jambo (Paraguai) e La Cartonera (México).

Essa rede de projetos pares que se formou na América Latina é um caminho alternativo ao mercado de arte e ao mercado editorial. O escritor que não conseguia se inserir em uma grande editora, agora tem a possibilidade de ser editado e o seu texto poderá circular por diversos países. Da mesma forma os catadores e os filhos de catadores que participam da oficina se abrem para novas possibilidades profissionais e desenvolvem seu potencial artístico. A soma desses esforços orientados para um objetivo comum, apesar de cada projeto possuir suas especificidades, denota, politicamente, a busca por autonomia e, esteticamente, a realização de um trabalho artístico que está focado no resultado das trocas entre os indivíduos que o produzem. As atividades do atelier geram renda, mas, sobretudo, promovem a auto-estima e o intercâmbio de experiências entre pessoas com origens e repertórios diversos, que ali se encontram, em um espaço aberto, para o exercício do prazer de criar.

Considerando estas características, a proposta do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora está calcada sobre o tripé social-artístico-cultural. Logo, este artigo, para contemplar a observação destes três pilares, se propõe a: con-



Figure 1. Desenho e corte do molde. Foto de Joana Barros.

ceituar a arte politicamente engajada que foi feita no Brasil nas décadas de 1960 e 1970, destacando o trabalho do artista Hélio Oiticica; e, em seguida, comparar a arte brasileira deste período com a produzida internacionalmente na década de 1990, que recebe a alcunha do curador francês Nicolas Borriaud, de *estética relacional*. Este comparativo será feito para indicar como aspectos da arte brasileira das décadas de 1960 e 1970 perduram nas propostas de grupos que se inserem na estética relacional, como é o caso do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora.

Teoricamente, serão apresentados os conceitos de cultura popular, defendido pelo teórico e poeta brasileiro Ferreira Gullar na década de 1960, período em que a arte brasileira, como também a latino-americana, era voltada para a produção de uma arte nacional, atitude contrária ao esmagamento causado pelo imperialismo ao desenvolvimento cultural dos países subdesenvolvidos; e o conceito de culturas híbridas de Néstor García Canclini, que, inserido no contexto globalizado e considerando as mudanças decorrentes do uso da internet, – que acelera os intercâmbios culturais e possibilita o surgimento de paradigmas no espaço virtual, desterritorializado, – percebe assim, a formação da cultura latino-americana como um híbrido entre culturas que podem se comunicar horizontalmente.

A apresentação destas referências teóricas, objetiva criar um contexto específico para a maneira como o conceito da estética relacional, conceito-chave deste artigo, será observado e praticado pelo coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora, nosso objeto de estudo.

HÉLIO OITICICA: DO NEOCONCRETISMO À ANTIARTE

“O museu é o mundo”
Hélio Oiticica

Em 1967, Hélio Oiticica escreveu o texto “Esquema Geral da Nova Objetividade”, por ocasião da exposição “Nova Objetividade Brasileira”, no Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro. Neste texto ele apresenta, já na introdução, as principais características da arte brasileira de vanguarda neste período:

1: vontade construtiva geral; 2: tendência para o objeto ao ser negado e superado o quadro do cavalete; 3: participação do espectador (corporal, táctil, visual, semântica, etc.); 4: abordagem e tomada de decisão em relação a problemas políticos, sociais e éticos; 5: tendên-

cia para proposições coletivas e consequente abolição dos “ismos” característicos da primeira metade do século na arte de hoje (...); 6: ressurgimento e novas formulações do conceito de antiarte.¹

Essas características muito se aproximam de nosso entendimento da estética relacional e da maneira como ela é aplicada nas ações do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora. No entanto, para compreender as semelhanças e diferenças, é necessário observar o contexto histórico ao qual esta proposta está inserida.

Na década de 1960, os artistas e teóricos brasileiros estavam preocupados em superar o subdesenvolvimento, proposta que, até então, havia sido tentada com base em modelos de arte das sociedades desenvolvidas, tanto no Modernismo brasileiro, quanto no Concretismo. Esses esforços não passavam do acréscimo de “cores locais” a modelos externos pré-concebidos, “um invólucro para exportação”, como afirma Carlos Zilio em seu ensaio sobre artes plásticas para a coleção “O Nacional e o Popular Na Cultura Brasileira”.²

Escolhemos estudar a trajetória do artista Hélio Oiticica porque ele foi o primeiro na arte contemporânea brasileira a se preocupar com o nacional, em seus trabalhos, principalmente com os *Penetráveis* e os *Parangolés*. As discussões levantadas por ele, além disso, fizeram com que ele se tornasse uma referência para trabalhos artísticos que partilhem de uma concepção antimetafísica da arte e que tenham a figura do artista como um propositor.

A arte é um dos pináculos da realização espiritual do homem e é como tal que deve ser abordada, pois de outro modo os equívocos são inevitáveis. Trata-se, pois, da tomada de consciência da problemática essencial da arte e não de um enclausuramento em qualquer trama de conceitos ou dogmas, incompatíveis que são com a própria criação.³

Oiticica acredita que há uma relação de envolvimento existencial do espectador com a obra, o que ele chamou de “vivências”. Esse tipo de relação rompe com a tradição construtiva que enxergava o sujeito como pura racionalidade.

A arte construtiva acredita no desenvolvimento progressivo da sociedade tecnológica dentro de uma harmonia em que arte e vida se confundiriam. Para ela, a luta cultural se passava num processo retilíneo de superações de esquemas formais passados, num aperfeiçoamento

constante em direção a um fim lógico e previsível. Não há espaço nesta concepção à contradição e à luta ideológica.⁴

Esta relação entre espectador e obra é característica do Neoconcretismo, que, vinculado ao idealismo fenomenológico, legitima a expressividade na arte. Para os neoconcretos, a expressividade é fundamental, pois, sem ela, o trabalho artístico se reduz a um acessório funcionalista da produção. Com isso, o Neoconcretismo se afasta da positividade da arte construtiva, presente no Concretismo, e se aproxima do Dadaísmo, movimento historicamente oposto à arte construtiva, por sua negatividade. Isso determina a singularidade do Neoconcretismo, que seria classificado por Ferreira Gullar, como “uma contribuição brasileira”.

A partir de 1970, a arte de Hélio Oiticica passa então a se estruturar sobre duas correntes: o Dadaísmo e a arte construtiva, constituindo uma síntese que o aproximaria do Construtivismo soviético, a única corrente que possui uma visão política da arte dentro da arte construtiva. Oiticica considera que, apesar das ligações entre a arte feita neste período e o Construtivismo russo, é necessário, diante dos questionamentos da arte contemporânea, repensar o termo “construtivismo”. Por isso, ele defende o termo cunhado pelo crítico brasileiro Mário Pedrosa: “novo construtivismo”. Esta designação admite novas reflexões sobre a essência do fazer construtivo, que não estava atrelado apenas à “arte geométrica”, o que indicava uma relação formal de idéias e soluções. A “arte construtiva” passa, com isso, a abranger uma tendência mais ampla na arte contemporânea.

O sentido de construção está estritamente ligado à nossa época. É lógico que o espírito de construção frutificou em todas as épocas, mas na nossa esse espírito tem um caráter especial; não a especialidade formalista que considera como “construtivo” a forma geométrica nas artes, mas o espírito geral que desde o aparecimento do Cubismo e da arte abstrata (via Kandinsky) anima os criadores do nosso século.⁵

Da década de 1970 em diante, é evidente a influência de Marcel Duchamp nos trabalhos de Oiticica, principalmente nos trabalhos denominados “apropriações”, que Oiticica chama de “um objeto” ou “conjunto de objetos”.

A particularidade das “apropriações” surge no tipo de objeto escolhido, capaz de compreender a participação do espectador, e também na sua preocupação em situá-lo em relação ao ambiente social (“o

museu é o mundo”). Estas serão algumas das bases do seu trabalho após o Neoconcretismo e que Oiticica denominará de antiarte.⁶

A transição de Oiticica do quadro para o objeto começa a se dar em 1959, com os trabalhos que ele chama de *Invenções*: placas quadradas com uma só cor que aderem ao muro e que originariam um pensamento em torno das relações cromáticas e da maneira como estas poderiam dialogar com o espaço e com o tempo, *estruturas-cor no espaço e no tempo*. Desta nova posição, nascem os *Núcleos* e os *Penetráveis*.



Figure 2. Grande Núcleo (Grand Nucleous). NC 3, NC4, NC6 - 1960-66. Photo: César Oiticica Filho. Courtesy Projeto Hélio Oiticica

Os *Núcleos* consistem em uma variedade de placas de cor que se organizam no espaço tridimensional. O espectador tem a possibilidade de contornar essa estrutura, podendo inclusive, nos *Núcleos* mais recentes, movimentar as placas, modificando a posição das mesmas. A cor aqui exerce um papel fundamental, sendo buscada uma dinamização das cores que as façam produzir movimentos, virtualmente. Já nos *Penetráveis*, a relação entre espectador e a estrutura alcança uma integração maior, pois o espectador é colocado no centro da obra. Oiticica considerava os *Núcleos* como a culminância da fase na qual ele propõe as primeiras estruturas no espaço, enquanto que o *Penetrável* abre novas possibilidades ainda não exploradas no “novo construtivismo”. O *Penetrável* dará origem aos *projetos*, conjunto de *Penetráveis*, entremeados de outras obras, como poemas,

realizados em maquetes para serem construídos ao ar livre, acessíveis ao público em forma de jardins.

Para mim a invenção do Penetrável, além de gerar a dos projetos, abre campo para uma região completamente inexplorada da arte da cor, introduzindo aí um caráter coletivista e cósmico e tornando mais clara a intenção de toda essa experiência no sentido de transformar o que há de imediato na vivência cotidiana em não-imediato; em eliminar toda relação de representação e conceituação que por ventura haja carregado em si a arte.⁷

É com os *Parangolés*, no entanto, que Oiticica alcança a o sentido de arte total, ao se utilizar de recursos plásticos como cor, estruturas, poemas, dança, palavra e fotografia.

Os *Parangolés* eram constituídos por “capas” especialmente concebidas, onde o corpo do espectador-participante se insere e estabelece, assim, uma relação orgânica. Outra característica importante dos *Parangolés* é a apropriação, aqui retomada e ampliada – trata-se de se apropriar de manifestações coletivas organizadas, típicas da cultura brasileira, como o carnaval e futebol. Nestes eventos, problematiza-se o código da arte ao



Figure 3. Parangolé P7 Cape 4 - Clark, 1964-65. Courtesy Projeto Hélio Oiticica.

colocá-la em um contexto de relação natural, em que o espectador é participante no exercício criativo. O artista da antiarte não é mais um criador que objetiva a contemplação e sim um “motivador para a criação”, sendo o espectador agora considerado um “participador”, e neste contexto de criação coletiva, são invalidadas as posturas metafísica, intelectualista e esteticista em relação à arte.

Há aqui uma disponibilidade enorme para quem chega; ninguém se constrange diante da ‘arte’ – a antiarte é a verdadeira ligação definitiva entre manifestação criativa e coletividade – há como que uma exploração de algo desconhecido: acham-se ‘coisas’ que se vêem todos os dias, mas que jamais pensávamos procurar. E a procura de si mesmo na coisa – uma espécie de comunhão com o ambiente.⁸

As apropriações são estendidas às coisas do mundo, articulando um caminho contrário ao museu, à galeria de arte, etc., e resignificando o próprio conceito de exposição. As “apropriações ambientais” lidam com o acaso presente nas ruas, sendo os aspectos sociais e políticos deste entorno, levados para a obra, na maneira *sócio-ambiental* como o espectador-participador interage com ela.

A concepção estética e conceitual dos *Parangolés* influenciará diretamente ações do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora, no que tange a construção de roupas ornamentais com o papelão. Uma destas roupas consiste em uma apropriação da figura do homem-placa, que através de um suporte como um banner ou um tecido, anuncia em seu próprio corpo produtos ou serviços como compra, venda ou troca de ouro e de passagens de transporte coletivo, ou atua como um chamariz de serviços realizados em uma loja próxima, como serviços de emissão de atestados médicos, por exemplo. O homem-placa, muito comum em grandes centros urbanos, indica modos de prestação de serviços clandestinos em que o próprio corpo é utilizado como espaço para divulgação, transformado em uma mídia visual, e a voz, com a ajuda de um auto-falante, anuncia os serviços oferecidos. Esses elementos, quando transpostos para o papelão, que conterá os livros presos por pregadores e vendidos a R\$6,00, com o anúncio colorido ilustrado com guache “livros a preço de banana”, resultam em um trabalho que dialoga com a estética relacional, ao se apropriar de relações comerciais e humanas do cotidiano e resignificá-las em uma esfera não-imediata, em que os produtos vendidos são livros com capas de papelão criadas por filhos de catadores e artistas, e que, tanto na maneira

como são feitos, como em seu conteúdo literário e na forma como são oferecidos para o público, sugerem novas formas de convívio. E, assim como fazia Oiticica em seus *Parangolés*, vários recursos sensoriais são fundidos para a formação de um efeito total: as cores, a estrutura de papelão, o corpo do participante usado como mídia e a voz que anuncia os serviços oferecidos, apresentando o trabalho artístico do coletivo, oferecendo livros e “anunciando” poesias, tudo isso inserido no espaço público da cidade, com grande movimentação de pessoas, informações e veículos.



Figure 4. Homem-placa. Intervenção no Mercado Municipal de São Paulo, março de 2008.
Foto de Fabiana Turci.

O *Parangolé* de Hélio Oiticica também esteve presente em um trabalho pensado pelo coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora especialmente para a FLIP – Festival Literário Internacional de Paraty - de 2008. A FLIP foi criada em 2003 e já representa o maior encontro literário no Brasil. Conhecida por trazer escritores consagrados e atrair muitos turistas para a cidade histórica Paraty, a FLIP aqueceu o mercado editorial brasileiro que passou a programar uma série de lançamentos para o evento. A presença do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora era mais uma proposta de se inserir “clandestinamente” em uma esfera “oficial” da produção de livros. Para essa ocasião, foi criada uma estrutura de bandeja de papelão revestida por tecido, com alças que se acoplavam ao corpo, como a estrutura utilizada por um vendedor de balas.

Ocorre que, em vez de balas, vendiam-se livros, mas as balas, no caso específico, pirulitos, eram oferecidas gratuitamente. Assim, anunciava-se pelo auto-falante “Olha o livro, olha o pirulivro” e também, é claro, recitou-se poesias.

ARTE DOS ANOS 1960 VERSUS ESTÉTICA RELACIONAL

Os trabalhos de arte que têm como referência a estética relacional, entre eles as ações do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora, possuem muitos aspectos que se aproximam da arte produzida nos anos 1960, principalmente no



Figure 5. Vendedor de balas. Intervenção durante o Festival Literário Internacional de Paraty, Rio de Janeiro, julho de 2008 - Livia Lima. Foto de Lúcia Rosa.

que diz respeito à formação de relações de convívio. A geração dos anos 1990 retoma esta problemática, mas sem a questão prioritária da definição de arte, presente nas décadas de 1960 e 1970.

Até a década de 1960, houve a alternância de uma série de movimentos modernos de vanguardas que buscavam a emancipação dos indivíduos e dos povos, bem como a evolução técnica, melhorias nas condições do trabalho e liberdade, condições fundamentais para uma sociedade melhor. Esses movimentos, segundo Nicolas Borriaud, se dividiam em três visões de mundo: uma concepção racionalista-modernista, advinda do século XVIII, uma filosofia da espontaneidade e da liberação através do irracional, como o Dadaísmo, o Surrealismo e o Situacionismo e, por último, as forças autoritárias ou utilitaristas, as quais as duas primeiras correntes se opõem. As décadas de 1960 e 1970, portanto, são caracterizadas por trabalhos artísticos que buscavam ampliar os limites da arte, para além destas três visões de mundo ou fundindo-as em uma visão nova, como é possível perceber no exemplo da trajetória do artista Hélio Oiticica, que a partir do final dos anos 1960 busca relações com o espaço, o tempo e o espectador que modifiquem a relação de transferência para o objeto quadro e escultura, passando o artista a se colocar como o próprio objeto desta transferência, etc.

Na década de 1990, no entanto, a prioridade não é mais ampliar os limites da arte, e sim testar a capacidade de resistência dentro do campo social globalizado. A maior diferença, na concepção de Borriaud, das vanguardas modernas para a arte contemporânea residiria no valor do “novo”. Nas vanguardas modernas, a arte deveria preparar e anunciar um mundo futuro e, muitas vezes, para isso, convida à subversão da linguagem, enquanto que hoje, a arte deve propor formas de habitar este mundo, concentrada no presente e se utilizando de várias referências (cultura eclética), inclusive do repertório da cultura de massa, resignificando-as, em trabalhos nos quais predomina a metalinguagem.

As práticas da estética relacional têm suas referências formais e teóricas na arte conceitual, no Fluxus e no minimalismo, mas possui propostas diferentes dos artistas destes movimentos, que defendiam a imaterialidade, privilegiando as performances e o conceito.

(...) não há mais o primado do processo de trabalho sobre os modos de materialização desse trabalho (ao contrário da *process art* e da arte conceitual, que, elas sim, tendiam a fetichizar o processo mental em detrimento do objeto). Nos mundos construídos por esses artistas, os

objetos, pelo contrário, fazem parte integrante da linguagem, ambos considerados como vetores de relações mútuas: de certa maneira, um objeto é tão imaterial quanto um telefonema, e uma obra que consiste numa sopa de jantar é tão material quanto uma estátua.⁹

O coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora, apesar de priorizar o processo do “fazer” do livro – que envolve tanto conceitos, quanto convivência e compartilhamento – produz objetos, os livros, diferente da arte conceitual. Na estética relacional, portanto, o mais importante é o resultado das relações, sendo os objetos, as instituições, as obras e até mesmo o emprego do tempo, material para organização de modos de socialidade e produtores de encontros humanos.

A esfera problemática da estética relacional se distancia dos problemas das sociedades pós-industriais, que como as da década de 1960 e 1970 enxergavam injustiças na organização social que precisavam ser combatidas pelo artista, e passam a considerar primordial a proposição de novas formas de convívio, sendo mais urgente inventar relações possíveis com os vizinhos de hoje do que pensar uma estrutura social ideal para o futuro.

Retomar a idéia de pluralidade, para a cultura contemporânea nascida da modernidade, significa inventar modos de estar-juntos, formas de interações que ultrapassem a fatalidade das famílias, dos guetos e do tecnoconvívio e das instituições coletivas que nos são oferecidas. Não podemos dar prosseguimento à modernidade a não ser superando as lutas que ela nos legou: em nossas sociedades pós-industriais, o mais urgente não é mais a emancipação dos indivíduos, e sim a da comunicação inter-humana, a emancipação da dimensão relacional da existência.¹⁰

Levando em conta esses aspectos, a preocupação social do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora orienta as ações promovidas por este grupo, mas que não se configura como assistencialismo, nem pode ser comparada com o trabalho de uma Organização Não-Governamental, por exemplo. O coletivo se concentra em um microcosmo, integram a oficina, em média cinco jovens. A principal diferença entre a arte dos anos 1960 e 1990, portanto, é que a arte dos anos 1990 não pretende mais inaugurar utopias, como pretendia a primeira, e sim construir espaços concretos. A construção destes espaços, entre outras coisas, será possível através do

exercício de formas “clandestinas” de vivência que, contrárias aos vínculos sociais padronizados, possibilitem que as relações humanas escapem do domínio do previsível.

Dentro das ações praticadas pelo coletivo isso fica claro no exercício da convivência e do compartilhamento nas atividades da oficina: pessoas de diferentes origens e repertórios se encontram para o livre exercício criativo. A não caracterização da arte ou do artista, presente nesta proposta gera uma fazer artístico politizado, mas não partidário. Este se concentra no problema maior da inclusão social, mas não se constrói sobre grandes utopias, e o que prevalece, como na estética relacional, é o resultado do convívio. Neste ponto, a concepção de arte de Nicolas Borriaud é também contrária à visão do situacionismo de Guy Debord, pois a arte para a estética relacional não é um amontoado de exemplos do que é necessário ser realizado na vida cotidiana, como acreditava este teórico dos anos 1960, e sim um espaço para experimentações.

DULCINÉIA CATADORA E CULTURAS HÍBRIDAS

Neste propósito de criar um espaço para experimentações, o trabalho artístico desenvolvido pelo coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora se articula como um híbrido de culturas e referências artísticas. Após traçar um breve panorama sobre a arte dos anos 1960 e 1970, tendo como exemplo a trajetória do artista Hélio Oiticica, vamos recuperar os conceitos de cultura popular e de culturas híbridas que, somados a estética relacional de Nicolas Borriaud, influenciam o trabalho artístico desenvolvido pelo coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora.

Aqui consideramos o coletivo como uma célula de uma rede de projetos em toda a América Latina, que, no entanto, tem particularidades advindas de uma formação de repertório cultural e artístico nacional, vide a influência de Hélio Oiticica para a criação de intervenções urbanas. O conceito de cultura popular de Ferreira Gullar, que não pretende um isolacionismo cultural, mas defende as singularidades de um trabalho criado em um país em relação a outro e atenta para a fragilidade dos países em formação cultural diante de influências externas que, segundo ele, tendem a introduzir desvios e discrepâncias no movimento cultural implantado.

As formulações teóricas de Ferreira Gullar, todavia, estão inseridas no contexto das décadas de 1960 e 1970; portanto, faz-se necessário pro-

ceder com ressalvas na utilização das mesmas, visto que estas décadas tiveram como características a formulação de uma utopia social por parte da arte, o que, conforme já foi esclarecido no tópico anterior, não diz respeito à proposta teórica da estética relacional.

A expressão “cultura popular” surge como uma denúncia dos conceitos culturais em voga que buscam esconder o seu caráter de classe. Quando se fala em cultura popular acentua-se a necessidade de pôr a cultura a serviço do povo, isto é, dos interesses efetivos do país. Em suma, deixa-se clara a separação entre cultura desligada do povo, não-popular, e outra que se volta para ele, e com isso, coloca-se o problema da responsabilidade social do intelectual, o que obriga a uma opção. Não se trata de teorizar sobre a cultura em geral mas de agir sobre a cultura presente procurando transformá-la, estendê-la, aprofundá-la.¹¹

Ferreira Gullar, apesar disso, leva em conta alguns pontos que dialogam com a visão da estética relacional, como a necessidade de articular uma comunicação coletiva, como função social do artista, relacionando, por exemplo, a arte participante com o reencontro da arte com sua legitimidade cultural. Além disso, Gullar discute a atitude da crítica de arte, acusando-a de alimentar o mercado, mantendo o consumo de arte restrito a algumas classes sociais.

A crítica atual, de modo geral, tende a considerar a obra de arte como um valor absoluto, um universo fechado, sobre o qual apenas se podem fazer discursos mais ou menos esotéricos. Não cabe aqui examinar as razões verdadeiras dessa atitude da crítica, mas o fato é que ela não vacila em afirmar a inutilidade da obra de arte e seu caráter de produto de elite para elite (de uma elite espiritual para uma elite econômica). A obra de arte não serve para nada, senão para satisfazer “necessidades espirituais” que a própria crítica tem, cada dia, maior dificuldade em definir. De qualquer modo, é fundamental para a sustentação dos conceitos críticos, hoje, a separação entre arte e função social.¹²

A concepção de cultura de Néstor García Canclini se adequa mais ao estudo do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora, porque ele acredita que a modernidade latino-americana foi produzida por uma força alheia dominadora que determinou a substituição do tradicional e do típico, adotando a

hibridização como paradigma para pensar a modernização, reordenando as desigualdades, sem suprimi-las. Alguns desses pontos também foram levantados por Ferreira Gullar, mas Canclini, diferente daquele, propõe que ao invés de se construir uma afirmação política do papel social do artista que reconhece as próprias origens em uma atitude político-revolucionária, o trabalho artístico deve incorporar esta hibridização. Canclini acredita que as fronteiras entre o tradicional, o moderno, o cultural e o popular são mais maleáveis do que se supõe.

É necessário demolir essa divisão em três pavimentos, essa concepção em camadas do mundo da cultura, e averiguar se sua hibridização pode ser lida como as ferramentas das disciplinas que os estudam separadamente: a história da arte e a literatura que se ocupam do “culto”; o folclore e a antropologia, consagrados ao popular; os trabalhos sobre comunicação, especializados na cultura massiva. Precisamos de ciências sociais nômades, capazes de circular pelas escadas que ligam esses pavimentos. Ou melhor: que redesenhem esses planos e comuniquem os níveis horizontalmente.¹³

Portanto, Canclini aponta a importância de repensar as classificações e articular uma perspectiva interdisciplinar capaz de ler as ciências sociais como um todo que liga esses pavimentos e possibilita que diversos setores se encarreguem da heterogeneidade de cada nação. Essa perspectiva interdisciplinar pode se estender do estudo acadêmico à prática artística, e integrar, em um mesmo grupo ou trabalho de arte, repertórios distintos, provenientes de linhas conceituais aparentemente opostas, como um trabalho que transponha poemas concretos, que tradicionalmente seriam enquadrados em uma “cultura superior”, para o grafite, tido como manifestação da “cultura popular”, e depois registrados em fotografias que serão diagramadas, impressas em papel reciclado e fotocopiadas, gerando um livro, que como os demais produzidos pelo coletivo, terá capa de papelão. Este exemplo, é uma proposta do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora (ainda não realizada), que se fecha na intenção de ocupar por dois meses um espaço cultural, como uma biblioteca, e realizar as oficinas de poesia que darão origem aos grafites que também seriam feitos nesse espaço. Ao criar um espaço de convívio e encontro, esse exemplo traduz perfeitamente o conceito da estética relacional.

DULCINÉIA CATADORA E A ESTÉTICA RELACIONAL

O exemplo discutido acima elucida a maneira como o coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora articula referências diversas na composição de um trabalho que objetiva o resultado das relações entre as pessoas. Neste último tópico do artigo, pretende-se esmiuçar as características da estética relacional e apontar outros exemplos na prática deste coletivo que dialoguem com este conceito.

A estética relacional pode ser entendida como arte processual, comportamental e interativa, que propõe formas de convívio que contrapõem as relações humanas controláveis e repetíveis resultantes, principalmente, da divisão do trabalho e da superespecialização exigida pela sociedade contemporânea. Como uma arte que se insere no contexto da urbanização e da evolução tecnológica dos meios de comunicação e desses fatores recebe influências.

O coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora é muito ativo nas redes digitais. Possui três blogues: *Meio Tom*, destinado à apresentação do projeto e do catálogo de publicações; *Notícias da Catadora*, para anúncio de eventos e atividades vinculadas ao coletivo e *Dulcinéia Catadora*, mais teórico, elabora reflexões sobre arte contemporânea e disponibiliza traduções livres de autores, como o próprio Nicolas Borriaud. É pela internet que se estabelecem a maior parte dos relacionamentos com os escritores, que conhecem o projeto e propõe textos para publicação, ou, pelo caminho contrário, são procurados pelo coletivo para serem publicados. Além disso, os blogues permitem que qualquer pessoa que se interesse pelo grupo dê sua opinião ou entre em contato com os integrantes do coletivo, aumentando a escala de convívio e relacionamento já existente nas oficinas, possibilitando “encontros fortuitos”, como define Borriaud. São esses tipos de encontros que definem a tradição materialista da estética relacional, o “materialismo do encontro fortuito”.

(...) toda obra é modelo de um mundo viável. Toda obra, até o projeto mais crítico e demolidor, passa por esse estado de mundo viável, porque ela permite o *encontro fortuito* de elementos separados: por exemplo, a morte e as mídias em Andy Warhol. É o que diziam Deleuze e Guattari quando definiam a obra de arte como um “bloco de afetos e perceptos”: a arte *mantém juntos* momentos de subjetividade ligados a experiências singulares, sejam as maçãs de Cézanne ou as estruturas listradas de Buren.¹⁴

A estética relacional é, portanto, uma teoria da *forma* e não apenas uma teoria de arte. A *forma*, no entanto, é entendida por Borriaud como uma unidade coerente que apresenta as características de um mundo, sendo “um subconjunto da totalidade das formas existentes”.¹⁵ É necessário salientar que, na concepção da estética relacional, a obra de arte não detém o monopólio da forma e que, no contexto da arte contemporânea é mais apropriado falar em *formações* do que em forma, porque, ao contrário do objeto fechado para contemplação, a obra de arte da estética relacional está aberta para outras *formações*, sejam elas artísticas ou não.

Os projetos de instalação do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora são realizados a partir desta idéia de *formação*. Ocupar espaços culturais ou museológicos com caixas de papelão pintadas por diferentes pessoas e dispostas em uma expografia pensada e definida por todos, é um exemplo disto.

A intersubjetividade se torna a própria essência da prática artística e as trocas são permeadas por esse elemento, aquilo que é mostrado é devolvido pela maneira como o que recebeu enxergou.

A obra procura captar meu olhar, como o recém nascido “pede” o olhar da mãe: Tzvetan Todorov mostrou, em *La Vie commune [A vida em comum]*, que a essência da socialidade consiste muito mais na necessidade de reconhecimento do que na competição ou na violência. Quando um artista nos mostra alguma coisa, ele expõe uma ética transitiva que situa sua obra entre o “olhe-me” e o “olhe isso”.¹⁶

Para expressar o efeito do olhar do outro na construção da própria obra, Nicolas Borriaud cita Serge Daney (1992)¹⁷ : “toda forma é um rosto que me olha”, a partir do momento em que uma forma (e para tal leia-se a interpretação específica da estética relacional sobre o que consiste uma forma) é um convite para o diálogo.

Para satisfazer esse desejo de encontrar o olhar do outro para perceber a si mesmo, a estética relacional cria conexões, pontos de encontro, convívio e encontros casuais. Articulando uma vivência no espaço e no tempo que resulta na transposição da “aura” da obra de arte para a forma coletiva e temporal que esta obra produz ao ser exposta.

As relações entre os artistas e suas produções, assim, rumam para a zona do *feedback*: há alguns anos vêm se multiplicando os projetos artísticos convivais, festivos, coletivos ou participativos, que exploram múltiplas potencialidades da relação com o outro. O público se vê cada vez mais levado em conta. Como se agora essa “aparição

única de um distante”, que é a aura artística, fosse abastecida por esse público: como se a microcomunidade que se reúne na frente da imagem se tornasse a própria fonte da aura, o “distante” aparecendo pontualmente para aureolar a obra, a qual lhe delega seus poderes.¹⁸

Este desejo de encontro do outro é também desenvolvido na própria esfera de elaboração artística, originando assim, colaborações, “contratos” e novas formas de ocupar a galeria. Os artistas propõem como obras de arte, momentos de socialidade e objetos produtores de socialidade, de modo que a relação entre galerista e artista pode ser apropriada para um projeto artístico, bem como é possível recriar modelos socioprofissionais e o artista atuar no campo real da produção de serviços e de mercadorias, pretendendo gerar uma ambigüidade entre função utilitária e função estética. “Com a prestação de pequenos serviços, o artista preenche as falhas do vínculo social: a forma realmente se torna esse ‘rosto que me olha’”.¹⁹

O coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora possui um trabalho de intervenção urbana que dialoga com essa busca de encontrar o outro. O projeto, já realizado algumas vezes em pontos da cidade de São Paulo que se conectam com as periferias, consiste em abordar pessoas e perguntar: “o que te toca?”. Em seguida, pede-se para que a pessoa escreva a resposta em um livro com capa de papelão pintada à mão e com páginas em branco. O desdobramento poderia ser o desenvolvimento de uma ficção colaborativa a partir destas respostas fragmentadas, mas a proximidade com um desconhecido, seguida do questionamento de fórum íntimo, já denota um trabalho afinado com a proposta da estética relacional.

A estética relacional, portanto, pode dar origem a uma série de trabalhos com diferentes orientações iconográficas, mas de modo geral, estes trabalhos se comunicam a partir do momento em que se posicionam contra a ideologia dominante do artista sozinho, que precisa se afastar do mundo para criar, substituindo-o por redes relacionais inventadas. Todavia, não se trata de uma proposta de “arte social” ou sociológica, e sim uma proposta de construção de espaços-tempo cuja finalidade não é o convívio e sim o produto deste convívio, a experiência.

O entendimento da experiência que mais se aproxima da estética relacional é o de Jorge Larrosa Bondía. Este teórico vai até a origem etimológica da palavra e define a experiência como algo que “nos acontece”, sendo ela cada vez mais rara por quatro motivos: excesso de informação, excesso de opinião, falta de tempo e excesso de trabalho. O sujeito da

experiência é definido não por sua atividade e sim por sua passividade, que diferente da oposição ativo *versus* passivo, é aqui entendida como receptividade, disponibilidade e abertura para que algo aconteça a este sujeito, que algo o toque. Sendo o saber da experiência, algo singular e intransferível.

O saber da experiência é um saber que não pode separar-se do indivíduo concreto em quem encarna. Não está, como o conhecimento científico, fora de nós, mas somente tem sentido no modo como configura uma personalidade, um caráter, uma sensibilidade ou, em definitivo, uma forma humana singular de estar no mundo, que é por sua vez uma ética (um modo de conduzir-se) e uma estética (um estilo).²⁰



Figure 6. Intervenção “O que te toca?” no Parque Dom Pedro, São Paulo – Ana Dangelo. Foto de Lúcia Rosa.

Bondía também compara o experimento científico com a experiência, o experimento é previsível, objetivo e repetível, enquanto que a experiência não é nem previsível, nem objetiva, quanto mais repetível. A experiência é única, subjetiva e incerta, porque consiste em uma abertura para o desconhecido.

Esta comparação (aqui) se encaixa aqui, pois desperta uma reflexão a respeito dos limites de um trabalho acadêmico que se propõe a estudar um trabalho artístico, estando o primeiro inserido na esfera do experimento e o segundo, na esfera da experiência. Assim, ainda mais por se

tratar de uma visão de arte da estética relacional, é impossível delimitar e teorizar sobre o que é deveras produzido, tendo em mente que o objetivo maior deste coletivo e do trabalho artístico desenvolvido por ele é criar modos de convívio entre pessoas de origens diversas, catadores de papel, filhos de catadores, artistas plásticos, escritores e público, que resultem em experiências.

O trabalho teórico deve, portanto, reconhecer suas limitações e se restringir a apresentar as propostas teóricas que orientam a prática artística e exemplificá-las a partir de ações que tenham sido feitas pelo coletivo, e, se para além da esfera individual, estes trabalhos reverberam em transformações sociais, estas devem ser entendidas justamente como o produto do convívio proposto pelo trabalho artístico que, ao reunir subjetividades individuais em espaços de encontro, gera significados coletivos.

Para concluir, é necessário retomar o trabalho do coletivo Dulcinéia Catadora e entendê-lo não só como um coletivo que produz livros com capas de papelão, e sim um grupo que entende o trabalho artístico e o papel da arte na esfera da estética relacional, priorizando o produto do convívio estabelecido no decorrer do “fazer” do livro.

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NOTES

- * Pesquisa desenvolvida sob a orientação da Profª Drª Maria Ignês Carlos Magno, professora permanente do mestrado de Comunicação Contemporânea da Universidade Anhembi Morumbi.
1. Hélio Oiticica, “Esquema Geral da Nova Objetividade”, em *Escritos de Artistas anos 60/70*, Glória Ferreira e Cecília Cotrim, org. (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2006), 154.
 2. Carlos Zílio, *O nacional e o popular na cultura brasileira – artes plásticas* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 2^a edição, 1983), 23.
 3. Hélio Oiticica, “A transição da cor do quadro para o espaço e o sentido da construtividade” [1962] in *Escritos de Artistas anos 60/70*, Glória Ferreira e Cecília Cotrim, org. (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 2006), 86.
 4. Zílio, *O nacional e o popular na cultura brasileira*, 21.
 5. Oiticica, “A transição da cor do quadro para o espaço e o sentido da construtividade”, 87.
 6. Zílio, *O nacional e o popular na cultura brasileira*, 26.
 7. Oiticica, “A transição da cor do quadro para o espaço e o sentido da construtividade”, 86.
 8. Hélio Oiticica in Zílio, “O nacional e o popular na cultura brasileira”, 27.
 9. Nicolas Borriaud, *A estética relacional* (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2009), 66.
 10. Ibid., 84.
 11. Ferreira Gullar, *Cultura posta em questão* (Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio Editora, 2^a edição, 2002), 21.
 12. Ibid., 62.
 13. Néstor García Canclini, *Culturas híbridas: uma estratégia para entrar e sair da modernidade* (São Paulo: Edusp, 1997), 19.
 14. Borriaud, *A estética relacional*, 27.
 15. Ibid., 26.
 16. Ibid., 32.
 17. Serge Daney, *Persévérance* (Paris: Ed. P.O.L., 1992), 38.
 18. Borriaud, *A estética relacional*, 85.
 19. Ibid., 51.
 20. Jorge Larrosa Bondía, “Notas sobre a experiência e o saber de experiência,” *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, nº19 (2002): 27.

Cartonera Publications Catalog / *Catálogo de publicaciones cartoneras*

The books listed below correspond to those published by *cartonera* publishers from their foundation to March 2009 according to the information sent by *cartonera* publishers participating in this book. Due to the great differences in their catalogues, we decided not to unify the format in this text in order to respect the personality of each publishing house. Some organize their catalogues in chronological order; others, alphabetically by the author's last name. There are those who divide catalogues according to different collections and series; others mention the literary genre of the published work. The order of listed works of *cartonera* publishers here is chronological according to their year of foundation. These dates have been added in parenthesis next to their name.

Los libros listados a continuación corresponden a las publicaciones de las editoriales cartoneras que participan en este libro, desde su fundación hasta marzo de 2009 de acuerdo a la información enviada por ellas mismas. Debido a la gran diferencia en los formatos de sus catálogos, hemos decidido evitar uniformar el formato del texto para respetar la personalidad de cada editorial. Algunas organizan su catálogo de manera cronológica; otras, en orden alfabetico por el apellido del autor. Unas subdividen su catálogo de acuerdo a las diferentes colecciones y series que tienen; otras, anotan el género literario al cual pertenece la obra. El orden en el cual aparecen listadas las editoriales cartoneras es cronológico de acuerdo a su fecha de fundación, la cual aparece entre paréntesis al lado del nombre de la editorial.

ELOÍSA CARTONERA, ARGENTINA (2003)

Titles are listed in chronological order. / *Los títulos están listados en orden cronológico.*

Gabriela Bejerman. *Pendejo.* (poesía)

Damián Ríos. *Habrá que poner la luz.* (novela)

Timo Berger (Alemania). *Literatura Skin*

- Cucurto. *Noches vacías*. (relato)
- Fabián Casas. *El bosque pulenta*. (cuento)
- Ricardo Piglia. *El pianista*. (cuento)
- Néstor Perlongher. *Evita vive*. (relato)
- Leónidas Lamborghini. *Trento*. (fragmentos inéditos)
- Dalia Rosetti. *Durazno reverdeciente*. (novela)
- César Aira. *Mil gotas*. (novela breve)
- Ricardo Zelarayán. *Bolsas*. (relatos y poemas)
- Fabián Casas. *Casa con diez pinos*. (cuento)
- Cucurto. *La máquina de hacer paraguayitos*. (poesía)
- Gonzalo Millán (Chile). *Seudónimos de la muerte*. (poesía)
- Ramón Paz. *Pornosonetos*. (poemas)
- Haroldo de Campos (Brasil). *El ángel izquierdo de la poesía*. (poesía bilingüe)
- Sergio Parra (Chile). *La manoseada*. (poemas)
- Enrique Lihn (Chile). *Poesía de paso*. (poemas)
- Enrique Lihn. *Por fuerza mayor*. (poemas)
- Enrique Lihn. *La aparición de la virgen*. (poesía)
- Enrique Lihn. *Huacho y Pochocha*. (relato)
- Enrique Lihn. *La musiquilla de las pobres esferas*. (poesía)
- Julián Herbert (Méjico). *Autorretrato a los 27*
- César Aira. *El todo que surca La Nada*. (novela breve)
- Dalia Rosetti. *Sueños y Pesadillas vol. III y IV*. (relato)
- Fogwill. *Llamado por los malos poetas*. (poesía)
- Gonzalo Millán (Chile). *Cinco poemas eróticos*. (poesía)
- Alejandro López. *La asesina de Lady Di*. (primera versión)
- Luis Cháves (Costa Rica). *Anotaciones para una cumbia*
- Oswaldo Reynoso (Perú). *Cara de ángel*. (cuentos)
- Silvio Mattoni. *El paseo*. (poema largo)
- Dani Umpi (Uruguay). *Aún soltera*. (novela)
- Matías Rivas (Chile). *El canario*. (poesía)
- Glauco Mattoso (Brasil). *Delirios líricos*. (bilingüe)
- Martín Eguía. *El retama*. (relato)
- Wally Salomão y otros. *Brasil años 70. Poesía marginal*. (poesía)
- Luis Hernández (Perú). *Charlie Melnick*. (poesía)
- Leónidas Lamborghini. *Comedieta*. (poemas)
- Cucurto. *Fer*. (novela breve)
- Alfredo Villar (Perú). *El Subte*. (relato)

- Alejandro Caravario. *Charrúa*. (relato)
- Oscar Hahn (Chile). *Imágenes nucleares*. (poesía)
- Ná Khar Ellif-ce. *Umbanda Jackson*. (relato)
- Cecilia Pavón. *Discos Gato Gordo*. (relatos)
- Leonardo Longhi. *Arenal*. (poesía)
- Luciana Paglia. *Caperucita Roja*. (poesía)
- Francisco Garamona. *Una escuela de la mente*. (poesía)
- Timo Berger (Alemania). *Sexo y sonido*. (relatos)
- Carmen Ollé y otras diez. *Poetas Peruanas Contemporáneas*
- Cristian De Nápoli. *Palitos de agua*. (poesía)
- Marcelo Cohen. *Fossey*. (cuento)
- César Aira. *El cerebro musical*. (relato)
- Arturo Carrera. *Pizarrón*. (poesía)
- Alejandro Rubio. *Autobiografía podrida*. (relato)
- Carmen Iriondo. *Animalitos del cielo y del infierno*.
- Manuel Alemián. *23 cuentitos*. (microcuentos)
- Arnaldo Calveyra. *Tres hombres*. (poesía)
- Ricardo Zelarayán. *Traveseando*. (relatos para niños)
- Juan Calzadilla (Venezuela). *Manual para inconformistas*. (poesía)
- Fabián Casas. *Matas de pasto*. (ensayos)
- Sergio Bizzio. *El genio argentino*. (ensayo)
- Francisco Garamona. *Introspección por los patos*. (relato)
- Martín Adán (Perú). *La casa de cartón*. (novela)
- Manuel Silva Acevedo (Chile). *Lobos y ovejas*.
- Cuqui. *A mí me picó una araña*. (poema-ensayo)
- Cuqui. *Masturbación*. (relato)
- Alan Pauls. *El caso Malarma*. (cuento)
- Fabián Casas. *Los veteranos del pánico*. (novela breve)
- Mario Bellatin (México). *Salón de belleza*. (novela)
- Salvadora Onrubia. *Gaby y el amor*. (cuentos)
- Douglas Diegues (Brasil). *Uma flor na solapa da miséria*. (poesía en portugués)
- Ricardo Piña. *Sentimiento Bielsa*. (poesía)
- Raúl Zurita (Chile). *Tu vida derrumbándose*. (poesía)
- Gabriel Casas. *Papá, ¿por qué no vino Cruyff?* (relato)
- Jorge Mautner (Brasil). *Susi*. (novela de amor)
- Cucurto. *Hasta quitarle Panamá a los yankis*. (novela)
- Dalia Rosetti. *Sueños y Pesadillas*, vol. I y II. (relato)

- Elsa Drucaroff. *Leyenda erótica -fragmentos-*. (cuentos)
- Mario Bellatin. *La jornada de la mona y el paciente*.
- Ruben H. Ríos. *Restos del Cadillac*. (poesía)
- Jorge Nóbile. *Jueguitos*. (relatos)
- Jorge Nóbile. *Dos relatos*. (relatos)
- Silvano Martinelli. *Antología*. (poesía)
- Antonio Miranda (Brasil). *San Fernando de Beira Mar*.
- Teodoro Placeres-Manuel Alemián. *23 cuadritos*. (comic)
- Cucurto-Pablo Martín. *Cucurietas*. (comic)
- Martín Gambarotta. *Punctum*. (poesía)
- Pablo Queralt. *Primer paso*. (poesía)
- Alejandro Ricagno. *Negocios de estos días*. (poesía)
- Cucurto. *Panambi*. (novela breve)
- Monserrat Alvarez (Perú). *Alta suciedad*. (poesía)
- Crisitian De Napoli. *Música del mundo*. (poesía)
- Camila do Valle (Brasil). *Robé y me tragué un collar de perlas chinas...*
(relato)
- Alfredo Villar (Perú). *Ciudad Cielo*. (poesía)
- Juan Incardona. *El ataque a Villa Celina*. (relatos)
- José Emilio Pacheco (México). *Batallas en el desierto*. (novela)
- David Wapner. *La noche*. (cuentos fantásticos)
- Pablo Queralt. *Crack*. (poesía)
- Reinaldo Arenas (Cuba). *La loma del ángel*. (novela)

¡Novedades!

- Ernesto Camilli. *El sol Albañil*. (para niños)
- Rodrigo Rey Rosa. *El cuchillo del mendigo*. (relatos)
- Rodrigo Rey Rosa. *El Tren a Travancore*. (cartas indias)
- Pedro Lemebel. *Bésame de nuevo, forastero*. (crónicas)
- Washington Cucurto. *1999*. (poesía completa)
- Manuel Alemián. *Zapping*. (cuentitos)
- Ernesto Camilli. *Las casas del Viento*. (para niños)
- Gabriela Bejerman. *Ubre*. (poesía)
- VV.AA. *Cháque tu lengua*. (antología del Chaco argentino)
- Ricardo Piña. *Ortega no se va*. (poesía)
- Fabián Casas. *Boedo*. (todos los poemas)
- Víctor Hugo Viscarra (Bolivia). *Borracho estaba, pero me acuerdo*. (crónicas)

Tomás Eloy Martínez. *Bazán*. (cuentos)
Mario Santiago Papasquiaro (Méjico). *Respiración del laberinto*. (poesía)
Cucurto. *El amor es más que una novela de 500 páginas*. (novelita de amor)
Víctor Gaviria (Colombia). *El rey de los espantos*
Enrique Lihn. *Poeta y extranjero*. (antología)
No hay cuchillo sin rosas. . . Historia de una editorial latinoamericana
(con fotos y antología de nuevos autores)

Premios Nuevo Sudaca Border de narrativa breve

Juan Leotta. *Luster*
Leandro Ávalos Blacha. *Serialismo*
Marcelo Guerrieri. *El ciclista serial*
Pedro Nalda Querol. *Palomas que no son pájaros*
Gonzalo Alfonsín. *El Sr Velásquez y el licenciado Ramírez*
Dante Castiglione. *Cacho el más macho*

SARITA CARTONERA, PERÚ (2004)

Narrativa

Oswaldo Reynoso. *Colorete*. (Perú)
Juan Emar. *Ayer*. (Chile)
Miguel Ildefonso. *El príncipe*. (Perú)
Carlos Eduardo Zavaleta. *La batalla*. (Perú)
César Aira. *Mil gotas*. (Argentina)
Néstor Perlongher. *Evita vive*. (Argentina)
Gerardo Ruiz. *Arriba está Solano*. (Perú)
Jorge Luis Chamorro. *El primer beso*. (Perú)
Julio César Vega. *Los cachaquitos no van al cielo*. (Perú)
José Adolph. *Noemia*. (Perú)
Washington Cucurto. *Noches vacías*. (Argentina)
Juan Manuel Chávez. *Sin cobijo en Palomares*. (Perú)
Ricardo Piglia. *El pianista*. (Argentina)
Carlos Yushimito. *El mago*. (Perú)
Juan José Sandoval. *Barrunto*. (Perú)

- Alejandro Neyra. *Peruvians Do It Better*. (Perú)
Rodrigo Hasbún. *El futuro*. (Bolivia)
Diamela Eltit. *Los vigilantes*. (Chile)
Washington Cucurto. *La máquina de hacer paraguayitos*. (Argentina)
Cristino Bogado. *Punk desperazamiento*. (Paraguay)
Patricia de Souza. *Aquella imagen que transpira*. (Perú)

Poesía. Serie A la poesía se la respeta

- Aldo Miyashiro. *Fuga última*. (Perú)
Edgar Saavedra. *Final aún*. (Perú)
Romy Sordómez. *Vacas negras en la noche*. (Perú)
Paul Guillén. *La muerte del hombre amarillo*. (Perú)
Haroldo de Campos. *El ángel izquierdo de la poesía*. (Brasil)
Pedro Lemebel. *Manifiesto*. (Chile)
Montserrat Alvarez. *Nerópolis*. (Perú)
Chrystian Zegarra. *Sacrificios*. (Perú)
Diego Lazarte. *La edad del ámbar*. (Perú)

Ensayo. Serie El bandido doblemente armado

- Santiago Roncagliolo. *El arte nazi*. (Perú)
Mario Bellatin. *Underwood portátil modelo 1915*. (Perú)
Fernando Iwasaki. *Mi poncho es un kimono flamenco*. (Perú)
Margo Glantz. *Saña*. (México)
Luis Millones. *Taki Onqoy. El largo camino del mesianismo andino*. (Perú)
Víctor Vich. *Borrachos de amor*. (Perú)
Zeín Zorrilla. *La novela andina contemporánea*. (Perú)
Luisa Valenzuela. *Taller de escritura breve*. (Argentina)

Serie de tradición oral Casa Chúcara

- Kristel Best. *Un libro bien grande donde dice todo lo de la hacienda*. (Perú)

ANIMITA CARTONERA, CHILE (2005)

Línea Catálogo General

Colección *Chilensis*:

Gonzalo Millán. *Archivo Zonaglio*, 2006, 51 págs.

Raúl Zurita. *Cinco fragmentos*, 2006, 49 págs.

Carmen Berenguer. *Bobby Sands desfallece en el muro*, 2006, 31 págs.

Andrea Jeftanovic. *Monólogos en fuga*, 2006, 41 págs.

Mauricio Electorat. *Uno y dos*, 2006, 46 págs.

Jaime Collyer. *El abismo todos los días*, 2006, 23 págs.

Colección Literatura bailable:

Felipe Cussen. *Deshuesos*, 2006, 16 págs.

Colección Aquí te las traigo:

Daniel Hidalgo. *Barrio Miseria*, 2007, 23 págs.

Jorge Navarro. *Testigo*, 2007, 24 págs.

Andrea Ocampo. *Patio 29: la democracia imaginaria*, 2007, 15 págs.

Ana López Montaner. *La persecución*, 2007, 29 págs.

Francisco Rojas Troncoso. *El mercado del sol*, 2009, 31 págs.

Felipe Yévenes. *Las reinas sin Corona*, 2009, 37 págs.

Ricardo Mir. *Estado Nacional y diferencia cultural*, 2009, 25 págs.

Leticia Vorphal. *El Belafonte*, 2009, 25 págs.

Colección La internacional:

Mario Santiago Papasquiaro. *Respiración del laberinto*, 2008, 32 págs.

Línea Rescate e Investigación

Colección Sepia:

José Santos González Vera. *Perspectiva* (Selección y prólogo de Ana María Moraga), 2006, 39 págs.

Teresa Wilms Montt. *Collage* (Selección y prólogo de Ana María Moraga y Macarena Valenzuela), 2006, 49 págs.

Varios autores: *Lira Popular* (Selección y prólogo de Paloma Domínguez), 2007, 37 págs.

Línea Infantil

Colección Mi primer cartón:

Tomás Ives. *Lupa*, 2007, 14 págs.

Lespie Leppe. *En blanco y negro*, 2007, 26 págs.

Natalia Guerra. *Cristino*, 2007, 30 págs.

Natalia Matzner y Valentina Matzner. *Niño Arsenio*, 2007, 32 págs.

MANDRÁGORA CARTONERA, BOLIVIA (2007)

Javier Payeras. *Afuera*

Ramiro Fonte. *Antología mínima*

Carlos Rimassa (Comp.). *Antología. Tres Marías*

Iván Castro. *Ayer*

David Sánchez. *Biodiversidad Amenazada*

Rodrigo Hasbún. *Carretera*

Ferrufino-Coqueugniot. *Close To You*

Horacio Cerutti. *Como hablar de Dios...*

Edmundo Paz S. *Como la vida misma*

Victor Montoya. *Cuentos Violentos*

César Verduguez. *Cuentos*

Maximiliano Barrientos. *Cuerpos*

Cristino Bogado. *Dandy Maká*

Ernesto Carrión. *Demonia Factory*

David Acebey. *El Chalan Loco*

Homero Carvalho. *El Rey Ilusión*

Rosalba Guzmán. *El Vendemilagros*

Gonzalo Lema. *Fue por tu amor*

Javier Viveros. *Futbol S.A...*

Ramón Rocha Monroy. *Harmonia Libertaria*

Jan Grzinic. *Jardín de altares violáceos*

Hector Hernández. *La poesía chilena*

René Rivera. *Mariposas Negras*

Miguel Lindin. *Micronovelas*

Bartolomé Leal. *Muerte de un escritor*

Iván Castro. *Noche Abandonada*

Gonzalo Montero. *Pétalos de Sangre*
Fesal Chain. *Poemas y Relatos breves*
Horacio Cerutti. *Por un filosofar...*
Ernesto Carrión. *Presentimiento de identidad*
Miguel Angel Chang. *Quien las hojas*
Carlos Rimaza. *Rapsodia casi triste*
Mario Papasquiaro. *Respiración del laberinto*
David Sánchez Rubio. *Reversión del Derecho*
Mario Bellatin. *Salón de belleza*
Alan Mills. *Síncopes*
Juan José Tamayo. *Sujeto, utopía*
Ricardo Zelarayán. *Traveseando*
Rosalba Guzmán. *Un cuento que no se cuenta*
Jhonny Montero. *Versos en tiempos de cambio*
Joaquín Herrara Flores. *El derecho desde el feminismo*
Joaquín Herrara Flores. *La reinvención de los DDHH*

YERBA MALA CARTONERA, BOLIVIA (2007)

Catálogo nacional

Ayllón, Virginia. *Liberalia*, El Alto 2007 (ensayo)
Barrón, Vadik. *ipoem*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)
Cáceres, Roberto. *Línea 257*, El Alto 2006 (narrativa)
Cárdenas, Adolfo. *Sueño de reyes*, La Paz 2009 (narrativa)
Coaquira Alí, Óscar. *Los cuentos del Ch'oto!*, La Paz 2009 (narrativa)
Freudenthal, Jessica. *Poemas ocultos*, El Alto 2007 (poesía)
Hasbún, Rodrigo. *Familia y otros cuentos*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
Jaliri, Nelson Van. *Los poemas de mi hermanito*, El Alto 2007 (poesía)
Jiménez Kanahuaty, Christian. *El mareo*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
León, Carolina. *Las mujeres invisibles*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa y poesía)
Llanos, Gabriel. *Sobre muertos y muy vivos*, El Alto 2007 (narrativa)
Luna, Darío Manuel. *Khari Khari*, El Alto 2006 (narrativa)
Maldonado, Rery. *Andar por casa*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)
Medinaceli, Aldo. *¡Hijos del caos!*, La Paz 2009 (narrativa)
Medinaceli, Aldo. *Seremos*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)

- Michel, Claudia. *Juego de ensarte*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- Montellano, Marco. *Narciso tiene tos*, El Alto 2007 (poesía)
- Morales, Banesa. *Memorias de una samaritana*, El Alto 2007 (poesía)
- Pantoja, Gabriel. *Plenilunio*, El Alto 2007 (poesía)
- Piñeiro, Juan Pablo. *El bolero triunfal de sara*, El Alto 2007 (narrativa)
- Portugal, Crispín & amigos. *Cago pues! (textos póstumos y de homenaje a C. P.)*, La Paz 2008 (testimonio y narrativa)
- Portugal, Crispín. *Almha la vengadora*, El Alto 2006 (narrativa)
- Quiroz, Mancarla. *Imágenes*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)
- Saavedra, Lourdes. *Memorias de un walkman*, La Paz 2008 (ensayo y poesía)
- VV. AA. *Cuentos de alasitas* (ganadores concurso cuento breve Oscar Cerruto 2009), La Paz 2009 (narrativa)
- VV. AA. *Destamayados* (cuentos del Concurso Franz Tamayo 2008), La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- VV. AA. *Las adelas* (selección de escritoras bolivianas: Vilma Tapia, Erika Bruzonic, Giovanna Rivero, Claudia Peña, Jessica Freudenthal, Mónica Velásquez, Lourdes Saavedra, Cecilia Romero, Yancarla Quiroz, Carolina León, Banesa Morales, Claudia Michel, Elvira Espejo y Virginia Ayllón), La Paz 2008 (narrativa, poesía y ensayo)
- VV. AA. *Cuentos breves* (Ganadores concurso cuento breve Oscar Cerruto 2008), La Paz 2008 (narrativa)

Catálogo extranjero

Argentina:

- Aira, César. *Mil gotas*, La Paz 2009 (narrativa)
- Campos, Haroldo de. *El ángel izquierdo*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- Cucurto, Washington. *Un amor cumbiantero*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- García Recoaro, Nicolás. *27.182.414*, El Alto 2007 (narrativa)
- Morales, Bruno. *Bolivia construcciones*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- Pauls, Alan. *El caso malarma*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- Perlongher, Néstor. *Evita vive*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- Piglia, Ricardo. *El pianista*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- Walsh, Rodolfo. *Esa mujer*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
- Wapner, David. *La noche*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)

Chile:

- Lemebel, Pedro. *Bésame otra vez forastero*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
Guillén, Jonathan. *Urbana siniestra*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)
Malebrán, Juan. *Reproducción en curso*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)
Podestá, Juan. *Novela negra*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
Fuentelzar, Danitza. *Inhalámbrica*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)

México:

- Hernández Montecinos, Héctor. *La escalera (Reescritura de el escarlape de Jaime Sáenz)*, La Paz 2008 (poesía y narrativa)
Melchy, Yaxkin. *Nada en contra*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)
Papasquiaro, Mario Santiago. *Respiración del laberinto*, La Paz 2008 (poesía)

Perú:

- Bellatin, Mario. *La jornada de la mona y el paciente*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
Bellatin, Mario. *Salón de belleza*, La Paz 2008 (narrativa)
Iwasaki, Fernando. *Mi poncho es un kimono flamenco*, La Paz 2007 (ensayo)
Roncagliolo, Santiago. *El arte nazi*, El Alto 2007 (ensayo)

DULCINÉIA CATADORA, BRAZIL (2007)

- Ademir Demarchi. *Do Sereno que enche o Ganges*, nov/2008 16p.
Alice Ruiz. *Salada de Frutas*, nov/2008 20p.
Almandrade. *Malabarismo das pedras*, nov/2007 31p.
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