

FROM THE OUTSIDE: LATIN AMERICAN ANTHOLOGIES
AND THE MAKING OF U.S. LITERATURE

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A dissertation submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Literatures in English

Written under the direction of

Professor Rebecca Walkowitz, Chair

And approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

October, 2019

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation explores how the evolution of twentieth-century U.S. literature was shaped by the reception of Spanish and Latin American poetry. I argue that midcentury poets embraced the diverse structures of poetic address they encountered in the Latin American anthology in order to remake the unit of the poem and the linguistic and structural boundaries of the single book-length volume. Poets such as Jack Spicer, Langston Hughes, Elizabeth Bishop, and Kenneth Koch adopted the anthology as a creative model that foregrounded the circulation and mutation of discursive contexts, and underscored a pointed indifference to the integrity of the book. *From the Outside* thus assembles an unusual cast of major and lesser-known poets whose address to various publics belies conventional affiliations of coterie and community as well as narratives that organize postwar American poetry under the master signs of lyric, nation, institution, or Cold War cultural politics.

Anthologies and translations, and especially anthologies *of* translations, remain understudied today. Literary scholarship tends to regard these objects as derivative, staid documents of canon, movement, ideology, or period. Yet midcentury translation anthologies were neither politically conservative nor formally stable; as objects of study, they reveal a field of multiplicity involved in the complex process of re-organizing itself. While they granted a measure of access to the multilingual poetry of the Americas, anthologies of translations also staged a confrontation with the limits of monolingual address. This

confrontation exposed a persistent tension between two competing models of poetry's communicability: one premised on circulation within communities; the other, on circulation beyond them. This tension surfaces as a dialectical push-and-pull between lyric communication and its primary modality, direct address, and non-lyric modes of address oriented to a more heterogeneous range of publics.

This drama unfolds at an historical moment when the proliferation of poetry anthologies contributed to the widespread perception among poets that poetry had never been more infiltrated, nor more marked by, publicity. As scholars of the new lyric studies have shown, this perception did nothing to diminish the tendency in this period to read all poetry as lyric. Lyric reading obscured the ways in which midcentury poetry embraced publicity and addressed multiple publics. In fact, because publicity was assumed to have a uniformly negative influence, lyric became one of the master signs of poetry's capacity to resist the threats of mass culture, the administered world, and the encroachments of capital. By cementing the association between poetry and lyric, mainstream anthologization helped to lend this allegory its force. By contrast, the anthology of Spanish and Latin American poetry—published by small presses situated on the margins of the literary field—existed in an antagonistic relationship with the canon-defining textbook and popular anthologies that disseminated the norms of lyric culture.

The poets I study repurposed the modes of address and poetic genres they encountered in translation anthologies in order to rethink these norms. As they wrote in the somewhat fantastical, Latinized light of the “Spanish” and “Latin American,” they reconsidered what and how “American” poetry—as a media form and as public discourse—communicates. Individual chapters show the San Francisco Renaissance poet Jack Spicer bemoaning the New York publishing industry's anthologization of “crap,” while

simultaneously turning to anthologies of Federico García Lorca's poetry to develop a poetics of serial address; Langston Hughes drawing on his prolific work as an anthologist to bring the address of global decolonization to mainstream white and black U.S. readerships; Elizabeth Bishop cannibalizing Latin American genres to make poetry out of the gendered interplay of recognition and misrecognition that constitutes the landmark anthology of Brazilian poetry she co-edited with Emanuel Brasil; and the first-generation New York School poet Kenneth Koch noticing the popularity of the mid-sixties Latin American poetry anthology, and turning the form and its stylization into objects of parody.

DEDICATION

in memory of my father, Robert Carroll Challener
and to Amy, Annalise, and Gabriel, with all of my heart

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A previous version of Chapter 1 originally appeared as “Addressing ‘Alien Worlds’: Publics and Persons in the Poetry of Jack Spicer,” *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Winter 2017. Thanks to my anonymous readers for their incisive feedback. Thanks as well to Eileen Ewing for her expert editorial attention.

Poets meet in anthologies. Scholars do too. Once upon a time, an English high-school teacher assigned students an anthology of six American poets and asked them to write a report on one of those poets. My poet was Langston Hughes. That’s one origin—one hint of the beginning of this project. There are many other points of origin for which I am grateful. They radiate out in “concentric waves of contact”—to quote a favorite Hughesian figure of mine.

In particular, I want to thank my readers in the English Department at Rutgers: Meredith McGill for our conversations in Montague and New Brunswick, as well as for her early mentorship and steadfast encouragement; Rebecca Walkowitz, for her belief in my work, for her vision, and for her leadership; and Andrew Goldstone, for his ongoing, unfailing support. I owe a special debt of gratitude to David Kurnick, whose generosity and friendship have shaped my thinking about the study of literature in countless ways. My thanks as well to Margaret Ronda, for modeling how to be a poet and scholar of poetry in perilous times. Each of these readers has been an incredible interlocutor and guide. I thank my lucky stars that our paths crossed. My thanks to Jeffrey Lawrence, as well, who served in the past few years as a kind of de facto fifth reader for my dissertation.

I am also grateful in general to the faculty of the English Department: as soon as I arrived, they welcomed me into a vibrant community and challenged me in the best possible ways. Special thanks to Lynn Festa, John Kucich, and Carolyn Williams for their guidance.

Many, many thanks to Cheryl Robinson and Courtney Borack for their presence, understanding, kindness, conversation, bad jokes, and amazing baked goods. Thanks also to Mark Doty, Chris Iannini, Ann Jurecic, Ryan Kernan, Jonathan Kramnick, Mukti Mangharam, Stéphane Robolin, Evie Shockley, and Jonah Siegel.

Special shout-outs to my peers working in the Americanist and Anti-Racism Colloquia, and to the Anticolonial, Modernism and Globalization, Modernist Studies, Poetry and Poetics, and Post-45 research collectives. My thanks as well to the organizers, host institutions, and participants of the Futures of American Studies Institute at Dartmouth College, the Post-45 Graduate Symposium at Yale University, the Graduate English Symposium at Rutgers, and the Institute for World Literature at the Universidade de Lisboa. I had the privilege of sharing drafts of my work with great audiences in these settings. I am especially grateful to have been in conversation over the years with Vaughn Anderson, Andrew Carlson, Isaac Cowell, Emily Coyle, Bakary Diaby, Gabrielle Everett, Regina Hamilton, Lech Harris, Scott Harris, Sean Hughes, Lauren Kimball, Jenny Lalli, Gabriele Lazzari, Moyang Li, Daniel Malinowski, Ariel Martino, Michael Monescalchi, Amadi Ozier, Melissa Parrish, Caro Pirri, Pritika Pradhan, Abigail Reardon, Sushil Sivaram, Maria Vrcek, and William Welty.

I'm thankful, too, for the conversations with scholars I have met through conferences, fora, and colloquia, including Charles Bernstein, Joseph Bizup, Jeremy Braddock, Michelle Clayton, Rachel Blau Duplessis, Harris Feinsod, Abram Foley, Adela Piñeda Franco, Rachel Galvin, Valentino Gianuzzi, Alan Golding, Chris Haines, Laura Heffernan, Donatella Izzo, Peter Kalliney, Maurice Lee, Andrew Leong, Heather Love, Meredith Martin, Tom McEnaney, Anjali Nerlekar, Anthony Reed, Jennifer Scappettone,

and Patricia Stuelke, among others. These conversations have enriched my work and my intellectual life.

This is not an exhaustive list of acknowledgments, and its inadequacy is humbling and beautiful. It's overwhelming to reflect on what makes something like a dissertation come together at all—in any of its many forms. I am grateful to an amazing number of convivial fellow graduate students, poets, librarians, editors, archivists, and faculty of other departments and networks across the country and beyond who have shared advice, archival support, criticism, guidance, friendship, playlists, reading lists, spare beds, libations, nourishment, and care over the years.

I'm also grateful for the material support I have received from the English Department and the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers. The University and Louis Bevier Fellowship and Andrew W. Mellon School of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Completion Fellowship were especially helpful in the final years of my graduate career.

I thank my friends who encouraged and supported me along the way. Profound gratitude to Brandy and Kevin Barents; Christian Bracho; Eileen, Jim, Kathleen, Peter, and Sue Campbell; Allison Patton Culyba; Matt Culyba; Kate Godin; Alice Hsiaw; Patrick Hsieh; Daniel Johnson; Ebele Okpokwasili-Johnson; Thomas Kindling; David Lagakos; Christian and Courtney Megliola; Marisa Milanese; Rebecca and Thom Neale; Maija Niemistow; Damen, Emily, and Ruth Provost; Jess Pulver; Natalia Ramondo; Nick Rogers; Eric Senecal; Mike Stewart; Dustin Tingley; and Chris Walsh. I couldn't have done it without them. A very special thanks to Leslie Shipman and Paul Pimsler for their camaraderie, love, and many wonderful hours full of conversation, music, and laughter.

I thank Lee Beckhusen and Carrie Klinge; John, Mary, and Matt Beckhusen; David Beckhusen and Marian Hepburn; and Theresa Beckhusen and Salvatore Pane for their love

and support. I thank my sister Stephanie Challener, for sharing her home with me and for so many lovely meals and conversations. My thanks and love to my siblings Cynthia Challener, Deborah Challener, Roberta Challener, and Kenneth Challener. My thanks to Ana Cipoletta for her care of Annalise and Gabriel during the first three years of their lives. My gratitude and love to Barbara Mendel and Eric Beckhusen, whose help and care made the completion of this project possible.

I thank Annalise, my daughter, for her wild approach to the world—for bringing into it so much spirit, rhythm, color and song, with such humor and intelligence. I thank Gabriel, my son, for his mischievous wit and his thoughtfulness, for his attentiveness and curiosity, and for his delight in making and playing. What words could ever say it? Their affection is a balm. I thank each of them for sharing with me their feelings, their art, their wonder, and their daily, adamant joys and questions. And I thank Amy Beckhusen for her laughter; for her uncompromising vision of what this world might be; for her refusals and her gleeful silliness and defiance; for her many acts of kindness, love, generosity, and humor; for her essential and surprising weirdness; for her vital labors of care and sympathy and imagination; for opening up our lives and our family to new paths and new possibilities; for the conversations she makes happen. May there be many more.

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Introduction: Poetry in the Presence of Translation Anthologies

This dissertation explores an invisible history: how the evolution of twentieth-century U.S. literature was shaped by the reception of Spanish and Latin American poetry. I offer a transhemispheric account of this history by reading the prefaces, introductions, annotations, and individual translations in anthologies created by major and minor U.S. poets alongside the contemporaneous book-length poems they authored. These anthologies belong to a distinctive literary subgenre—the translation anthology—that has been all but invisible as an object of English literary study. For instance, in their infamous 1928 polemic, *A Pamphlet Against Anthologies*, Robert Graves and Laura Riding asserted that “It may be stated as a general rule that the anthology of translations, whatever the merits of the translation, is unlikely to be justifiable as an anthology” (161). This view has persisted in the Anglo-American academy through much of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In what remains the most rigorous historical overview of American anthologies to date, Alan Golding’s 1995 *From Outlaw to Classic: Canons in American Poetry*, the translation anthology does not appear. Likewise, in her 2001 book-length “inquiry into anthologies,” Ann Ferry does not offer any sustained consideration of the form. Perhaps more surprisingly, it is also largely invisible in the emergent field of translation studies: as Teresa Seruya, Lieven D’huylst, Alexandra Assis Rosa, and Maria Lin Moniz observed in 2013, neither the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* nor the *Handbook of Translation Studies* include entries on anthologies (2).

When scholars do discuss the anthology in relation to translation, they tend to be particularly interested in modernism. In Jeremy Braddock’s astute *Collecting as Modernist Practice* (2013), for example, the story of the anthology ends by midcentury because the story of the archive begins. While I dispute this conclusion, I am indebted to Braddock’s emphasis

on anthologization as a social practice, a term he uses to distinguish the agency of “the occasional, coterie, or interventionist anthology” as a “provisional institution” from that of “the more expressly canon-defining modernist anthologies” (16). As Braddock observes, Riding and Graves’s attack was “constitutive of a larger argument about modernism, and thus participated, albeit from a slightly different position, in the same contest for institutional authority that had been engaged by modernist anthologies themselves” (25). While Braddock examines Riding and Graves’s exclusion of the African American anthology—an elision necessary for their argument in favor of modernist autonomy—he does not consider the pamphleteers’ similar exclusion of the translation anthology.

Braddock’s account, like mine, owes much to Brent Hayes Edwards’s influential *The Practice of Diaspora* (2003), which evinces the many ways that a “basic grammar of blackness” gets “fully dislodged [and] lost in translation” through the vexed process of making of black internationalist anthologies. For Edwards, this process culminates in Nancy Cunard’s massive, multilingual *Negro: An Anthology* (1934), an effort he dubs “the last Negro anthology” not because “it is canonical or definitive, nor in the sense that it closes an historical period,” but because the anthology “demonstrates—it attempts to *practice*—the impossibility of anthologizing blackness” (316). My second chapter takes this claim as a point of departure, situating Langston Hughes as a poet, translator, and anthologist making anthologies in the fifties. Hughes is writing “after the last Negro anthology” both in the historical sense, and in the sense of anthologizing from the modernist models put forward by James Weldon Johnson, Alain Locke, Countee Cullen, and Cunard. Like these writers, Hughes was also practicing the impossibility of anthologizing blackness—but unlike them, in his co-edited anthologies of Nicolás Guillén, the *Poetry of the Negro*, and later anthologies of black African literature, Hughes revises his earlier internationalism with a prospective,

indirect address primarily oriented to U.S. readers whom the poem envisions as an emergent public of global decolonization.

The historical marginality of the postwar anthology of translations is intimately related to its significance for postwar U.S. literary production. Precisely because they occupied a marginal position in the literary field, anthologies of translations—initially published almost exclusively through independent and periodical presses—articulated a more interventionist and internationalist orientation than their more academic and popular “canon-defining” peers. This orientation helps to explain how and why anthologies of translations migrated into postwar U.S. literary field with such renovative force. For the presses, the translation anthology was a strategic means of entering the literary marketplace. As the sociologist Gisèle Sapiro concludes in her study of translations of French literature published in the United States, “translating literary works is a mode of accumulating symbolic capital for newcomers in the publishing field,” especially because such ventures tend “not to have the economic and symbolic resources necessary to attract American authors” and are unable to pay the “high advances on royalties that their agents demand” (335). Adapting a core-periphery model, Sapiro has elsewhere suggested that the Spanish and Latin American poetry anthology’s unevenness and “semi-peripheral” position in the world system may be contrasted with the more “central” presence of French, German, and Russian literatures.¹ We could also add that it may be contrasted with the “world literature” or world literary anthologies (in which this unevenness tends to be reproduced), as well as with monolingual mainstream, small press, and periodical press anthologies.

For poets, the marginal position and paraliterary status of translation anthologies was part of the attraction: by embracing the extensive repertoire of creative strategies made available by such anthologies, poets could differentiate themselves from more mainstream

and established authors. In *Translation Changes Everything*, the follow-up to his influential study of the translator's invisibility, Lawrence Venuti elaborates on this point:

In the United States, most poetry translations are issued by small and university presses, limiting their print run and distribution and making many of them ephemeral publications. These factors, as Pierre Bourdieu observes of poetry in general, turn its translation into 'the disinterested activity *par excellence*,' determining that it will invite not only 'charismatic legitimation' but also 'a succession of successful or abortive revolutions' as translators seek to garner 'poetic legitimacy' by distinguishing their work. Released from the constraint to turn a profit, poetry translation is more likely to encourage experimental strategies that can reveal what is unique about translation as a linguistic and cultural practice. (174)

Thus the Spanish and Latin American poetry anthology exists in both the publishing and poetry fields as a provisional institution. Provisionality marks out the translation anthology not only within these fields, but also in contrast to mainstream anthologies. For this reason, some of the more common assumptions we share about the postwar American anthology—e.g., that anthologization inherently entails canonization, preservation, or conservatism—require scrutiny. In some respects, these assumptions make a good deal of sense: along with the rise of the University and the consolidation of American literature as a discipline, the midcentury period saw the emergence of the Norton—the “Cadillac of all anthologies,” in Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s telling phrase.² Thus when the primary frame is postwar U.S. literature, the anthology’s canon-making and commercial functions have long been its most conspicuous, most entwined, and most agonistic features. Two crucial episodes have received sustained attention—the so called “anthology wars” of the sixties and the “canon wars” of the nineties.³ In these episodes, anthologies function as the preeminent genre of norm-setting for public literary culture, and as a result, these “wars” may be understood as struggles not only with and for symbolic representation, but also as contests over a burgeoning readership in a rapidly institutionalizing field. Outside of such episodes, however, only individual accounts of specific anthologies can be found scattered throughout

the critical work on the U.S. literatures produced in the second half of the twentieth century, and by themselves, these accounts do not cohere with the more well-known master narratives of the anthology's central importance to canonicity and the literary marketplace.

The Latin American anthology emerges in the postwar U.S. literary field at a time when the proliferation of monolingual anthologies was widely perceived among poets as consolidating a set of norms about poetry's role in public life. Many poets reflected publicly and in private on the meaning of their anthology-obsessed age, and conceived the making of poetry itself in relation to anthologies. The archives of midcentury poetry are littered with remarks attesting to the durability and persistence of a widely shared perception about the omnipresence of anthologies. Borrowing a phrase from the poet and novelist James Dickey, I call this corpus as a poetry written "in the presence of anthologies." In a review of the first edition of *New Poets of England and America*, Dickey reflected, "In a sense, every poem of every new book is presided over and judged by an imminent Anthology."

Anthologies are perhaps the most important harbingers of lastingness that a writer's work may know during his lifetime; thus they have come to seem a kind of trial immortality for all good poems. ... In the presence of anthologies the mighty tremble; the lesser know fantastic hope, and the plainly unworthy are exalted. (294)

For Dickey, anthologies possessed an unnerving power to evaluate and set the immediate terms of a poet's reception. They acted as arbitrary and unjust judges, in whose courts the authority of individual writers and the literary value of their work became distorted and misconstrued.

Though part of a familiar lament about the state of the art, Dickey's notion of the continual imminence of anthologies also points to an imagined relation to literary production, and to a broader sense of the literary field at midcentury. Jed Rasula has observed that "By the time he was forty [in 1957], Lowell had already appeared in eight major anthologies, as had Merrill [in 1966] by the same age. Others could be found in even

more anthologies: Anthony Hecht (11) [by 1963], Richard Wilbur (14) [by 1961], James Wright (10) [by 1967], and W. D. Snodgrass an astonishing seventeen anthology appearances before his second book appeared at the age of forty-two [in 1968]" (*Syncopations* 14).⁴ Likewise, as Ann Ferry records, after her appearance in Oscar Williams's popular *A Little Treasury of Modern Poets, English and American* (1946), Elizabeth Bishop's poetry consistently figured in major anthologies.⁵ In 1970, the sheer number of permissions requests she received led Bishop to remark to Lowell, "I swear they get out a poetry anthology every day of the week" (676).

Parodying the Postwar Poetry Anthology

Because the fifties and sixties were decades of hyper-anthologization, it should come as no surprise that parodies of anthologies appear throughout the period. Because parody depends on recognition, it depends on circulation. That is, parody depends on genre and discourse awareness: parodies antagonize the conventions of recognizable genres and discourses, and as such, reflect the visibility a given genre in the genre system and the literary field. Reading parodies of anthologies can tell us a lot about how they were read and understood, as well as about their particular creative function as catalysts of literary production: parodies of anthologies travesty not only the contents of anthologies, but also their discursive framing, internal structures, and address. To characterize this parodic function, I turn first to the poet Stan Persky's parody of Donald Allen's landmark *New American Poetry: 1945-1960* (Grove Press).

On the pale pink cover of the eleventh number of the poet Stan Persky's mimeographed poetry zine *Open Space*. "The Penguin Anthology of Contemporary Verse, Edited by Donald M. Allen" appears in majuscule over a black-and-white photograph of an Emperor penguin in an arctic landscape.⁶ As opposed to the "dignified but flippant" svelte

Puffin of the publishing company's famous logo, the body of the Emperor looms large, head angling to the sky. Its sharp beak lances the end of "American"; its torso and outspread flippers darken Allen's name. Below the photograph, a caption, in small font, reads: "In this position a fully grown Emperor is about three feet eight inches tall." The parody is most directly aimed at Allen—here, the lone emperor, out of scale in an inhospitable landscape—and the landmark anthology he edited, *The New American Poetry: 1945-1960* (Grove Press 1960). Linking the alternative Grove Press to the mainstream Penguin, Persky's cover portrays Allen as out of touch with the poetry movements he introduced to a wider readership four years earlier, and makes his anthology in retrospect seem a commercial, rather than artistic, venture (though of course it was both).

The arctic backdrop and the diminutive stature of the actual penguin, in contrast to its imperial, frontal pose, make it possible to read this cover in a broader Cold War context, but Persky's choice of the verse anthology connects it more immediately to "the anthology wars" of the 1960s. To borrow once more the well-worn dichotomy of Robert Lowell's 1960 National Book Award speech, the cover also displaces the cultural nationalism of Allen's putatively American project (with its flag-draped cover and its "raw" poetics), aligning it instead with the staid, conservative, canonical, establishment "verse" of an elitist "cooked" Anglo-American literary culture and tradition. Persky's reversal, from small press to trade publisher, was a response to a companion anthology Allen and Robert Creeley planned for Penguin, *The New American Story*, then circulating in galleys and manuscript. But Persky's cover's emphasis on "verse," rather than fiction, makes it clear that the poetry anthology is the genre most in question. The parodic "Table of Contraps" with which the issue opens confirms this emphasis:

Abraham Lincoln - Ode to Integration 1
 LeRoi Jones - Wow 3

John Greenleaf Whittier - Snowbound 36
 Walt Whitman - O England 44
 Carl Sandberg - Chicago 45
 Robert Frost - Neither in too Deep 53
 Design 54
 Amy Lowell - Zap 55
 Susan Sontag - Notes on Camp 60
 Joanne Kyger - Now Dear Donald 113
 Debbie Reynolds - Nowheres - 115
 The Beatles - I Wanna Hold Your Paw - 116
 Adolph Hitler - Mein Camp - 118
 Gary Snyder - Lipton's Tea 121
 Lew Welsh - Forever Amber 127
 Herman Melville - At Hawthorne's Grave 140
 Ron Loewinsohn - Making Out in 4/4 Time 141
 Barry Goldwater - Heartless Mothers 170
 George Stanley - Peptalk 180

This list is followed by the statement: "Some of these poems have appeared in the following publications: *The United States Congressional Record*, *Scientific American*, *Playboy*, *Life*." The pastiche creates what Michael Warner calls a "cross-citational field"; it is also a complex reorganization—indeed, remapping—of American literary history ("Publics and Counterpublics" 66). Here LeRoi Jones, the only black poet here (as in Allen's *The New American Poetry* and *The New American Story*), sits uncomfortably between the Great Emancipator's "Ode to Integration" and Whittier's poem of being blessedly "bound" in whiteness; Whitman transforms from the poet of "O America" into an Anglophile who hears England singing; Susan Sontag becomes part of an trifecta of women that includes the Imagist popularizer and poet-anthologist Amy Lowell and Persky's contemporary, Joanne Kyger. Persky also mocks Kyger's husband, Gary Snyder, whose poetry was influenced by Japanese sacramental tea ceremonies (not Lipton's!). By turning its "contents" to "contraps," Persky attacks Allen's anthology projects and their definitive claims on *the* new as cons and traps that can turn a poem like George Stanley's "Tree Talk" into a peptalk.

Persky's parody speaks to the degree to which Allen's avant-garde anthology rapidly came to be perceived as a dominant in the American poetry field. As the nod to the "big magazines" *Scientific American*, *Playboy*, and *Life* suggests, the gambit is also about the stakes for poetry in a restrictive field constrained by horizons perceived to be dictated by a mass readership, circulation and distribution. Donald Allen, in fact, as Alan Golding has shown, modeled his anthology on other major occasional anthologies of the time, intending it to be titled "Anthology of Modern American Poetry (1948 to 1958-59)"—perhaps after Louis Untermeyer's successful *Modern American Poetry* (the seventh edition of which appeared in 1950)—and to be replaced in a few years by another, updated version.⁷ As such, Persky's cover points not to the embattled distinctiveness, but to the continuities, between Allen's anthology and Donald Hall, Robert Pack, and Louis Simpson's transatlantic midcentury leviathan, *New Poets of England and America* (1957; 1962). Persky's gesture thus supports Jed Rasula's conclusion that "the 'anthology wars' of the 1960s benefited both sides, establishing various rosters that anthologists up to the present have felt obliged to duplicate or honorifically extend by rhetorical enframing" (*Syncopations* 14). More generally, the cover speaks to the degree to which writers had become anthology-conscious, sensitive to the power of literary anthologies to determine a poet's perceived stature and position in the literary field.

Persky's parody also suggests that contemporary poets anthologizing contemporary poets—a phenomenon distinctive to the twentieth century (with a few important exceptions)—raised all sorts of questions about the sociality of anthologies, about the histories they invented and inventoried, the associations they projected, the pressures they exercised and enacted, the boundaries they created and enforced. Robert Duncan echoed the complaints of many of the so-called New American poets when he responded to a review of

Donald Allen's landmark *New American Poets: 1945-1960* (Grove, 1960) anthology in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, complaining that the term "San Francisco Renaissance" is "a band-wagon slogan or a grab-bag. What common concerns or views of the nature of poetry are there? What, other than a mistake, groups Brother Antoninus and James Broughton, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Jack Spicer, together as a movement, or even as what is called now a 'scene'? ... "The San Francisco Renaissance" is a misnomer, a term that misleads us from showing meaningful orders" (qtd. in Golding 191). Privately, Kenneth Koch wrote to Frank O'Hara:

Now certainly we want to be as great and as much admired as we possibly can, Frank. The whole thing is that, well, just who are our admirers going to be? No, that's a defeatist attitude, I guess. Let's get famous. Do you think we should be choosy about our means? What is the "new poetry"? do you and I and Allan [sic] Ginsberg write it? That's enough of a strain, but if "Jack Spicer" writes it too, then I'm getting off right here at Scarsdale and walking the rest of the way.

In Spicer's case, as I argue in the first chapter, the anthology—not the little magazine, mimeo, or small press—was the unlikely means by which his poetry gained a measure of the regional and national recognition he initially sought as a young poet. Just as important, however, is the fact that this recognition did not lead to more publication, increased visibility, or greater recognition. Nevertheless, Spicer's inclusion in Allen's surprisingly successful anthology complicates how we think about his outspoken disregard for mainstream publication. Behind his rejection of the mainstream stands a writer who brooded over how poetry and poets should "be" public, should exist in relation to local communities and to society at large. Poetry anthologies figure in Spicer's thought and organize virtually all of his volumes, from *After Lorca* (1956, White Rabbit Press) to the posthumously published *Book of Magazine Verse*, because they made these questions more vexing and more consequential. This is in part because anthologies do not simply reproduce poems, but address them to new publics, and in doing so, project new discursive contexts for the socioformal relations that cut across and against individual poems. Thus it is not only

the poems themselves, but these relations, that anthologies circulate differently, and often more widely, than individual issues of magazines or single-volume books of poetry.

As Allen's anthology rapidly became a crucial agonist of the "anthology wars," it brought the groups he organized into the categories we still use today—Black Mountain College, Beat Generation, the group of poets we now associate with the New York school, the San Francisco Renaissance—increasing prominence and conceptual rigidity. Despite Allen's insistence that they were "somewhat arbitrary and cannot be taken as rigid categories," these groupings remain powerful in part because they project sociality, or the sense that these groups are coherent and communitarian, bonded by association and fellow-feeling, as well as by shared publication histories, geographies, and often politics and poetics (xii).⁸ As a result, the anthology's success intensified for many of its writers, including Spicer, the vexing problem of their position within, among, and beyond these groups and the publics they ostensibly addressed. This problem is foundational to the tensions of address that animate postwar poetry. As Spicer said at his talk during the Berkeley Poetry Conference, "The kind of association of your poetry with the other people's poetry" in an anthology "makes an entire difference" (*The Collected Lectures* 149). Though they have little in common with Spicer's politics or his aesthetics, on this point the poets I study would find themselves in surprising agreement.

Theorizing the Anthological Poetics of Postwar Poetry from the Outside

Persky's parody of Allen's anthology helps to illuminate the particular significance of Kenneth Koch's "Some South American Poets," a contemporaneous parody of the Latin American poetry anthology, which I explore in detail in the fourth chapter. More broadly, these parodies offer a critical ground from which to consider two more general theses: first, that anthology-making is a catalyst of, rather than an obstacle to, literary change in the

second half of the twentieth-century; and second, that the Spanish and Latin American anthology's midcentury emergence in U.S. literary space occasioned a distinctive Bakhtinian encounter. It is by now somewhat predictable for a scholar of poetry to invoke Bakhtin's concepts, quarrel with his account of the "monoglossia" of poetry, and proceed to argue that poetry is dialogic, too. More recently, however, noting "the continuity in Bakhtin's thought as far as artistic language (be it poetic or novelistic) is concerned," Margarita Marinova has advanced our understanding of Bakhtin's continued importance for poetry studies. In arguing that this continuity exists from Bakhtin's writing in the twenties until his less well-known *Dialogues with Duvakin* interviews in the seventies, Marinova demonstrates that the deconstructive reading of Bakhtin's dialogism, as advanced most prominently by Paul de Man, offers a persistent but mistaken reading of the "novel/poetry dichotomy" that Bakhtin famously advanced in his essay "Discourse in the Novel" (43-44).

Drawing on an incomplete manuscript of an article Bakhtin drafted on the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, Marinova writes that "Bakhtin looks for the predecessors of Mayakovsky's style (much like he does in his work on the prehistory of the novel) in the classical world of Roman satire, and in the literature surrounding such rituals as saturnalias, triumphs, and funerals. He acknowledges that each epoch's literature 'orients itself towards its audience,' which means that it must 'at the same time orient itself in time.' The stylistic responsiveness to the times in Mayakovsky's case leads to a recalibration of the poet's position in the surrounding world, and a new sense of what deserves to be incorporated into poetic language" (48). Bakhtin's basic premise here—that literature is structured dialogically by its orientation to an audience—is my premise as well. I build on Bakhtin's concepts in two ways: by revising the concepts of "audience" and "addressee" to include what Michael

Warner calls “textual publics,” and by conceiving of translation and anthologization as dialogic activities.

In making these revisions, I argue that an internal dialogism structures the anthological books of poetry I study—Jack Spicer’s *After Lorca* (White Rabbit Press, 1955), Langston Hughes’s *ASK YOUR MAMA* (Knopf, 1961), Elizabeth Bishop’s *Geography III* (FSG, 1976), and Kenneth Koch’s *The Pleasures of Peace* (Grove, 1969). I read this dialogism as a structural feature of the poetry. It is produced by the simultaneous orientation toward circulation among publics and persons, and by the interanimating presence of Spanish and Latin American poetic genres. These books of poetry are structured by an internal dialogism between the simultaneous direct address to named persons or objects and the indirect address to publics. One scene of “microdialogue” thus turns on and into another; one language and mode of address, into another. In particular, I focus on the way these anthological books are replete with staged scenes of address that dramatize poetic utterance coming undone from the conditions that shape it. The force of this undoing is discursive and circulatory; it does not come from one direction or emanate from a singular, stable subjectivity, speaker, or locus. These scenes of address may invoke historically sedimented poetic genres—e.g., ode, elegy, ballad, dramatic monologue, sonnet—or they may turn to parapoetic genres like the letter-poem, manifesto, and even the “anthology poem,” a self-reflexive, metapoetic poem addressed to anthologies or anthology-making. In each of the chapters, I read this dynamic between the invocation of genre and the undoing of generic, conventional modes of address alongside the authors’ work with anthologies of translations.

The translation anthology’s experimental character may also be attributed to two other important, if relatively neglected, general features: its collaborative composition, and its relative disregard for the integrity of the poetry book. In the case of translations of individual

poets as well as of larger national (e.g. Brazilian, Mexican) and Latin American poetry anthologies, many translators contribute poems, thus extending the network of readers and audiences for the anthology, while also increasing the range of translational practices featured in a given anthology. Likewise, translation anthologies do not consistently preserve the publication or reception contexts for an individual translated poem. Even when they do indicate the volume of poetry in which the selected translation appears, for instance, they rarely go further, or work to remind readers of the provenance of individual poems. Taken together, these attributes may be understood as part of the larger, more basic, and more creative anthological phenomenon of context loss.

As anyone who has taught with an anthology knows, anthologies create context loss, that peculiar phenomenon in which the anthology's paratexts, headnotes, annotations, and excerpts make visible through reference, gesture, and sometimes apology the sheer amount of context that must be squeezed out to make such a selective object. While some kinds of loss are made explicit by anthologists and editors, other kinds—whether cultural, social, political, biographic, material—remain occluded. Translation has also been understood in similar terms. As Venuti remarks, translation is “radically decontextualizing” because it “dismantle[s], rearrange[s], and finally displace[s] the chain of signifiers that make up a source text” (35). At the same time, however, translation, like anthology-making, is also a process that involves recontextualization and an “exorbitant gain” that should be understood in formal and creative terms, not just in sociological, cultural historical, or political ones (180-81). To assume that translation anthologies are *primarily* engines of context loss—to understand or frame them exclusively through an interpretive framework or rhetoric of loss or untranslatability—is also to assume that the new contexts that translated poems accrue through the process of anthologization are somehow less important than their “original”

contexts. Yet these contexts themselves are not “new” or even discrete. Instead, as Seth Lerer writes, they are “constantly in flux, as texts get copied into new collections, printed books get bound together, and long works or portions of a poet’s oeuvre get plucked for beauties in a modern book” (1263).

In *The Challenge of Comparative Literature*, Claudio Guillén argues that anthologies across all cultures share a “diachronic structure” (“a complex of relations linking change with continuity, difference with analogy, particularity with generality”) and an “astonishing supranationality” (328-29). These remarks ring true in the U.S. context, even in the case of the most stubbornly nationalist of anthologies, like Allen’s *New American Poetry*. As Harris Feinsod has persuasively argued, the “extranational coordinates” of small press projects like the City Lights Pocket Poets series and *New American Poetry* should be rescaled in recognition of ways they are explicitly “in dialogue with other anthological projects” and indebted to transhemispheric discourses (194-95). Guillén’s capacious definition allows me to keep both its transhistorical and transcultural dimensions in view while also bringing an historical poetics approach to the Latin American poetry anthology’s emergence in the postwar period. One of the basic premises of the historical poetics working group is that we cannot “separate the practice of reading a poem from the histories and theories of reading that mediate our ideas of poetry” (Prins, “What Is Historical Poetics?” 13).⁹ Another is that genre is a “mode of recognition instantiated in discourse,” and as such, requires us to consider “the discursive arrangements in which readers recognize and poets produce various verse genres, not because these arrangements provide ‘context’ or ‘cultural history,’ but precisely because such discursive arrangements made poems possible from the inside out” (37).

Guillén’s points of emphasis—on the re-elaboration of “already existing texts,” on the anthologist as a particular kind of reader, and on the anthology’s cultural function—

become useful as points of contrast for thinking about the relationship between the postwar anthology and the making of U.S. literature. For instance, when considering the special significance of translation to the Spanish and Latin American poetry anthology, it is clear that Guillén's emphases on the anthologist and reception require some rethinking. In the case of single author poetry anthologies—like those of Nicolás Guillén, Federico García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz, and César Vallejo—and omnibus “Latin American” poetry anthologies, like Dudley Fitts's *Anthology of Contemporary Latin American Poetry* (New Directions, 1942), the translation process involved many authors and editors. By contrast, Elizabeth Bishop's co-edited *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry* (Wesleyan Press, 1972) likely never would have come into being had Bishop not already been established as a *New Yorker* author and a prize-winning poet. Insofar as such anthologies can be said to “intervene in the reception of multiple poets,” the reception at stake tends to be as much that of the translators and anthologists as of the poets being translated. Moreover, by shifting from Guillén's exclusive focus on the anthology and the anthologist to the *interplay* between anthology-making and poetry-making, I approach the translation anthology as a creative genre that imputes to midcentury poetry what can be called an anthological function.

The books of poetry I examine all trope this anthological function, most often as a “dark theater”—an imaginative space of circulation and address in which poetic speech always arrives addressed and addressable—or, as Bakhtin writes, “with conditions attached”:

The boundaries between semi-stylized and semiparodic discourse were very unstable... after all, one need only emphasize ever so slightly the conventionality in stylized discourse for it to take on a light overtone of parody or irony, a sense that words have ‘conditions attached to them’: it is not, strictly speaking, I who speak; I, perhaps, would speak quite differently. (*Dialogic Imagination* 65)

For poets, Spanish and Latin American poetry anthologies intensified this sense of writing on these unstable boundaries, moving in and out of parodic conventionality and lightly ironized utterance.

Utterance in postwar anthological poetry is estranged—and thus “reanimated”—because it is constituted by the tensions created by the circulation, mediation, and reception of anthologies: the reinstantiation (and mutation) of genre; the distinctive drift of address away from recognizable attribution; the partial recoil from address’s drift in the book format. One of the internal tensions structured by the orientation to anthological publics inheres in the basic push and pull of format and form. On the one hand, each of books I study projects a distinctive sense of itself as a formatted object. This sense is most visible on the covers, but it is also evident in deliberate choices involving size, ink, paratexts, annotations, and typography. On the other hand, these books are conspicuously structured by the extensivity of their address—by their orientation to circulation among publics created in part by the anthologies of translations that their authors edited or otherwise engaged with. In light of this tension between format and address, the poems thus become more about communication—about the central question of what and how poetry communicates. Their essential subject is similar to what Bakhtin called “addressivity,” that peculiar situation of utterance wherein address always involves consciousness of two elemental aspects of communication. The first is that alterity is baked into speech; the second, is that “the relations between utterances are always conditioned the potential response of another” (Clark and Holquist 217).

In this regard, the Latin American anthology’s historical emergence in U.S. literary space should also be understood as making possible a particular kind of Bakhtinian encounter between translation, anthologization, and midcentury poetry and poetics. I gesture

to this encounter with my title phrase, “from the outside.” In “Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse,” Bakhtin argues that a new linguistic consciousness, evident in the proliferation of parodies of the conventions of literary and speech genres, precedes and conditions the invention of the novel. “A new mode developed for working creatively with language,” Bakhtin writes. “The creating artist began to look at language from the outside, with another’s eyes, from the point of view of a potentially different language and style.” It is this *potentiality* that Spanish and Latin American anthologies make available to postwar U.S. poets; likewise, it is this potentiality that they summon in order to parody and remake poetic address in their work.¹⁰

The phrase “from the outside” is also resonant in the midcentury period. In a speech delivered at the Inter-American Writers’ Conference in Puerto Rico in 1941, for instance, the American poet William Carlos Williams asked the audience: “What influence can Spanish have on us who speak a derivative of English in North America?” Williams offered two answers to his question: Spanish could “shake [writers] free,” he thought, “for a reconsideration of the poetic line,” and more generally, could move writers to change their practices, to write not “from within ... but from the outside” (130). In other words, for Williams, the conditions of derivativeness definitive of American poetry in 1941 called for formal innovations oriented to outsides that challenged inward-looking national and lyric frames. In *Paterson*, as Williams seeks to put his answers into practice—expanding and redefining what is interior and exterior to his project—his poetry becomes increasingly anthological. Williams’s description of the “English” he speaks as structurally “derivative” challenges us to rethink the whitewashed myth of Williams as the anti-cosmopolitan, homely doctor-poet of New Jersey—i.e., the modernist who stayed home. Indeed, it requires us to rethink Williams’s poetry—written in what he more famously called the “American idiom,”

what the poet Marianne Moore called “the plain American that cats and dogs can read”—as a register of a long, deeply conflicted, engagement with the derivative nature of language. For English and Spanish were both, in Williams’s sense, derivative: though his Puerto Rican mother and English father were fluent in Spanish, Williams translated primarily in collaboration with others who knew the language better. Nevertheless, as Julio Marzán observes, speeches like the one Williams gave in Puerto Rico require us to put the “Carlos” back in William Carlos Williams.

The linguistic and genre consciousness disclosed in this poetics implies that all of these poets—from the less well-known (Jack Spicer and Kenneth Koch) to the more well-known (Langston Hughes and Elizabeth Bishop)—may be read as parodists, and specifically, as parodists of the postwar poetry anthology and its publics. Or, to put it differently, writing in the presence of translation anthologies meant inquiring into the “addressivity” of poetry, as well as into how the conditions under which one becomes addressable depend on the degree to which words stick to and come unstuck from persons and publics. “It is, after all,” Bakhtin writes, “precisely in the light of another potential language or style that a straightforward style is parodied, travestied, ridiculed. The creating consciousness stands, as it were, on the boundary line between languages and styles” (60). To be clear: by invoking Bakhtin’s phrase “from the outside,” I am not arguing that these poets practiced a kind of outsiderism. Rather, they invented outsides from which write “in the light of another potential language,” and in so doing, to look at normative reading practices and discourses, at publics that were constituted and bounded through rules that included and excluded them in various ways.

In the chapters that follow, I consider the differences between Williams’s sense of the outside in Puerto Rico and the distinctive senses of the “outside” that operate in the

poetry of Spicer, Hughes, Bishop, and Koch. I unpack Spicer's articulation of "the Outside" as a venue of indefinite address. In Hughes's case, I consider how making anthologies of Nicolás Guillén's poetry and the *Poetry of the Negro* contributes to Hughes's linguistic awareness and heightens his contradictory sense of "belong[ing] to a nation, if only by proxy," as he once put it in the margins of a letter. For Bishop, writing in Brazil, the outside is repeatedly characterized by "vagueness," on the one hand, and through the dramatic monologue, on the other—perhaps the most anthological of all poetic genres. In Koch's anthological poetry, linguistic consciousness becomes a means of effecting a poetic address that anticipates and even happily indulges in creative "misunderstanding and understanding." Koch's poetry stages estranging scenes of address that are deliberately decontextualized from a posited but unavailable outside in order to elaborate a parodic anthological poetics. The "outsides" and publics these poets envisioned were distinctive, but taken together, their anthological work widened the horizons and clarified the constraints of American literature, ascribing to both structures and scenes of address indelibly marked by a searching, self-reflexive transhemispheric reach.

The Chapters

My first chapter shows how the San Francisco Renaissance poet Jack Spicer develops an alternative circulatory poetics of address to respond to the norms of lyric culture as well as to those of counter-cultural community and coterie. Though he denounced anthologies as New York publishing industry "crap," Spicer relied on anthologies of Lorca's poetry to write his first major book, *After Lorca* (1957). I begin with Spicer's work because it expresses this contradiction as a dialectic between circulation among communities and circulation beyond them. In an era defined by revolutions in mass media, Spicer turns to the anthology of Lorca's translations to articulate a constant tension between lyric communication and its

core model of direct address and non-lyric modes of address oriented to a wider, stranger range of publics.

My second chapter extends this argument by turning to the ways Hughes updates the modernist attempt to anthologize blackness in order to address competing imperatives of black and white midcentury readerships. The chapter traces the vexed relationship between Hughes and Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén, from Hughes's early translations in his 1948 co-edited anthology, *Cuba Libre: Poems by Nicolás Guillén*; through his unpublished, little-known translation of Guillén's poem "Little Rock," about the international dimensions of the Little Rock crisis; to his subsequent, failed efforts to claim Guillén as a poet of Négritude in his anthologies of black Africa. The chapter's concluding section argues that Hughes's understudied book-length poem of global decolonization, *ASK YOUR MAMA: 12 MOODS FOR JAZZ* (1961), turns to an anthological structure in anticipation of the book's reception. Hughes's book in effect parodies its own reception and circulation, in doing so, asks what global decolonization can mean for U.S. publics and the culture industry at midcentury. My third chapter takes Elizabeth Bishop's refusal to be anthologized as a "woman poet" in second-wave feminist anthologies and her reception as a "poetisa" [poetess] in Rio de Janeiro's masculinist media environment as occasions to examine how gender mediates the predominantly male canon of poets in her co-edited *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry* (1972). The dynamic, gendered interplay of Brazilian and Anglo-American literary genres in the anthology subtends the formation of the addressed-but-misrecognized subjectivities of *Geography III* (1976).

My final chapter examines Kenneth Koch's "Some South American Poets," an inventive parody of the stylized form of the Latin American poetry anthologies that were becoming an ever more visible staple of mainstream contemporary American poetry. Koch's

parody takes aim at the assumptions of translators like Robert Bly and James Wright, whose masculinist “deep image” program was motivated by the belief that U.S. poetry needed a psychic reorganization of “inner feeling.” Bly and Wright believed that translating “revolutionary” Latin American poets like Pablo Neruda and César Vallejo could address this need. Rather than prosecute Bly and Wright for their cultural politics, however, I trace two histories of Koch’s parodic anthology. The first follows its initial, understudied appearance across two issues of the avant-garde magazine, *Mother: A New Journal of the Arts*, through to its later publication in *The Pleasures of Peace* and the *Paris Review*. These contexts illuminate the development of Koch’s anthological poetics, and inaugurate the second history I examine: Koch’s career-long experimentation with personification and apostrophe, which culminates in *New Addresses* (2000), his penultimate anthological book of poems.

Writing and reading in the presence of anthologies fuels two concurrent developments in midcentury poetry: first, an explosion of creative anthological poetry that, rather than attempt to deride, mock, or appeal to mainstream anthologies, richly parodies the anthology as a genre with recognizable conventions. Second, a turning *away* from two kinds of anthologies—textbook anthologies, like the Norton and Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren’s *Understanding Poetry*, and from anthologies organized around a specific occasion or generic figure—and *toward* anthologies of translations of other languages and literary traditions.¹¹ Midcentury poets were no longer writing simply “in the presence of anthologies,” as Dickey put it, but in the presence of translation anthologies. The Spanish and Latin American anthology appears on the scene as a crucial spur, an occasion, for a Bakhtinian encounter, one in which anthology-making reanimates linguistic and genre consciousness; discloses the tensions between format and form as well as those between context and context loss; redistributes the energies of poetic genre; and spurs on the

heteroglossia, mutation, and dialogism characteristic of book-length poems.

Notes to Introduction

¹ See Sapiro, "Globalization and Cultural Diversity," 420.

² See WBGHForum, "Henry Louis Gates and Ilan Stavans."

³ The phrase often invokes, in somewhat caricatural terms, the use of the anthology in the early sixties as an instrument in a symbolic confrontation between the avant-garde, anti-academic, hip poets of the "New American Poetry" and the more staid, conventional, conservative "square" or "cooked" "verse" of the *New Poets of England and America* endorsed by Frost. I borrow the "raw" and the "cooked" from Robert Lowell, who in turn borrowed the terms from Claude Lévi-Strauss. In his 1960 National Book Award speech for *Life Studies* (1959), Lowell contends: "Two poetries are now competing, a cooked and a raw. The cooked, marvelously expert, often seems laboriously concocted to be tasted and digested by a graduate seminar. The raw, huge blood-dripping gobbets of unseasoned experience are dished up for midnight listeners. There is a poetry that can only be studied, and a poetry that can only be declaimed, a poetry of pedantry, and a poetry of scandal. I exaggerate, of course. Randall Jarrell has said that the modern world has destroyed the intelligent poet's audience and given him students. James Baldwin has said that many of the beat writers are as inarticulate as our statesmen." Lowell positioned himself in the middle of these poetries. See "National Book Award Acceptance Speech." On the "anthology wars," see Golding, Hemmer, Rasula, Perloff.

⁴ Rasula also observes that "opposing poets" in these wars "also fared well, like Gary Snyder, who at forty [1970] had been in at least sixteen anthologies" (*Syncopations* 14).

⁵ See Ferry 163-66.

⁶ My thanks to James Birmingham for providing me with this material.

⁷ "Allen has in mind a much more conventional anthology than he finally produced, something paradoxically closer in format to later, more mainstream collections." But there's no reason to see it closer in format to earlier anthologies, like Untermeyer's. See Golding, "The New American Poetry Revisited," 183.

⁸ Leary and Kelley's statement in the terse "Preface" to *A Controversy of Poets* indicates the degree to which Allen's categories had ossified by 1965: "This anthology is designed to turn the attention of the reader away from movements, schools or regional considerations. Hitherto some of these poets have been referred to by commentators more enthusiastic than accurate as belonging to this or that rival—and hostile—school. Such poetasting has only served to distract the reader from the *poem* and to divert his attention to supposed movements or schools, whereas the only affiliation finally relevant is that apparent from the work itself" (xi).

⁹ The group includes Yopie Prins, Virginia Jackson, Meredith Martin, Max Cavitch, Meredith McGill, Carolyn Williams, David Duff, and many others. See <https://www.historicalpoetics.com>.

¹⁰ As work by Irene Rostagno, Claire Fox, Deborah Cohn, Harris Feinsod, and others have shown, the interaction between a distinctively "Latin American" literature and U.S. translators and writers happens on a larger scale through a number of institutional and infrastructural networks developed in the aftermath of the Cuban Revolution. That said, with the exception of Feinsod, these scholars focus on the novel and the post-revolutionary "boom" in translated works of Latin American fiction. Feinsod's focus on a formal and

cultural history of diplomatic poetry tends to situate the agency of the poetry in an institutional matrix. Drawing more promiscuously on sociological field theory, historical poetics, and theories of parody and publics, my reading underscores the ways in which the circulatory poetics of postwar poetry locates agency within addressivity itself.

¹¹ I do not understand this reorientation as a move away from popular anthologies. With the exception of Spicer, all of the poets I discuss praised the formative influence of Louis Untermeyer's *Modern American Poetry*.

Chapter 1: “Composition by Book”: *After Lorca* and the Translation Anthology

Spicer in the Presence of the Translation Anthology

In the last talk he gave before his death, Spicer remarked of *Open Space*, a mimeographed zine he helped to found, that “...the point was that the poets were not thinking of themselves as anything but poets and the society didn’t matter. Obviously, if you’re smart in society, you get your thing sent to New York. That’s the reasonable thing. And you get in anthologies and all of that sort of crap. But this [*Open Space*] was restricted and restricted properly...” (*The Collected Lectures* 166).¹ As these comments suggest, Spicer regarded writing and publishing poetry on the periphery of the publishing field as a conscious choice—part of a politics. He clearly wasn’t interested in getting his work into anthologies (“the reasonable thing”) or “being smart in society”—being well-heeled, strategic in one’s alliances, attentive to the who’s who of literary New York. In short, he wasn’t interested in playing the game. Indeed, in contrast to his contemporaries, some of whom had appeared in as many as fourteen anthologies by the age of forty, Jack Spicer had appeared in only three before his death in 1965—and only two of these, Donald Allen’s *New American Poets: 1945-1960* (Grove Press, 1960) and Paris Leary and Robert Kelly’s *A Controversy of Poets: An Anthology of Contemporary of American Poetry* (Anchor Books, 1965)—would qualify as major. But over the course of his life Spicer did, in fact, think a lot about the production, circulation, and reception of poetry in a variety of midcentury institutions, including the mimeographed zine, the little magazine, the small press, the library, the archive, the rare book—and the anthology.

In fact, Spicer’s more well-known antagonism to the anthology has led scholars to overlook his work’s many debts to them. Spicer worked closely with anthologies during the formative period before he composed *After Lorca*, the first volume of “serial” poetry that he

wrote as a “book” rather than a collection of individual poems. As Kristin Prevallet and Kevin Killian have noted, Spicer’s undergraduate work for Harry Smith’s landmark *American Anthology of Folk Music* (1952) introduced him to alternative models of literary and cultural transmission that he would return to throughout his career.² His intensive reading with the poet Robin Blaser, in 1955-1956, of Robert Motherwell’s influential *The Dada Painters and Poets: An Anthology* (1951) showed him that the anthology could address not only the folk and the popular, but also the postwar avant-garde and its continuation of the modernist revolution of the word.³ The textual publics created by these anthologies and the internally dialogic modes of address within them presented Spicer with contradictory possibilities inherent in circulation that all of his counter-anthological work draws on.

Spicer’s parodic address to the anthology is perhaps most visible in works like the final section of *Heads of the Town Up to the Aether* (Auerhahn Society, 1962). As Michael Davidson has observed, this section, titled “A Textbook of Poetry,” is modeled on textbook anthologies like Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren’s *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* (the third edition had appeared two years earlier, in 1960). But *The Holy Grail* owes a significant debt to the medieval Arthurian miscellany, and the most notoriously enigmatic statement in *Language* (1963-1965)—“This is a poem about the death of John F. Kennedy”—and its iterations may be read as a response to a solicitation Spicer received for a Basic Books anthology of elegies responding to Kennedy’s assassination. Finally, *Book of Magazine Verse* (White Rabbit Press, 1966), published the year after Spicer’s death, also takes the anthology as a model.

Book of Magazine Verse is modeled on a fairly common kind of poetry anthology—the annual anthology of poems published in magazines. (Today’s most well-known annual anthology is the *Best American Poetry* series, which publishes a selection of the “best” poems

published in magazines in a given year.) As Craig Abbot observes, popular annual anthologies, like William Stanley Braithwaite's *Anthology of Magazine Verse*, published between 1913 and 1929, came to be associated with all that was anti-modernist (and so mainstream, normative, anti-experimental, anti-innovative, etc.).⁴ Spicer's parody of the annual anthology in *Book of Magazine Verse* presents a book made entirely of poems—all authored by himself—that were rejected by the magazines he submitted them to. Spicer's book thus takes advantage of the perceived conservatism of the anthology's contents as well as its treatment of these contents as singular, individual, anthologizable lyrics.

In his talk on "Poetry and Politics," Spicer remarks, "a magazine is a society. I think *Open Space* [a magazine he co-founded] proved that. You have to behave within the rules of the society, and if you don't then there's nothing else. In other words, if you publish in *Poetry* magazine, you get paid money. You get people reading it all through the country. But, in the long run, if you're participating in one of these things, then you have to say, 'yeah, I read *Poetry* myself...which I don't, and wouldn't, because I don't believe in the society it creates'" (149). In *Book of Magazine Verse*, Spicer groups six poems directed against what was arguably the book's main target—the "society" of the influential *Poetry* magazine, whose trademark Pegasus appeared on Spicer's cover—with thirty others. As with *After Lorca*, each poem in *Book of Magazine Verse* is dedicated, this time not to individuals, but to magazine publications where Spicer knew the poems would not be publishable: *The Nation*, "*Poetry* Chicago," *Tish*, *Ramparts*, "The St. Louis *Sporting News*," the *Vancouver Festival*, and *Down Beat*.⁵ When Spicer dedicates these poems "for" one of these magazines, address gains an additional directionality: *submitted to* and *rejected from*.

Spicer believed that the poems included in *Book of Magazine Verse* were not publishable in these magazines not because of any specific aesthetic, editorial, or personal

prejudice, but because the “societies” of their readers collectively participated in and enforced these prejudices socially—“you *have to say*, ‘yeah, I read *Poetry*’”—such that they became “the rules.” *Book of Magazine Verse* counterposes what Rachel Malik calls “horizons of the publishable” against one another. For Malik, the term names the range of processes and relations that “govern what it is thinkable to publish within a particular historical moment” (708). Importantly, these horizons are often circumscribed by the literary, “a category that necessarily holds itself up for ... certain types of public evaluation, which lie outside the jurisdictions of ordinary reading” (729). The publication of putatively unpublishable poems questions these jurisdictions, and countermands the ways certain magazines publicly evaluate poetry. Moreover, *Book of Magazine Verse*’s serial form also recontains the models of sociality and reading these publications promote in order to create a counter-space of circulation, a different society for poetry to thrive in. *Book of Magazine Verse* is thus not only a counter-anthology of the unpublishable, but also of the un-anthologizable.

With the trajectory of Spicer’s book production in mind, I turn to a seemingly simple but unconsidered fact: the gay San Francisco Renaissance poet Jack Spicer composed his first book of poetry, *After Lorca* (White Rabbit Press, 1957), out of an anthology—Donald Allen and Francisco García Lorca’s co-edited *Selected Poems of Federico García Lorca* (New Directions Press, 1955). Spicer is thus my first example of a poet who turned to the translation anthology in order to elaborate an alternative poetics. In what follows, I examine the relationship between *Selected Poems* and the ideas about poetry that Spicer works out in *After Lorca*. Many of Spicer’s key contributions to postwar U.S. poetry—serial form, or what he called “composition by book” (as opposed to composition poem-by-poem); the reconceptualization of the literary “tradition” as a homosexual counterpublic; and the

theorization of a relational poetics of “correspondence”—emerge from this relationship between the single-volume anthology of translations and the making of *After Lorca*. I argue that we should think of these ideas as part of a parodic, counter-anthological poetics that Spicer pursues throughout his career.

Spicer’s poetics register as anthological precisely in the way their scenes of address admit and reflect on their complex orientation to the translated poems in *Selected Poems* as well as on the textual publics created around the circulation and reception of Lorca’s poetry in the United States. Two tensions animate this work: the first is a very basic tension between format and form; the second is a tension that inheres within poetic form, between poetic and non- or para-poetic genres that Spicer repeatedly turns to. I read the anthology through *After Lorca* in order to illuminate the parodic function of these structural tensions. Ultimately this function may be thought of as counter-anthological: a creative, antagonistic response to midcentury anthology publics and Spicer’s anthology-obsessed milieu.

The cover of the first edition of *After Lorca* announces this parodic orientation. Designed by the artist Jess Collins, the cover reproduces a drawing of a photograph of the gay Spanish poet Federico García Lorca (1898–1936) as a child, as well as a facsimile of his signature. Both derive from not from *Selected Poems* but from the 1955 Aguilar Spanish-language edition of Lorca’s *Obras Completas* [Complete Works]. The facsimile signature suggests that Lorca has authorized the book— personally signed off on it, as it were, from the grave—and is the author of the “Introduction,” which Spicer wrote by ventriloquizing the Spanish poet. (Indeed, after the introduction, the words “Federico García Lorca | Outside Granada, October, 1957” appear, reinforcing the association of authenticity with the signing of a name, and a specific person, place, and date.) Moreover, Collins’s use of the signature parodies Alvin Lustig’s modernist design of another Lorca translation anthology,

Three Tragedies (New Directions, 1955) in which Lorca's name appears inscribed in sand soon to be washed away by a high tide. In Collins's design, the red, slantwise cursive lettering of the title that overwrites the copy of the drawing of the photograph thus points to the sentimentality and reproducibility of the signature: these are mediated, artifactual registers that gesture simultaneously to the artifice of the person and the book. The double appearance of "Lorca" on *After Lorca* likewise speaks to its dual function within the poetry: it is both the surname of the gay Spanish poet, and the name of the fictitious protagonist who acts as addressee and interlocutor in Spicer's serial poem.

As Lytle Shaw observes in his study of coterie in the work of Frank O'Hara, the practice of naming is overdetermined and underdetermined, crucial to coterie thought and intimate networks of exchange and "interested in what happens when poetry escapes these contexts" (17–20). But whereas the social function of O'Hara's poetry is to rethink (often by camping up) dominant models of kinship and canon formation, naming in Spicer's poetry is less invested in campiness, the nickname, or alternative canons than in how textual publics might experience poetry as disruptive public speech. Names proliferate in Spicer's work as untranslatables, poetic occasions that mark context loss and the limits of what can be known about a person. They also function as incitements that spur on circulation. In this sense, the naming on the cover of *After Lorca* presents a paradox the book explores: it looks like it is a book by one person (Spicer), introduced by another (Lorca). But in fact, Spicer authored the "Introduction," and about two thirds of the 34 poems of *After Lorca* are creative translations of Lorca's poetry. The remaining third do not have a counterpart in the historical Lorca's oeuvre: they are poems authored by Spicer masquerading as translations. At various points, Spicer referred to the poems of *After Lorca* as "untranslations" or "transformations." These terms speak somewhat to the poet's playful and unusual approach to translating Lorca's

poetry, but they don't really tell us much about the sheer variety of kinds of translations on display in Spicer's book, which range from the relatively faithful (as in Spicer's version of García Lorca's "Oda a Walt Whitman"), to the substantially distorted, in which neither the title nor of the body of the text is recognizable as pertaining to the Spanish poet's work.

Within *After Lorca*, Spicer's debt to the translation anthology is most visible in the way Spicer's creative translations summon Lorca's use of poetic genre to rework the tensions of direct address to persons and publics. Spicer tarries with poetic address in such an extensive fashion for two main reasons—first, because Lorca's poetry is itself driven by direct address and by a poetics of dedication, and second, because translation made visible the poetic possibilities created by linguistic estrangement. In *After Lorca*, the concrete familiars of attribution and emplaced lyric utterance—framed by "Lorca" in the "Introduction" and marked throughout by the inscription of pronoun, name, dedicatee, the addressee—are set adrift from their material contexts. This circulatory poetics in turn points back to Spicer as a kind of gleefully perverse anthologist who picks poems from a canonical gay poet's body of work, and proceeds to order and translate them in a seemingly random and unpredictable fashion. At the same time, the internal dialogism of *After Lorca* suggests that the book is oriented toward several textual publics, including those created by anthologies of Lorca's work. Spicer writes "from the outside" in part by adopting a series of rhetorical positions that situate the homosexual poet as subject to the minimal conditions for entry into these publics. That is, the poetry of *After Lorca* works over the tension owing to the experience of the person who, merely by coming into range, has become a member of a public in which he is not embraced, recognized, or directly addressed as such.

Spicer's turn to the translation anthology is thus at odds with a core assumption in the existing criticism of Spicer's work. Daniel Katz puts it this way: "Spicer's later work

cannot be read beyond the contexts of community, coterie, and networks of exchange, within and for which he imagined it" (*Poetry of Jack Spicer* 8).⁶ In my view, these contexts, while important, cannot be understood apart from the dynamic tension inherent in the poetry's simultaneous address to publics and persons. Lacking a framework that takes this tension into account, we miss how Spicer's serial poetry repeatedly stages direct address as a fraught encounter between publics and persons. Subject to circulation, direct address ambiguates and becomes multiply directed. Questions of directionality and addressability animate this poetry. In an important departure, Christopher Nealon characterizes Spicer's poetics as founded on "a constant tension between the world-making possibilities of the poem . . . and the world-enclosing strategies meant to protect 'poetry'" (114). However, even as Nealon convincingly links this tension to Spicer's position as a homosexual in midcentury America, he follows the general critical tendency to locate it within the "strict boundaries around coterie relations" (107). This tendency turns the virtual dimensions of Spicer's poetry, as well as its interest in mass publicity, into effects of a coterie poetics. The same is true of persons: whether Spicer is read as a poet of "positive personhood" (Snediker 127) or one who rejected "the big lie of the personal," persons for these critics attain their particularity from within the coterie (Spicer, *Collected Poetry* 150).⁷ They are rarely approached as public, and therefore, not only textual, but social—and virtual—constructions.

As the cover of *After Lorca* suggests, Spicer creatively engaged not only with the translation anthology but also with the 1955 Aguilar-edition of *Obras Completas*. The point matters: by working across the *Selected* and the *Obras Completas*, Spicer could take full advantage of the distinctive features of both. For instance, one of the most conspicuous features of *After Lorca*, the dedication of each "translation" to a definite person—friends, acquaintances, lovers—Spicer had met at one point or another, comes from Lorca. From the

twelve dedications of Lorca's first book, *Libro de poemas* (1921), to the nine of *Poema del cante jondo* (1921), to the twenty-six of *Canciones* (1921–1924), to the *Romancero gitano* (1924–1927), in which every poem is dedicated, Lorca's work modeled the possibility of organizing poetry around dedication and direct address. Spicer's biographers describe the dedicatees of *After Lorca* as "a formidable range of muses – students...old friends; former 'boyfriends'; a child of only three or four, Nate Hardin, the son of his Berkeley friend, Sam Hardin; new acquaintances; bar poets; actors who were working with Duncan on *Medea Part II*...." (Ellingham and Killian 104). In total, there are twenty-nine dedicatees; Spicer's two publishers, Joe Dunn and Graham Mackintosh, the editor and anthologist Donald Allen, and Spicer's friend, the poet Ebbe Borregaard, each have two poems dedicated to them. One poem, however, isn't dedicated to anyone, another is playfully dedicated to the University of Redlands, and Spicer's translation of Lorca's playlet for Buster Keaton is dedicated to "The Big Cat Up There." Spicer also dedicates the final poem "a postscript for Marianne Moore," suggesting we take the body of *After Lorca* as a kind of weird serial love letter or parodic epistolary novel, one whose postscript strays in another direction. Spicer also dedicated, but ultimately discarded, an unpublished "translation" to W. S. Merwin, who translated many of the poems that Spicer chose to re-translate and include in *After Lorca*.⁸

Because Lorca's dedications are removed in *Selected Poems*, Spicer's decision to adopt Lorca's dedicatory practice discloses a parodic, contrastive relation with the New Directions translation anthology. This parodic function is also evident in Spicer's decisions to retranslate and creatively repurpose some of the poems included in *Selected Poems*, and to translate poems that are not included in the New Directions anthology in a more "literal" or "faithful" fashion. The clearest example of this latter practice is Spicer's reworking of Lorca's suite of six early poems entitled "Tres retratos con sombras" [Three Portraits with Shadows].

None of these poems are included in *Selected Poems*. In Aguilar's edition, the order of the portraits runs "Verlaine," "Juan Ramón Jiménez," "Debussy"; in smaller font after each portrait, a shadow-poem appears with a title that references a mythological character: "Verlaine" is paired with "Bacchus"; "Juan Ramón Jiménez" with "Venus"; "Debussy" with "Narcissus." Spicer translated, disassembled, and distributed all six poems throughout *After Lorca*. Unlike most of his creative translations; however, Spicer did not alter the titles of these portraits or the shadow-poems paired with them. Together with Spicer's six playful letters on poetics from "Jack" addressed to Lorca, these six poems form a cluster that organizes the internal dialogic structure of the book. The translations of the three portraits, as well as "Bacchus," order the first third ("Verlaine" is the last poem before the second letter); the long middle of the book, comprising seventeen poems and the second, third, and fourth letters from Jack to Lorca, is organized generically by ballads, songs, and a correspondence between the letters and the two poems that Spicer titles "Narcissus" (one, a shadow-poem, the other, a poem from an early book of Lorca's) that follow them. Of this cluster, "Venus"—the shadow poem paired with Lorca's "Juan Ramón Jiménez"—appears last, near the end of this middle section.

As a practice, this radical redistribution of Lorca's poems creates a structural echo of the midcentury small press translation anthology, which often displays a flagrant disregard for the integrity of the book. For instance, in addition to omitting Lorca's dedications from his poems, *Selected Poems* also omits the dedications of Lorca's *Canciones* (to Pedro Salinas, Jorge Guillén, and Melchorito Fernández Almagro); as well as the internal sections Lorca used to organize his books. Likewise, while the table of contents and preface of *Selected Poems* indicate the titles of the books to which García Lorca's poems pertain, as well as the year of publication, no such markers exist thereafter. As a result, the *Selected Poems of Federico García*

Lorca runs poems together from nine different books without consistent regard for the autonomy or integrity of García Lorca's individual works. Read in codex format, a reader of the anthology wouldn't have cause to notice that "Song of the Barren Orange Tree," for instance, is the last poem in the selection from *Canciones* (1921-1925) and "Somnambule Ballad" is the first poem of the selection from *Romancero Gitano* (1924-1927). Similarly, no distinctions of this sort appear in *After Lorca*. Spicer is not only a relatively faithless translator: he is a faithless anthologist. The selection of García Lorca's poems he "transforms" are not organizable by any recognizable rubric of chronology, publication history, or period. The most discernible principle of organization is, rather, the reanimation and internal dialogism of poetic genre and the staging and undoing of direct address through this generic relay. This faithlessness to anthological norms looks forward to Stan Persky's "table of contraps" and its literary and typographical disjunctions, and is important to the opening up of address and the work's orientation toward a homosexual counterpublic. As I argue in the next section, Spicer's work rescales the conventional notion of a literary "tradition" such that it depends on such strategic faithlessness, on finding different forms of intimacy among strangers and poems.

"Tradition" from the Outside: Parodic Genres and the Homosexual Counterpublic

"Frankly I was quite surprised when Mr. Spicer asked me to write an introduction to this volume," the "Introduction" to *After Lorca* begins. "My reaction to the manuscript he sent me (and to the series of letters that are now a part of it) was and is fundamentally unsympathetic" (107). As Peter Gizzi and Kevin Killian have argued, the introduction to *After Lorca* can be read as a send-up of the Yale Younger Poets series, "one of the most established venues for a first book" in the 1950s, for which W.H. Auden served as editor and judge. Lorca, they observe, "is perhaps the only major international gay poet [Spicer]

could propose to rival Auden's endorsement," providing "both the perfect vehicle for unrequited love and the perfect emblem of literary inheritance and tradition" (*Collected Poetry* xxi-xxii). Spicer's use of Lorca in the introduction, like his use of the elegy in "They Murdered You" and the ode in *Golem*, also signals a preoccupation with publicity and the circulation of texts through the genre system.

In *After Lorca*, the genres are highly specific, but unlike elegy and ode, are conventionally read as extrapoetic: the introduction of a first book of poetry by the older, prestigious poet, and the letter by a young poet to a more established poet. By incorporating both into the body of *After Lorca*, Spicer uses genre to underscore the simultaneously personal and impersonal nature of public language. "Lorca" makes this point explicitly in the introduction, when he explains that he realized that the letters from Jack are not solely addressed to him: "When Mr. Spicer began sending them to me a few months ago, I recognized immediately the 'programmatic letter...the letter one poet writes to another not in any effort to communicate with him, but rather as a young man whispers his secrets to a scarecrow, knowing that his young lady is in the distance listening'" (107-108). What "Lorca" describes here is the heteronormative triangulated structure of address typical of the English lyric (amorous courtly male poet to "his young lady"). But the introduction re-presents this scene of address between Jack, scarecrow, and young lady as "programmatic" because it refuses to admit or reflect on its relation to readers who are not "party to the tryst."

The situation "Lorca" describes does not conform to John Stuart Mill's famous dictum that "poetry is overheard," in other words, because it supposes an audience *and* insists on including readers who are not present. Moreover, Spicer's sexualization of address recruits us to participate in several other deeply personal and deeply public "trysts" as well—between Jack and "Lorca," reader and poem, Spicer and his friends and sometime lovers—

all as strangers and potential cohabitants of the public space of circulation the book projects. Our virtual, readerly participation in this unfolding relationship lends substance to the intimacy elaborated by the “Introduction” and the letters between Jack and “Lorca” that appear throughout the book. The “Introduction” thus frames the 34 poems, six letters, and two surrealist playlets that make up *After Lorca* as serial “effort(s) to communicate” that fall outside the traditional purview of lyric communication.

Given the title’s emphasis on Lorca and the fiction that the “Introduction” is written by Lorca himself, it might seem strange that the first poem readers encounter in *After Lorca* is titled “Juan Ramón Jiménez.” Critics tend to ignore this strangeness, focusing instead on the changes Spicer makes to the poem’s body (substituting Lorca’s “nardo,” for instance, for “seaweed,” rather than spikenard).⁹ But the title directs us to that which remains untranslated: the name of another poet of Lorca’s generation—Juan Ramón Jiménez. Moreover, the poem’s primary position makes it appear part of the book’s bid for estrangement from mainstream American poetry. Yet it would be a mistake to read Spicer’s decision to foreground “Juan Ramón Jiménez” as a move intended only to dissuade readers from reading for authorial traces of Jack Spicer or Federico García Lorca. Ramón Jiménez won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1956, the year before *After Lorca* was published: the name’s international publicity recalls Spicer’s assertion that names have the power to “glow...with a kind of promise of undiscovered, unimagined freedoms” (*Tower of Babel* 24). By opening *After Lorca* with “Juan Ramón Jiménez,” Spicer doubles down on the promises of freedom inherent in context loss and the negative pleasures of circulation.¹⁰

Spicer’s inscription of individual named persons in *After Lorca* not only “brings others into the text, to create a community,” as his biographers put it, but also brings otherness into the text, to create a public (*Poet Be Like God* 103). In his later serial poem, *The*

Holy Grail, he describes his practice of using names as “a kind of disturbance [to] get all of the immediate out of the poem,” implying, as Daniel Katz writes, “that these seemingly most ‘personal’ aspects of his writing are in fact what are the least so, being simply structuring elements which allow another ‘message’...to be elaborated” (*Poetry of Jack Spicer* 66). The complex redirections and variant play of address in *After Lorca*, however, are not merely or “simply” structural in Katz’s sense. A more expansive mode of address not only “allow[s] another ‘message’” in: it admits the unattributed speech of other anonymous speakers and addressees. As with the virtual nature of the “intimate communion” Jack and “Lorca” share, this practice of naming admits the possibility of intimacy among strangers who do not come to know one another as domestic partner, friend, or kin.¹¹ Naming, in other words, is performative: though names appear to be particular to specific poems, they serve collectively to interrupt and exceed the poem’s emergent narrative. By inscribing them in titles and dedications, Spicer’s poetry both conserves names, and uses them to disturb the immediate, concrete relations between persons.

The address to persons thus makes the name a site of contradictory activity. Spicer’s translation of Lorca’s “Oda a Walt Whitman” is a case in point. In a sense, the poem is doubly dedicated—as “A Translation for Steve Jonas” and, through the title, to Whitman. Yet Lorca’s “Oda” uses the Spanish preposition *a*—or “to”—not *para* (meaning intended for, destined for). The distinction matters because Lorca’s poem addresses Whitman in a mode of homage. His ode is sung to—directed toward—Whitman, but also implies the distance across which the ode attempts to reach.¹² Spicer’s preposition “for” suggests a wider, stranger, range of implication: “for” designates the movement of desire across an untraversable extension of space. “For” may be more intimate and more self-distancing, rendering Whitman the intended beneficiary or recipient of the poem, and at the same time,

ironically pointing to the good gray poet as an impossible addressee and problematic gay forebear.

Spicer sexualizes Lorca's poem into a more "extreme statement," as Michael Davidson observes, amplifying the negativity of Lorca's excoriation of "cocksuckers of cities" "who give the kids / Drippings of sucked-off death with sour poison" (*Gays Like Us* 47; *Collected Poetry* 130). Yet the spatial extension of Lorca's address is already conspicuously hyperbolic in Spanish, stretching across North America and a gay Atlantic before expanding to encompass the world: "Fairies of North America, / Pájaros of Havana, / Jotos of Mexico, / Sarasas of Cadiz, / Ápios of Seville, / Cancos of Madrid, / Floras de Alicante, / Adelaidas of Portugal—Cocksuckers of all the world, assassins of doves" (129-130). Though Lorca's "Ode" is often read as a poem of direct address, Spicer's translation of this passage suggests that we read it as a poem that stages direct address in order to exceed its triangulated structure. Spicer's decision to leave the regional slurs untranslated (with the exception of "maricas" as "cocksuckers"), for instance, is especially telling: what determines the identity of this collective, gay, plural "you" is not a specific, concrete addressee, but its addressability. The hostile public rhetoric is so recognizably prejudicial that it needs no translation: the insult's structure of address speaks, as it were, for itself.

While Lorca wields this familiar language against the sexual subculture he condemns, the poem's most prominent rhetorical feature in *After Lorca* is the sheer excess of its negation: the accumulating, vituperative force of invective exceeds the address, not only to any particular person, but also to Whitman, who disappears for thirty-three lines, only to reappear at the opening of the final stanza. Moreover, as if to emphasize the ode's investment in poetry as a public language that exceeds and redirects the structure of direct address, Whitman returns asleep by the Hudson river: he won't hear the "little black boy" in

the poem's final two lines "announce to the white men of gold / The arrival of the reign of the ear of wheat" (130). Reading this ode, we understand it is a translation, and we do not mistake the verses that name Walt Whitman ("And you, beautiful Walt Whitman") as being addressed directly to Jonas, or to us—or to Whitman, for that matter. Whitman's iconicity and above all, the fact that he will not come into range of the poem's multiple address—that he will not hear—matters more. The identification with Whitman is finally with his impossible relation to a body: by the poem's end, he is not just asleep, but a "gazelle without body" (130). This disembodied Whitman embodies the contradictions of the mass subject that animate *After Lorca*. Spicer's choice of Lorca reinforces this point: as a charismatic gay subject of publicity, the Spanish poet enables Spicer to write as though dead in American public discourse. In other words, the mass subject's impossible embodiment affords an exploration of the changing dynamics of gayness and publicness at a moment of intense Beat publicity.

Conducted through serial form, this exploration also turns reflexively toward Spicer. "Aquatic Park," the poem that immediately follows "Ode for Walt Whitman," and the first poem in *After Lorca* that is not a translation, is dedicated "A Translation for Jack Spicer." We might first assume that self-dedication, like self-address, is the most direct, most personal, means of self-identification that poetry makes possible. Yet "Aquatic Park" establishes a public scene of address that deals more with self-strangeness than self-portraiture:

A green boat
Fishing in blue water

The gulls circle the pier
Calling their hunger

A wind rises from the west
Like the passing of desire

Two boys play on the beach

Laughing
 Their gangling legs cast shadows
 On the wet sand

Then,
 Sprawling in the boat

A beautiful black fish. (131)

The title “Aquatic Park” situates the poem in a specific place and geography—a beloved park in San Francisco that Spicer and other gay men frequented. Yet nothing indexes the significance of this particular location. Instead, the poem’s mostly unpunctuated lines float between indefinite and definite articles, from *a* boat to *the* gulls, from *the* pier to *a* wind, and from the boys’ shadows on the wet sand to the poem’s surprising end: “Then, / Sprawling in the boat / a beautiful black fish.”

The interjection of narrative in the conjunctive adverb “Then” reveals “Aquatic Park” as a drama unfolding in speech and time, a drama of narrating the erotic play of boys from something like a stable position and a single perspective. Yet the poem’s ending presents an impossible veer from this perspective, and enable us to perceive how the quick shifts throughout “Aquatic Park” undermine any pretense to a coherent speaking self that occupies a secure, singularly addressable position. The problem “Aquatic Park” poses is not one of locatability, but of the circulation of address: the calling of the gulls and the laughter of the boys parallel “[t]he passing of desire” in their promise to address any body in range. Desire’s ability to float—or, to use Spicer’s fleshier verb, “sprawl”—between the definite and the indefinite, poses circulation against the occupation of any fixed position or secure vantage. Instead of a more familiar story, “Then” interjects an alternative possibility: that this erotic play between definite and indefinite identifications makes the sprawl—and indeed, the power of the story and the poem—possible. Language, in other words, is an ambient force in Spicer. The gulls of “Aquatic Park,” circling and “calling their hunger,” are emblems of

linguistic possibility and impossibility, of poetry as the embodied register of the indefiniteness of public speech.

Ostensibly authored by the surrogate young poet “Jack,” the six letters addressed to “Lorca” are performative statements of poetics—letter-poems much like Emily Dickinson’s, whose manuscripts Spicer meticulously reviewed in the Rare Book Room of the Boston Public Library in 1955 (207-211). In the fourth letter from Jack to “Lorca,” for instance, Jack attempts to explain why he “dedicates each of our poems to someone.” He begins the letter by asking “Lorca” a question: “where did your poems find people?” The letter’s second half answers this question by describing three types of readers of poetry—the young, the lover, and the friend (139). The somewhat comic argument of the letter—that writing to these particular types of readers ensures that Jack’s poems will find people, or “have an audience”—mirrors the gay anarchist poet Paul Goodman’s argument, in “Advance-Guard Writing,” about the significance of “intimate community” for the avant-garde. The goal of the “present-day advance guard,” Goodman writes, “is the physical reestablishment of community.” To solve the “crisis of alienation,” Goodman advises writers to write for and about other people “personally...for any one will pay concentrated attention to a work in which he in his own name is a principal character (375-76). Goodman’s radically personalized poetry, occasioned by and addressed to members of a “physical” community, is the opposite of Mill’s argument that “when [the poet] turns round and addresses himself to another person; when the act of utterance is not itself the end, but a means to an end ... then it ceases to be poetry” (349). Yet neither Goodman’s vision of an occasional poetry of avant-garde community nor Mill’s asocial poetry of self-confession offers a model that adequately explains the simultaneously deeply personal and deeply public address in Spicer.

In Michael Davidson's view, the distinction between Goodman and Spicer has to do with two different conceptions of community: "Spicer's imagined community," Davidson asserts, "exists through contention... argument and conflict signal the fact that ideas are real and earnest, embodied in persons who find them worth fighting for" (*Guys Like Us* 42). But as Warner's theory suggests, the critical function of counterpublics is discursive: the perverse character of "contention" necessarily extends beyond persons struggling over real ideas. Spicer's work trades on a more fundamental contradiction between circulation among communities and circulation beyond them. Warner explains that this contradiction occurs because "the arbitrary closure" of lived worlds both enables discourse and is undone by it: as it spreads elsewhere, public discourse always abandons its given audiences. Because public discourse "promises to address anybody," he writes, it "puts at risk the concrete world that is its given condition of possibility." The "fruitful perversity" of this promise illuminates Spicer's interest in poetry's capacity to upset closed worlds, and helps to explain Robin Blaser's sense of Spicer's "negativity within community," as well as his observation that the "small, specialized community for poetry was not what [Spicer] wanted" (Warner, 81; Blaser 259).¹³ Blaser's observations highlight the distinctions between the orientation toward publics in Spicer's poetics and the more community- and coterie-minded poetics of some of his contemporaries. The deeply public and deeply personal structure and activity of address in Spicer's poetry works to make poetic worlds that enable and undo, fix and unfix, the arbitrary closures of community.

The six letter-poems Jack addresses to "Lorca" in *After Lorca* are Spicer's earliest attempts to articulate a coherent poetics founded on this contradictory poetics of address. Spicer's use of letters as poetic texts deliberately ambiguates epistolary address, making it multiple, personal and impersonal, oriented toward circulation and virtual participation. For

instance, Jack's first letter begins, "Dear Lorca, These letters are to be as temporary as our poetry is to be permanent. They will establish the bulk, the wastage that my sour-stomached contemporaries demand to help them swallow and digest the pure word." In the next paragraph, Jack continues, "In my last letter I spoke of the tradition. The fools that read these letters will think by this we mean what tradition seems to have meant lately—an historical patchwork...used to cover up the nakedness of the bare word. Tradition means much more than that" (*Collected Poetry* 110). The multiple readers the letter addresses—Jack's "sour-stomached contemporaries" and the "fools that read these letters"—indicate that the letter is addressed not only to "Lorca," but to a contemporary reading public.

The first letter's concluding paragraph also calls attention to a different dimension of the book's deeply personal and deeply public investments. "A mad man is talking to himself in the room next to mine," Jack writes. "He speaks in prose. Presently I shall go to a bar and there one or two poets who will speak to me and I to them and we will try to destroy each other or attract each other or even listen to each other and nothing will happen because we will be speaking in prose" (111). Because the poets in this bar scene are "speaking in prose," "Jack" claims that "nothing will happen"—they will neither listen to one another, nor go to bed with one another, nor destroy one another. Jack thus equates "speaking in prose" with the purported ineffectiveness of public speech. "Nothing will happen," he insists, echoing W.H. Auden's famous claim in his 1940 elegy for Yeats, that "poetry makes nothing happen." But because Spicer stages this scene in a letter from Jack to "Lorca," he suggests that the letter, like the poets' bar talk, is performative of the address to a public. At the same time, he stages the problem of "speaking in prose" as one of limited inter- and intra-personal communication.

Thus contradiction is baked into the letter in two ways: first, the letter is performative of prosaic speech, but it speaks in poetry; and second, “speaking in poetry,” by Jack’s lights, should mean that poetry can and does make something happen. The contradiction is realized in *After Lorca*, as in much of Spicer’s subsequent work, because his poetry is *overspecified*, rather than unspecified or underspecified, for address.¹⁴ It names specific addressees (“Lorca” and the dedicatees of the poems), speakers (“Lorca,” Jack), and audiences in specific situations or scenes of address (like the mad neighbor’s room and the bar, or the tryst in the “Introduction”). Nevertheless, like the introduction’s attention to “the reader who is not party to the tryst,” Jack’s first letter to “Lorca” puts its orientation toward temporary circulation among a public of sour-faced contemporaries and foolish readers in tension with the proliferation of addressees and near-private scenes. This tension occurs in each of Spicer’s dedicated poems, and, in *After Lorca*, collectively motivates the need for an alternative counter-tradition. “Speaking in poetry”—and the concomitant address of poetry as public speech—becomes the primary means of effecting the creation of a counterpublic.

As he explained in a letter to Robin Blaser, “What I am trying to do [in *After Lorca*] is establish a *tradition*. When I’m through (although I’m sure no one will ever publish them) I’d like someone as good as I am to translate these translations into French (or Pushtu) adding more. Do you understand? No. Nobody does....I can see why Pound got so angry at the reaction to his ‘Propertius’” (“Letters to Blaser” 48). The relation to futurity Spicer describes here is neither reproductive nor private: “speaking in poetry” is a social, multilingual, textual, and sexual activity. It is also an prospective activity, structured by the anticipation of its future reception and circulation. In the first letter in *After Lorca*, Jack explains that “tradition,” “means generations of different poets in different countries patiently telling the same story, writing the same poem, gaining and losing something with each

transformation—but, of course, never really losing anything” (110-11). The generational narrative—so central to most conventional accounts of community formation—here matters only in the plural, as an index of a diffusive gay poetics. Spicer’s counter-tradition projects a future space in which poetry circulates freely, and more ambiguously, among “different poets in different countries” (*Collected Poetry* 110). This is a poetry remade without regard for the parochial borders of home town, nation, language, or community.¹⁵ This is “tradition” as a counter-space of circulation, a stage for serial, ongoing encounters between publics and persons.

Spicer’s definition of “tradition” is quite similar to the definition of “community” that Josephine Miles, a poet-scholar at Berkeley and one of Spicer’s early mentors, arrived at in her important chapter on the ballad in *Eras and Modes*. Miles asserted that ballads were not only “the completest definition of the community which enjoys them,” but that “the community which enjoys them may be greater than any one nation or language.” This conceptualization of “community”—transnational, articulated through the ballad, requiring a community of strangers—usefully resists much of the problematic features of the term as it is used by Spicer’s critics, and appears more in line with Spicer’s own usage and investment in balladry, which is predicated on a generative translation practice shared among strangers.

In the third letter, Jack builds on this alternative notion of tradition by defining the communication of poetry as one of “correspondence” rather than “connection.” “Things do not connect,” Jack asserts, “they correspond. Even these letters. They *correspond* with something (I don’t know what) that you have written (perhaps as unapparently as that lemon corresponds to this piece of seaweed) and, in turn, some future poet will write something that *corresponds* to them” (133-34). Spicer’s term “correspondence” includes the more common sense of an exchange of letters between persons, as well as the more abstract sense

of drawing of relations of equivalence often considered central to what we tend to think of as “faithful” translations. But the term also depends on contingency and opacity—on the “unapparentness” of the relation, on *not knowing* or not being able to fully know the objects that the letters and poems, and indeed the correspondents themselves, address and are addressed by. The implication of a third figure, “some future poet,” in this correspondence, reminds us that the address is not so much direct—triangulated to and for one person or one audience only—but directable and redirectable. “Correspondence” is, in other words, at base a circulatory term for the transmission of stranger-relationality, a communication enabled by approaching the address of poetry as public speech. The poetry is meant to be “translated” in this creative way, repurposed, and the relation between speaker and addressee exceeded and reconfigured by a future reader and writer, who in turn will be translated again, and so on. The unknowability built into this correspondence between strangers is foundational to Spicer’s counter-tradition: the condition of possibility for the continuance of tradition as such.

Spicer’s nod to Pound in his letter to Blaser and elsewhere have led scholars to read *After Lorca* as heir to a Poundian translational poetics, for which the overriding emphasis has been on the making, or Englishing, of a new poem. Yet as John Nichols argues, Pound’s lifelong investment in anthologizing “at the seams of tradition”—and including translations in his anthologies—“vividly illustrate[s] his evolving interest in juxtaposing one verse tradition with another” (177). Thus we might also think of Spicer’s correspondence as heir to Pound’s comparative anthological poetics and, therefore, to a less teleological model of translation and innovation. To borrow from Jacques Derrida, Spicer’s translations do “not seek to say this or that, to transport this or that content, to communicate such a charge of meaning, but to remark the affinity among languages, to exhibit its own possibility” (120). By

remarking affinity through correspondences across *The Selected Poems of Federico García Lorca* and *Obras Completas*, Spicer situates the relation between poetry and publics in more intensely dialogical, carnivalesque vision of communication and tradition. The role of the translation anthology in this vision is less pragmatic than parodic: translation as “poetic transposition” (121).

If Spicer’s work mobilizes anthologies of Lorca’s poetry to reimagine poetic tradition, he does so by creating a kind of counter-anthology of creative translations that situates the address of poetry in a dialectic between circulation among communities and circulation beyond them. In an era defined by revolutions in mass media, Spicer thus turns to the translation anthology to articulate a constant tension between lyric communication and its core model of direct address and non-lyric modes of address oriented to a wider, stranger range of publics. Langston Hughes, to whom I turn now, wrote in the presence of translation anthologies as well. Yet unlike Spicer, Hughes contended with the competing imperatives of white and black readerships and distinctive horizons of the publishable as he moved within and beyond the black public sphere.

Notes to Chapter 1

¹ See also *Poet Be Like God*, pp. 282-3: “Spicer insisted that *Open Space* should not leave the city limits of San Francisco: no subscribers, no libraries, no contributors, outside the Bay Area. Persky agreed. ‘I thought all of those rules were true and necessary to maintain the purity of the art.’” Indeed, Persky, in the audience of Spicer’s final lecture, shares Spicer’s insistence on the propriety of restricted circulation of *Open Space*: “When I thought people were starting to save sets a couple months I just gave out issues to poets that I knew so that other people wouldn’t get sets” (*The Collected Lectures* 167).

² Prevallet writes that during this period “Spicer brought this folk history to the San Francisco poets” (31). She also cites Spicer’s co-biographer, Kevin Killian, who in an unpublished talk titled “Jack Spicer’s Secret,” observes that “Spicer continued to appropriate these sources into his long serial poems, including *The Holy Grail*, *Golem*, and *Book of Magazine Verse* (31).

³ Motherwell’s anthology introduced Dadaist poetics to a new generation of artists. At once image-text, multi-generic collaboration, and literary and visual document, *Dada Painters and Poets* presented poets like Spicer and Blaser with a new occasion for poetry. More generally,

the anthologization of Dada fundamentally changed how Dada was read. No longer interventionist or arsonist (creation-as-destruction, burn down the libraries, etc.), Dada's broadly anti-institutional project had been thoroughly institutionalized. As Leah Dickerman argues, the institutional conditions for the re-emergence of Dada has led scholars to refine accounts of Dada's institutional imagination. Dada is now thought of as a "radically conceived...network of contacts, publications, and correspondences." In its new anthological context, she writes, Dada could be read as "a self-conscious borrowing of the structures of modern communication and exchange," rather than something merely in opposition to such structures (*The Dada Seminars* 1).

⁴ As Craig Abbott writes, "Braithwaite wanted to counter the public (and the poets') disparaging opinions about conventional magazine verse...the kind used at the time as filler in such wide circulation magazines as *Century* and *Harper's*. While his anthologies did generate poetry during the 1910s," Abbott adds, "they became by the end of the decade primarily an assertion of the qualities against which Modernism was defining itself." After 1914, "the volumes also provided an annual index to poetry and magazines and, irregularly, indices to articles and reviews, lists of poetry volumes, brief reviews" (151). But they also indexed what Warner calls a "virtual social world"—or public, and what Spicer calls "a society." For more on Braithwaite, see Newcomb.

⁵ The circulation and distribution of these magazines varied widely, but inclusion of *The Nation*, *The Sporting News* and *Ramparts* indicates that Spicer's critique in *Book of Magazine Verse* extends beyond little magazines to more mainstream publications. For specific accounts of these magazines, see Davey, Quartermain, and Richardson.

⁶ Katz's account of Spicer's "oxymoronic conceptualization of communal political agency" is more nuanced (*Poetry of Jack Spicer* 91). See also *American Modernism's Expatriate Scene* 118–39 and *Poetry of Jack Spicer* 1–51.

⁷ For more on Spicer's rejection of the personal, see the introduction to *Collected Poetry* xiii; and Katz, *Poetry of Jack Spicer* 63. The final third of *After Spicer*, edited by John Emil Vincent, is devoted to "the fundamental place" of personhood in Spicer's poetry, but the "durability and frangibility" of the person tends not to be considered as a discursive effect (Vincent, "Before After Spicer" 11).

⁸ See *Collected Poetry* 447.

⁹ For accounts of Spicer's translation of "Juan Ramón Jiménez," see Chamberlain 429–30 and Katz, "Translation as Decomposition," 102.

¹⁰ Spicer subtly links this promise to the trinity of Johns the poem brings together—Juan Ramón Jiménez, John L. Spicer, and Spicer's friend, John Ryan, to whom the poem is dedicated.

¹¹ "It is over, this intimate communion with the ghost of García Lorca," Jack writes in the sixth letter, "and I wonder now how it was ever able to happen." This "intimate communion" is not shared with Lorca, but with his ghost. It is not exclusively textual, but rather situated in an interstitial space between page and person (*Collected Poetry* 153).

¹² Spicer stressed this distinction in a letter to his publisher Joe Dunn: "This letter is *to* you because you are my publisher and because the poem I wrote *for* you gives the most distorted reflection in the whole promenade" (*Collected Poetry* 157).

¹³ Blaser's claim is supported by the fact that Spicer made a long list of poets and artists to whom he sent copies of *After Lorca*, including "Bob Creeley/Bob Lowell/Wynnie Auden/Bill Williams/Chuckles Olson' and so on down to 'Laurie Riding/Hildy Doolittle/Edie Sitwell/Bubbles Cocteau/Tom Eliot/Sal Dali/Alice Ginsberg/Clytemnestra Jeffers'" (*Poet Be Like God* 122). Such a list speaks to Spicer's ambitions and to the

complexity of *After Lorca's* address, just as it makes clear that the dynamics of this address are not realized through the camp mode the list displays.

¹⁴ For more on this distinction, see Waters 6.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the implications of such a transnational vision for public sphere theory, see Fraser, "Transnationalizing the Public Sphere" and Brouwer and Paulesc.

Chapter 2: After the Last Negro Anthology: Langston Hughes's Global Address

The Anthological Poetics of Langston Hughes

Between 1948 and his death in 1967, Langston Hughes edited or coedited more than a dozen anthologies. Of these, five are concerned with questions of poetry, translation and language difference: *Cuba Libre: Poems of Nicolás Guillén* (Ward Ritchie Press, 1948); *The Poetry of the Negro: 1746-1949* (Doubleday, 1949); *Selected Poems of Gabriela Mistral* (Indiana UP, 1957); *An African Treasury: Articles, Essays, Stories and Poems by Black Africans* (Crown Publishers, 1960); and *Poems from Black Africa* (Indiana UP, 1963). While these latter two anthologies focus on Anglophone literatures of sub-Saharan Africa, Hughes's prefaces acknowledge and reflect on how language difference mediates the body of work that he includes in both books. "To communicate from one land to another, one culture to another, particularly when the language is not one's own native tongue but acquired—as English and French are for some writers, presents some problems," he writes in the "Introduction" to *An African Treasury*. But he also delights in "African usages of the King's English," singling out the "strange language structures" of Amos Tutuola as a representative example. In *Poems from Black Africa*, Hughes sketches out a comparative poetics of English and French-language African poetry, and—important for my purposes—he associates this poetics with his decades-long engagement with the translation and anthologization of the Cuban poet Nicolás Guillén.

In this chapter, I read Hughes's translation and anthologization of Guillén through the anthological poetics of his final book-length volume, *ASK YOUR MAMA: TWELVE MOODS FOR JAZZ* (Knopf, 1961). I focus on the Hughes-Guillén nexus largely because it was more extensive and more formative than Hughes's other translation projects: Hughes's engagement with Guillén stretches from the publication of his translations in magazines as

well as in Dudley Fitts's *Anthology of Contemporary Latin-American Poetry* (New Directions, 1942) through the publication of *Cuba Libre* and *Poetry of the Negro* (which includes eight of Guillén's poems), and extends to his later, unpublished translation of Guillén's "Little Rock" and Hughes's somewhat surprising effort to hitch the Cuban's early poetics to his African anthologies. I pay special attention to the understudied ways in which Hughes reframes this relationship in the late fifties and early sixties to address the emergent publics of global decolonization. Hughes thus strategically revised his earlier internationalism. The tensions structuring *ASK YOUR MAMA* and the publicity materials that Hughes and staff at Knopf prepared highlight the responsiveness of Hughes's poem to its reception among black and white readerships. At the same time, they also index the poem's parodic reorientation of the global address of decolonization (evident in Guillén's midcentury poetry and Hughes's African anthologies) in anticipation of this reception.

In the next section, I situate Hughes's midcentury anthology projects "after the last negro anthology," a phrase Brent Hayes Edwards uses to describe Nancy Cunard's massive *Negro: An Anthology* (1934), not because "it is canonical or definitive, nor in the sense that it closes an historical period," but because the anthology "demonstrates—it attempts to *practice*—the impossibility of anthologizing blackness" (*Practice* 316). I read the practice of this impossibility across *Cuba Libre* and the contradictions that inhere in discursive frames of *Poetry of the Negro*, *An African Treasury*, and *Poems from Black Africa*. *Cuba Libre* demonstrates this practice in two key ways: first, in terms of the impossibility of translating the dialogism of Guillén's "criollo" poetry, and second, in terms the anthology's disregard for the integrity of Guillén's book production. The prefaces of the remaining three anthologies underscore Hughes's persistent but failed effort to use "variations of *négritude*" and "personality" as principles of organization that would integrate Guillén's early poetics into the wildly

heterogeneous traditions, languages, and literatures of Anglophone and Francophone Africa. Finally, I identify the seeds of several key features of Hughes's anthological poetics in his unpublished translation of Guillén's "Little Rock," which appears in the 1958 pre-revolutionary volume *Paloma del vuelo popular* [Dove of the Popular Flight] that Guillén published while in exile.

In the subsequent sections, I argue that the practice of the impossibility of anthologizing blackness illuminates the anthological poetics of *ASK YOUR MAMA*. As in Hughes's anthologies, blackness in *MAMA* is diachronic, heteroglossic, fugitive, and internally dialogical. The structural tensions inherent in this practice of the impossibility of anthologizing blackness are evident in poem's parodic orientation; they are also visible in the basic tension between format and address announced on the book's cover. *MAMA*'s most conspicuous typographical, material, and paratextual features are likewise animated by this orientation. Thus the structural tensions I find in *MAMA*'s format and form are also work at the level of individual lines and parts of the book-length poem—in Hughes's staging of rapidly shifting scenes of direct address, in the poem's multilingualism. As we will see, these tensions likewise shape *MAMA*'s distinctive microdialogical poetics of the name.

Practicing the Impossibility of Anthologizing Blackness at Midcentury

As Vera Kutzinski has shown, Hughes's experience translating Guillén's earlier poetry posed unavoidable problems of inassimilability to him and his cotranslator, Benjamin Carruthers. Generally speaking, there were two main issues the translators faced: how to translate Guillén's use of the performative tradition of the Afro-Cuban *son* and how to translate the racial and national contexts that Guillén's criollo poetics emerge from and respond to. By most accounts, the solutions Carruthers and Hughes arrived at were failures. They chose to render the *son* as equivalent to, rather than incommensurate with, the blues,

and they wrenched the complex racial dynamics of the Cuban context into an American Negro dialect that most educated U.S. readers, familiar with the black-white binarism of America's racialized culture, could easily recognize.

There is perhaps no more telling example of this encounter with inassimibility than the translation of Guillén's poema-son "Ayé me dijeron negro." In his drafts, Hughes titled the poem "Yesterday They Called Me Black"; in Carruthers's published version, the title reads "Today They Called Me Darky." (It's the second poem in the anthology.) As the difference between "Black" and "Darky" suggests, Hughes and Carruthers both struggled with how to translate Guillén's "negro" into American English. As Kutzinski points out, neither translator's choice works: "black" effectively flattens out the dramatic situation of the poem—one mulatto man insulting another mulatto man by calling him "negro"—while "darky" associates it with white racist caricature. Both translations elide the specific drama of the poem, which has to do with the use of "negro" as an insult exchanged between two men of mixed racial backgrounds. Hughes and Carruthers both effectively Americanize "negro" by making it take up a more stable, coherent position along a color line imagined to be intractable. As a result, in both translations the insult no longer makes sense.

Like other translation anthologies, *Cuba Libre* disregards the integrity of Guillén's book production. For instance, Carruthers does not acknowledge in his "Introduction" that he and Hughes selected the fifty poems of their anthology from four of Guillén's early books: *Motivos de son* (1930), *Sóngoro cosongo* (1931), *West Indies, Ltd.* (1934) and *Sones para turistas y cantos para soldados* (1937). They re-ordered these poems into eight short thematic sections: "Cuban Blues," "Habaneros," "West Indies," "Songs for Soldiers," "Here We Are!," "Federico," "Mulatto Poems," and "Propositions." These groupings are somewhat arbitrary—there are "blues poems," for instance, not included in the first section, and poems

addressed to the West Indies not included in the section with that title. That said, the discursive framing of *Cuba Libre* reflects a more generally assimilationist, domesticating approach to Guillén's vernacular dialogism. By erasing the abbreviation "Ltd." from "West Indies," from Guillén's title, for example, Hughes and Carruthers defang the poem's hemispheric anti-imperialist address. In a similar vein, though they do include some of Guillén's parodic "sones para turistas" [*Sons* for Tourists] they do not have a section that bears that title. And, as Kutzinski observes, "Cuban Blues" reinforces the analogy between the blues and the *son*, rather than stressing their differences from one another. The decisions to frame the anthology with Miguel de Unamuno's poetic homage to Guillén, and to begin the collection proper with "Don't Know No English," likewise reflect ways in which Hughes and the publisher sought to appeal to African American intellectuals and the college market.

Kutzinski shows that when Hughes saw the proofs for *Cuba Libre*, he noticed that the press had switched the order of the first two poems, so that "Yesterday They Called Me Darky" now opened the anthology. He wrote back immediately:

I notice that you have changed the order of the poems about in the CUBAN BLUES section, which is O.K.—except that I would not start the book with, "Last Night Somebody Called Me Darky." Some colored people (especially "intellectuals") are often over-sensitive about the word "darky," and since I would expect this book to have a certain sales appeal to Negro colleges and libraries, I don't believe it would be wise to start the volume right off the bat with this particular poem. In fact, I request you, PLEASE DON'T. . . . (I have gone through this minority sensitiveness with my own poetry and know it can affect sales if not tactfully handled.) (qtd. in *Worlds of Langston Hughes* 154)

In the framing of *Cuba Libre*, and in the translation and selection of poems, practicing the impossibility of anthologizing blackness meant not only struggling with the incommensurability of racial vocabularies across cultures, but also with the expectations of black (and white) publics—from Hughes's "intellectuals" (in scare quotes) to the black college market to the "minority sensitiveness" of readers of Hughes's poetry. Hughes's

reckoning with the inassimilability of Guillén's mulatto poetics and anti-imperialist address informed his subsequent selection and revision of Guillén's poems for inclusion in *Poetry of the Negro*. In particular, Hughes and Bontemp's co-edited anthology attempts to avoid the specifically racial character that Peter Kalliney has shown historically marks the black modernist anthology from its inception.

In addition to the editors decision to include a section of "Tributary Poems by Non-Negro Poets," this departure is evident in their focus on the Hispanophone and Anglophone Caribbean. But the practice of the impossibility of anthologizing blackness is perhaps most striking in the contradictions implied in its effort to compile and organize a diachronic, comprehensive transhistorical anthology under the rubric of the "poetry of the negro." As Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwanko argues, "Negro" in the anthology's title "is intended by the editors to index a sociopolitical category (defined in the United States as Negro), an experience (the Negro experience in the Western world), and an aesthetic tradition, as well as an ongoing conversation between "the Negro" himself and the world(s) around him" (110). The attempt to address such a wide range of publics led Hughes and Bontemps to argue in the preface that what unifies the poetry in the anthology is neither a concept nor a language of race ("a racial idiom"), but participation in shared literary traditions. By asserting that "Negro" poetry belongs to such traditions, the editors sought to counter the assumption that negro-ness is exclusively "foreign," "native," or non-literary. Their stated project was to include literary representations of black experience whose complexity gives the lie to such terms, and share them with wider audiences.

One can see how such an argument would make anthologizing a poet invested in "racial idiom" like Guillén particular challenging. At the same time, Hughes's experience with *Cuba Libre* enabled him to continue including the Cuban's poetry in his anthological

practice. Guillén's unusual presence in the introductory remarks of Hughes's later African anthologies speaks to the importance of the poet for the evolution of Hughes's internationalism. In *Poems from Black Africa*, Guillén appears in the final paragraph of Hughes's "Introduction." After observing that since 1957 more than twenty countries in sub-Saharan Africa had gained independence, Hughes advocates for understanding decolonization in Africa through an international, cross-cultural lens, presenting "the black poets writing today in English or French" not as "propagandists for African nationalism," but as "spokesmen for variations of *négritude*" (11). Somewhat improbably, Hughes concludes by turning to the Hispanophone Caribbean, and to Guillén—and particularly his "poems of *ñañigo* and his use of rhythms of *sones*" as exemplifying future possibilities for the poetry of "the New Africa" (15).

Reading Hughes's "variations of *négritude*" across his prefaces, poetry, and later notes shows that the longevity of *Négritude* and other universalizing terms of the multiple, like "Negro," depend both on their instability and on the circulation of composite generic figures. In addition to "soul," for instance, Hughes also tried out "personality" as a term that could help lend coherence to the internationalist aesthetic links he attempted to establish between Anglophone, Francophone, and Hispanophone publics. In the "Introduction" to *An African Treasury*, Hughes reflects: "Perhaps the phrase that best sums up this swelling pride and fierce insistence on individual identity is 'African personality.' It is a phrase much used in writings coming out of Africa today" (9.505). And in the "Foreword" to *Poems from Black Africa*, after acknowledging some of the differences between Anglophone and Francophone poets in Africa, he concludes, "But the best poetry of both French and English expression bears the stamp of the African personality, and most of its emotional aura might be included within the term *négritude*..." (9.509). "Personality" thus neatly

encapsulates both Hughes's attention to publicity and his problematic reading of African literary discourse. (As we'll see, Hughes describes many of the names that appear in *ASK YOUR MAMA* as "personalities.")

In the "Introduction" to *An African Treasury*, Hughes argues that "personality" bears as much on the publics of the South African literary magazine *Drum* as it does in "John McNulty's pieces in *The New Yorker* on Third Avenue bars." He finds "personality" "burst[ing] forth in bitterness toward the ousted colonial powers expressed in one portion of Abioseh Nicol's lovely lyric, *Return to West Africa*, and in the challenge posed by the Europeans who decide to stay on as future citizens," and "cr[ying] through protest pieces" across the anthology. Hughes acknowledged that this "personality" was "necessarily—and happily—as varied as the people of Africa," but he also argued that "it is founded on a common bond, a common yearning..." (9.506). "Personality" in these instances becomes both a capacious term reflective of Hughes's changing internationalism and a concept beset with contradictory impulses that attend the impossibility of anthologizing blackness at midcentury.

Spanning these two anthologies, "personality" embodies the "stirring, concluding response at the Accra Conference: *Mayibuye, Afrika!*"—"Come back, Africa!," in Hughes's "literal translation" (9.506)—and simultaneously speaks to readers of the *New Yorker* who frequent the bars of Harlem. "Personality" in Hughes's account also speaks to the advocates of Négritude, who include in Hughes's citations not only Senghor and Césaire, but also Ezekia Mphahlele, who gave a paper on the topic at the First International Congress of Africanists at the University of Ghana, and the African-American poet Paul Vesey (9.509-510). As part of the practice of the impossibility of anthologizing blackness, Négritude and "personality" are positioned in these documents to perform as a kind of stabilizing fiction.

Hughes invokes it because as an organizing principle of his anthologies, no midcentury term has greater discursive power.

As Adlai Murdoch puts it, “Négritude was the key discursive avatar that made...subsequent discourses [of postcolonialism] possible” (1102). Hughes’s routing of the concept through a profusion of scenes and structures of address activates a poetics responsive to the “multiplicities and fragmentations” that the dilemmas of colonialism occasioned (1102). Négritude thus functions as a kind of anthological aspiration, a marker of the degree to which practicing the impossibility of anthologizing blackness was a fraught but integral part of an expanding midcentury literary field. Négritude’s versatile discursive character, its global circulation among mass publics, and its capacity to perform virtually—as an untranslatable “avatar”—all attract Hughes, and paradoxically enable him to incorporate Négritude as a particular kind of term of the multiple—a heteroglossic name—into *ASK YOUR MAMA*’s parodic global address.

Before examining this address in more detail, I turn briefly to Hughes’s unpublished translation of Guillén’s “Little Rock.” The poem prefigures the anthological poetics of the name that Hughes develops further in *MAMA*, as well as that poem’s expansive internationalist address. In the Cold War but not entirely of it, “Little Rock” begins: “Un blues llora con lágrimas de música / en la mañana fina” [a blues moans its tears of music / in the fine morning]. Guillén’s poem retains “blues” in English, signaling the foreignness of the music for his readers, its untranslatability, as well as a sympathetic identification with the plight of “los niños / negros entre fusiles pedagógicos [quienes van] / a su escuela de miedo” [The Negro / Children [who] walk to their school of fear / Between pedagogical rifles]. As in the rest of the poem, Guillén points to the militarization of the situation as the real “lesson” of “Little Rock.” The rifles are the “pedagogical” instruments of Jim Crow,

who is their “maestro”—their teacher and master:

Cuando a sus aulas lleguen,
 Jim Crow será el maestro,
 hijos de Lynch serán sus condiscípulos
 y habrá en cada pupitre
 de cada niño negro,
 tinta de sangre, lápices de fuego.

Así es el Sur. Su látigo no cesa.

[When Jim Crow arrives
 His wings flapping
 He will be the teacher,
 Lynch's boys their fellow students
 And in each desk where a nigger sits
 They'll have blood for ink and pencils of fire.

Thus the South. Its whip never stops.]

Hughes's translation struggles most in these opening lines. For instance, he misreads the Spanish *aulas*—classrooms—as *alas*, wings, and thus misattributes the verb “arrive” (*lleguen*) to Jim Crow, rather than the students. Guillén's poem more literally reads “When they arrive in their classrooms / Jim Crow will be the teacher.” Hughes's error does not make literal or figurative sense with the rest of the poem, because the underlying truth it trades on is not reducible to the teacher/master-Jim Crow analogy. As the stanza powerfully concludes, the brutal enforcement of racial difference “never stops.” That is, according to the poem's logic, Jim Crow could not “arrive,” because Jim Crow was already there: there was no sanctuary to be found inside the halls of Central High. Rather than an escape from racism, Guillén's poem reveals how the school harbors and sustains it: in teachers; in students, who repeatedly harassed the Little Rock Nine; and at each desk, where the new students are disciplined by the daily threat of violence.

Unlike his earlier problems with translating race in Guillén's criollo poetry, here Hughes's decision to translate Guillén's Spanish “negro” as the more pointed racist invective

raises other questions. Why not translate “negro” as negro? Because the racial context of “Little Rock” is Arkansas, not Havana, Hughes doesn’t run into the same domesticating effects that he faced in his earlier translations. Nonetheless, his decision intensifies and complicates the poem’s picture of U.S. racial politics. At the same time, the final stanza of “Little Rock” makes clear that the poem’s internationalist address, rather than threats of the spread of segregationism, racism, or militarization alone, raises the highest stakes:

Y bien, ahora,
 señoras y señores, señoritas,
 ahora niños,
 ahora viejos peludos y pelados,
 ahora indios, mulatos, negros, zambos,
 ahora pensad lo que sería
 el mundo todo Sur,
 el mundo todo sangre y todo látigo,
 el mundo todo escuela de blancos para blancos,
 el mundo todo Rock y todo Little,
 el mundo todo yanqui, todo faubus...
 Pensad por un momento,
 imaginadlo un solo instante.

[And so, now,
 Ladies and gentlemen, young ladies
 Now children
 Now horrible bums and old drunks
 Now Indians, mulattos, negroes, half-breeds, now
 Think what it would be like, the world
 All South.
 The world all blood and all whip
 The world all white schools for whites
 The world all Rock and all Little
 The world all yanqui, all Faubus....
 Think for a moment
 Imagine it for one instant.]

The audiences Guillén names in his final stanza describe an expansive, imaginative public that ranges from “Ladies and gentlemen” to “Indians, mulattoes, negroes, half-breeds.” By crossing class and racial lines, Guillén’s catalogue of addressees suggests that the resistance to desegregation at Little Rock bears urgently on the fate of all Cubans, if not a broader,

more cosmopolitan Hispanophone readership gathered together by the informal second person plural form “pensad” [(you all) think].

Hughes’s translation extends the poem’s projection of this readership still further, and his changes tend to operate by a logic that supports this extension. By altering Guillén’s alliterative, playful “viejos peludos y pelados”—more literally “old people hairy and bald”—to “horrible bums and old drunks,” for instance, Hughes not only veers away from the levity of Guillén’s line, but also toward communicating to a public on whom Guillén’s pun would be lost. In the next line, Hughes translates the first three terms of Guillén’s racial categories literally: “indios, mulatos, negros” becomes “Indians, mulattos, negroes.” But Guillén’s last term, “zambos,” a Spanish word for a Latin American person of mixed indigenous and African ancestry, becomes the more general, and more explicitly racist, “half-breeds.” Moreover, Hughes ignores the word’s cognate, “Sambos,” perhaps because the term, long in mainstream use in the United States, became more widely recognized as a slur in the fifties. Still more telling, however, are Hughes’s subtle adjustments to Guillén’s mostly end-stopped lines. Guillén’s “ahora pensad lo que sería / el mundo todo Sur” becomes in Hughes “now / think what it would be like, the world / All South.” Whereas Guillén’s choice to end the previous line on “zambos” suggests a continuity with his earlier criollo poetry’s explorations of racial address, Hughes’s choices to end on “now” and “the world,” and to make “All South” into a full stop by adding a period, dramatize and generalize the urgency of the translation’s global address.¹

Impossibility’s Form: The Microdialogical Poetics of the Name

So many names appear throughout *ASK YOUR MAMA* that a writer in an advance trade review accused Hughes of “name-dropping.” In a draft of an unpublished publicity note, Hughes disagreed. Contrasting his use of celebrities with the “nature names” that

appear throughout the Anglo-American poetic tradition, Hughes argued that the names in *MAMA* are widely recognizable by “most Americans”:

Why not use the names of recognizable people in today’s poetry—names everybody knows like Patti Page and Ralph Bunche and Governor Faubus. Poets are always using nature names like the violet and the rose, the shumach [sic] and the willow, and Dylan Thomas wrote a whole book about the milkwood. I use names like the Martha Roundtree and the Harry Belafonte and the Duke and the George Sokolsky ~~and~~ the great Louis and Lena Horne, almost as well known to most Americans as the names of flowers and trees. These human beings are certainly better known than milkwood” (“Poets Drops Names”).

Hughes’s remarks speak both to the recognizability and publicity of the name—its discursive character—as well as to its parodic function. The name in *MAMA* is imbued with an anti-pastoralizing function. At the same time, however, Hughes’s poem also draws on the fact that the indexicality of names diminishes as they attach to and detach from the poem’s specific dialogical structures and discursive contexts. Thus while there is some truth to the reviewer’s accusation, insofar as Hughes’s poem can be read as part of a larger effort to recuperate his standing, defend his politics, and demonstrate his credentials among black readers and artists whose sympathies are shifting toward Black Power and the Black Arts Movement, Hughes’s poem is not so much name-dropping—ostentatiously summoning the names of celebrities he knew in order to demonstrate his cultural authority or social capital—as anthologizing the name in order to redirect its energies into a new cross-citational environment.

In this environment, the name is not attached to the person—not an index or referent—but to the internal dialogism of the poem’s anthological architecture. This is particularly evident in the poem’s single citation of Négritude:

METHUSELAH SIGNS PAPERS W.E.B.
ORIGINAL NIAGARA N.A.A.C.P.
ADELE RAMONA MICHAEL SERVE BAKOKO TEA
IRENE AND HELEN ARE AS THEY USED TO BE
AND SMITTY HAS NOT CHANGED AT ALL.

ALIOUNÉ AIMÉ SEDAR SIPS HIS NÉGRITUDE. (70)

The concatenation of first names here belies to some degree Hughes's argument in the publicity note, since by deliberately eliding the last names of these figures and embedding them within a complex network of rhyme, Hughes's stanza stresses their poetic, rather than their pragmatic, or indexical, character. Moreover, while some of these figures—W.E.B. Du Bois, Ada “Bricktop” Smith (“Smitty”) and the leaders of Négritude would likely be recognizable to “most Americans”—others, like Adele Glasgow and Ramona Lowe, owners of a gallery in Harlem where Hughes first read *ASK YOUR MAMA*, would not (*Collected Poems* 686). When Hughes mashes together the names of Aliouné Diop, the founder of the influential, multilingual Pan-African journal *Présence Africaine*, with the theorists of Négritude, Aimé Césaire and Léopold Sédar Senghor, the name works as a highly compressed effect of the impossibility of anthologizing blackness evident in the prefaces to Hughes's African anthologies.

Hughes's recombination of a plurality of first names into one composite figure creates something different from what Jahan Ramazani, in his account of transnational poetics, calls “creolization,” and from what Adlai Murdoch describes as the “vast world of cultural signification” that the discourse of Négritude granted to black internationalists (1114). *MAMA* makes visible the detachment from and distance between name and referent, person and public—and through rhyme, oxymoron, litotes, and other kinds of word play—marshals the aesthetic power of names to signify beyond the circumscriptions of time and place. Hughes's repeated use of the names of the leaders of decolonized and newly independent states, for instance, registers the creative promise of decolonization's world-making address, and at the same time, brings the ironies and failures of that promise home.

The two organizing scenes of “Cultural Exchange,” the poem’s first section, illustrate this structural tension between the name and the poem’s parodic orientation to its audience. The title of the section refers to the U.S. State Department’s anticommunist diplomatic program of “cultural exchange,” which strategically enlisted African-American artists to demonstrate the virtues of American democracy abroad. Most famously, the State Department nominated and sponsored “jazz ambassadors” as central to its vision of cultural diplomacy. To the State Department, the particular appeal of jazz was its ability to represent what was exceptional about America: already internationally famous, jazz could be exported to the Third World as a U.S. commodity, a product made out of American democracy that demonstrated the uniqueness of the American idea. For the jazz ambassadors, as for Hughes, who participated in several state-sponsored tours and art festivals, participation in “cultural exchange” programs was far more complex, however. State sponsorship afforded midcentury black internationalists an opportunity to travel the continent and to interact with African publics with a degree of political agency abroad that often eluded them at home. Programs of cultural exchange also increased the circulation of their art by orders of magnitude. At the same time, these artists were not oblivious to the ways that the State Department program sought to coopt, instrumentalize, and exploit the commodification of black culture.²

While some artists became ironists of cultural exchange as a result of this awareness, the juxtaposition of scenes of address in “Cultural Exchange” discloses a more complex sense of what thinking decolonization and desegregation together entails. The second scene, which closes out the section, inverts the racialized order of Jim Crow, so that instead of Guillén’s challenge to “Imagine the world / All South,” Hughes takes up the Communist Party’s black belt thesis, “DREAMING THAT THE NEGROES / OF THE SOUTH

HAVE TAKEN OVER” (92). In Hughes’s scenario, however, “WEALTHY NEGROES HAVE WHITE SERVANTS, / WHITE SHARECROPPERS WORK THE BLACK PLANTATIONS, / AND COLORED CHILDREN HAVE WHITE MAMMIES.”

“Cultural Exchange” ends with a flourish, addressing “*DEAR OLD / MAMMY FAUBUS*”: “*CULTURE, THEY SAY, IS A TWO-WAY STREET: / HAND ME MY MINT JULEP, MAMMY. / MAKE HASTE!*” Hughes scores this ending with “When the Saints Go Marching In,” which runs “joyously for two / full choruses / with maracas....” While it appears simple enough, and drew laughs when Hughes read it to audiences, it’s worth pointing out that the ironies of this closing scene are multiple: the punchline is not simply that this scenario is neither plausible nor desirable, or that culture is obviously not a “two-way street”—or a two-way dialogue—for black Americans.

Like much of the material in *MAMA*, Hughes had explored an earlier version of this scenario in a Simple column, in which Simple dreams that he is one of Hughes’s “WEALTHY NEGROES.” Titled “Rude Awakening,” the column ends with Simple waking from his dream into the “same old nightmare” of Harlem (8.239-241). Although *MAMA* carries the lessons of Simple forward in several ways, the poem radically dispatches with the dialogic structure of address that drives Hughes’s Simple stories. Whereas Simple’s interlocutor’s presence is only glancingly signaled in the opening and closing paragraphs of Hughes’s column, the final scene of “Cultural Exchange” is multiply framed and addressed—most immediately, by the chiasmus “DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES... / NIGHTMARES... DREAMS! OH!”—lines that make the meaning of “cultural exchange” more ambiguous, both fantasy and incubus. The final scenario is also framed by the first of a series of nine questions from white interlocutors that recur throughout the book, prompting the poem’s collectively, anonymously voiced retort: “THEY ASKED ME RIGHT AT

CHRISTMAS / IF MY BLACKNESS, WOULD IT RUB OFF? / I SAID, ASK YOUR MAMA.” This “I” is collective and anonymous because, unlike the Simple columns, or the prefaces to Hughes’s anthologies, the pronoun is not attributed consistently to any single person, figure, or speaker.

In “Name In Print,” another column from this period, Hughes dubs this usage of the first person “the racial I”—meaning the pronoun to refer, Simple’s friend scoffs, to “Negroes” in the plural.

“Just look at the front pages of the newspapers,” said Simple, spreading his nightly copy of the *Daily News* out on the bar. “There is never hardly any colored names anywhere. Most headlines is all about white folks.”

“That is not true today,” I said. “Many headlines are about Negroes, Chinese, Indians and other colored folks like ourselves.”

“Most on the inside pages,” said Simple, blowing foam from his beer. “But I am talking about front-page news. The only time colored folks is front-page news is when there’s been a race riot or a lynching or a boycott and a whole lot of us have been butchered up or arrested. Then they announce it.”

“You,” I said, “have a race phobia. You see prejudice where there is none, and Jim Crow where it doesn’t exist. How can you be constructive front-page news if you don’t make front-page news?”

“How can I make front-page news in a white paper if I am not white?” asked Simple. “Or else I have to be Ralph Bunche or Eartha Kitt. That is why I am glad we have got colored papers like the *Afro*, *Defender*, *Courier* and *Color*, so I can be news, too.”

“I presume that when you say ‘I’ you mean the racial I—Negroes. You are not talking about yourself.”

“Of course I am not talking about myself,” said Simple, draining his glass. “I have never been nowhere near news except when I was in the Harlem Riots. Then the papers did not mention me by name. They just said ‘mob.’ (8.107-108).

As this back-and-forth suggests, Hughes thinks about the complexity of the name in print specifically in relation to its differential force in the white and black press. But he also unpacks how the name attaches itself to black celebrity as a means of cultural distinction: Simple would never see himself in Bunche or Kitt, but he does identify as a member of the textual public created by the Negro press. In *ASK YOUR MAMA*, Hughes parodies this aspiration to become a “name” as a fantasy:

GOT THERE! YES, I MADE IT!
 NAME IN THE PAPERS EVERY DAY!
 FAMOUS—THE HARD WAY—
 FROM NOBODY AND NOTHING TO WHERE I AM.
 THEY KNOW ME, TOO, DOWNTOWN,
 ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY, EUROPE—
 ME WHO USED TO BE NOBODY,
 NOTHING BUT ANOTHER SHADOW
 IN THE QUARTER OF THE NEGROES,
 NOW A NAME! MY NAME—A NAME!

YET THEY ASKED ME OUT ON MY PATIO
 WHERE DID I GET MY MONEY!
 I SAID, FROM YOUR MAMA!

In 1961, as *ASK YOUR MAMA* was going to press, Hughes was making lists. On these lists were names: “personalities” he asked Knopf to send copies to; people to give copies of “Mama” to in person; people to mail the book to as gifts; magazines where sections of the poem’s twelve sections might be sent for publication; and, on a typed sheet with the heading “Suggestions for Publicity and Promotion for ‘Ask Your Mama,’” six categories detailing where to send review copies, mailing announcements, canned reviews, letters about the book, ads, and even bookstores in Harlem where Hughes would like a “special window display.”³ To readers familiar with Hughes’s work or midcentury black print culture more generally, these detailed suggestions should come as no surprise: Hughes could claim that he was the first black American writer to earn his living solely from his writing—one of many firsts he would lay claim to—because he worked tirelessly not only as a writer, but also as agent, advertiser, broker, intermediary, sponsor, editor, and publicist. In addition to offering insight into the lengths Hughes went to ensure the circulation and successful reception of his work, this archival material demonstrates that the address of Hughes’s poem is far more complex than has been previously considered. Indeed, such lists make it clear that *ASK YOUR MAMA* demands that we approach its address as outwardly and insistently multiple—simultaneously international and national, global, regional, and local.

One page, for instance, is neatly divided between fifteen people Hughes will give the book to in person, including Robert Glenn, who directed Hughes's "Shakespeare in Harlem"; the writer Gwendolyn Bennett; and the novelist Harold Humes, who co-founded the *Paris Review*; and fifteen people he will mail the book to. These include the painter Clara Deike; Nnamdi "Zik" Azikiwe and Kwame Nkumrah (both of whom Hughes met while at his alma mater, Lincoln University); Aimé Césaire; the Anglo-Indian biologist and theorist of race, Cedric Dover; the Colombian-Mexican poet Germán Pardo García; and the late South African writer Peter Abrahams. On the right-hand margin Hughes lists Europe, Mexico, West Indies, Puerto Rico, and the U.S.S.R among the countries where this wide-ranging list of addressees resides. Another page, headed simply, "ABROAD," adds Nancy Cunard, the French photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson, Nicolás Guillén, and Bricktop. These names are both deliberately personal—Hughes, in fact, sent a "personal letter" to each person mentioned in *ASK YOUR MAMA*—and deliberately oriented toward publicity.⁴

The second and tenth sections of the poem trade on the tension created by this dual orientation to name and figure, person and public. Specifically, Hughes invokes two characteristic generic literary figures he encountered in the Caribbean poetry he anthologized: the abuela, or grandmother, and the morena. Both of these figures recur in Guillén's poetry, for instance, as well as in the poetry of the Puerto Rican Luis Palés Matos. In *MAMA*, they appear implicated in scenes of address that would be inconceivable without decolonization. In the second section, for instance, writes:

IN THE QUARTER OF THE NEGROES
 TU ABUELA, ¿DÓNDE ESTÁ?
 LOST IN CASTRO'S BEARD?
 TU ABUELA, DÓNDE ESTÁ?
 BLOWN SKY HIGH BY MONT PELÉE?
 ¿DÓNDE ESTÁ? ¿DÓNDE ESTÁ?
 WAS SHE FLEEING WITH LUMUMBA?"

Though Hughes likely encountered the question, “TU ABUELA, DÓNDE ESTÁ?” [Your grandmother, where is she?] in Puerto Rican discourse, he immediately entangles the figure of the abuela with the names of Fidel Castro and Patrice Lumumba, the Congolese independence leader and first democratically elected prime minister of Congo, who was imprisoned and tortured in 1960, and executed by Belgian and U.S.-backed forces in 1961. Castro’s revolution and Lumumba’s death both catalyzed anticolonial movements across Africa and the Americas. More generally, as with Négritude, Hughes points to the power of the name to elicit a sympathetic identification across an internationalist network.

Such associations remind readers of an America that promotes only certain kinds of cultural exchange at the expense of others. But even more conspicuously, Hughes’s innovative end-rhyme (“ESTÁ / LUMUMBA”) asserts poetry’s capacity to bring this series of wildly divergent scenes, from revolutionary Cuba to Lumumba’s flight from persecution, into relation. Hughes achieves that relation not just through sound, but through poetic address. That is, these associations come together within a particular scene of address that requires readers to recognize that the anonymous speaker is speaking to a “MORENA”: “AY, MORENA,” the speaker asks, repeating the question, “DÓNDE ESTÁ?” The logic of question, which simultaneously marks the unlocatability of the grandmother figure as an effect of her colonial past and the desire to locate her in the new imagined coordinates made possible by decolonization, enables Hughes to bring the question of her historical belonging into the present.

This turn to the historical present and the postcolonial future is vividly enacted in the tenth section, when the MORENA speaks, not to her abuela, but to her grandfather:

GRANDPA, WHERE DID YOU MEET MY GRANDMA?

 GRANDPA, DID YOU HEAR THE
 HEAR THE OLD FOLKS SAY HOW

HOW TALL HOW TALL THE CANE GREW

 AND OF HOW SOJOURNER HOW SOJOURNER
 TO PROVE SHE WAS A WOMAN WOMAN
 BARED HER BOSOMS, BARED IN PUBLIC?
 TO PROVE SHE WAS A WOMAN?
 WHAT SHE SAID ABOUT HER CHILDREN
 ALL SOLD DOWN THE RIVER.
I LOOK AT THE STARS
AND THEY LOOK AT THE STARS,
AND THEY WONDER WHERE I BE
AND I WONDER WHERE THEY BE.
 STARS AT STARS STARS. . . .
 TOURÉ DOWN IN GUINEA
 LUMUMBA IN THE CONGO
 JOMO IN KENYATTA. . . . STARS. . . .

The address links the question of the MORENA's ancestry not only to the colonial question and the history of slavery, but more specifically to the address of abolitionism, and the public conditions and costs of that address. The passage movingly traces a line from Truth's public address to the address of decolonization. But it concludes with the grandfather, who has become too absorbed in television and its mass reproduction of stars—the "TV SILENCE / OF A MILLION MARTHA ROUNDTREES"—to hear or answer his granddaughter. This trajectory thus also traces a line from an oral mode of address ("DID YOU HEAR THE / HEAR THE OLD FOLKS SAY") to an embodied Sojourner Truth addressing a white, disbelieving audience, to the mass publics and mass subjects of televised broadcast news.

Finally, Hughes's use of the Puerto Rican idiom, "tu abuela, ¿dónde está?" also activates the ways in which the presence of other languages in *ASK YOUR MAMA* participate in poem's poetics of multiple address. The question of language, while present throughout, is nowhere more evident than in "Gospel Cha-Cha," the poem's seventh section, where "PAPIAMENTO," a creole language spoken widely throughout the Dutch West Indies, appears next to the Haitian creator god, "DAMBALLA WEDO OGUN";

“PAPA LEGBA,” a loa in Haitian voodoo; “SHANGO,” an orisha from Yoruba present in many Latin American syncretic traditions; ÑÁÑIGO, a word designating a Afro-Cuban fraternal collective and rhythm referenced in Guillén’s poetry; “POCOMANIA,” a syncretic tradition in Jamaica; and “MARIE LAVEAU,” who gained notoriety in the nineteenth century as the “Voodoo Queen” of New Orleans. As elsewhere in the poem, these words function first as sounds: Hughes hears “PAPA” in “PAPIAMENTO,” and rhymes “I DON’T KNOW” with “MARIE LAVEAU.” That these referents are brought together by the force of a shared history of economic and cultural subordination is not lost on Hughes. But as the “Liner Note” on this section suggests, his more immediate interest is how to bring them together in the present address “to various lands in various tongues” (90). That variety is brought together through the scene of prayer, but again, the address is not directed to a singular “LORD,” but to a more ambiguous, extensive pantheon of addressees and publics. Hughes describes this address using a circulatory figure: it is less monologic invocation than a percussive “CRY” that turns to music and dissolves “IN THE WIND’S FRENETIC FISTS” (51). The presence of other languages is thus not meant to “foreignize” or “creolize” the text, or simply to estrange it, but to ironize the basic situation of address of postwar U.S. poetic discourse. As I argue in more detail in the conclusion, Hughes’s poem returns to the vernacular game of the dozens precisely to parody the conditions for entry into this discourse.

The anthological architecture of Hughes’s poem, then, links format, figure, and form, and exists in constant tension with the excess of the poem’s proliferating names and multiple structures of address. The final scene of “Cultural Exchange,” for instance, is preceded by a catalogue of the names of leaders of the struggle against colonialism, including Kwame Nkrumah, Nnamdi “Zik” Azikiwe; Gamal Abdel Nasser; Fidel Castro; Ahmed

Sékou Touré; and Jomo Kenyatta. The catalogue thus stands between the opening scene of address and the final scene, and asks readers to consider both through the perspective a state-sponsored visitor from Africa. Indeed, in the opening lines of “Cultural Exchange,” Hughes reminds us—ironically through the litotes “FORBID[DING] US TO REMEMBER”—that the U.S. government regularly sponsored visits by African delegations. In the first “Liner Note,” Hughes explains that these visitors were sent to the South “to meet Negroes” (85). The visitor, Hughes writes, “is baffled by the ‘two sides to every question’ way of looking at things in the South”:

Although he finds that in the American social supermarket blacks for sale range from intellectuals to entertainers, to the African all cellophane signs point to ideas of change—in an IBM land that pays more attention to Moscow than to Mississippi.

What—wonders the African—is really happening in the shadow of world events, past and present—and of world problems, old and new—to an America that seems to understand so little about its black citizens? Even so little about itself. Even so little. (86)

By challenging readers to adopt the perspective of the state-sponsored African visitor, Hughes insists on viewing these problems from a decolonizing outside, “in the shadow of world events, past and present—and of world problems, old and new” (86).

The text of “Cultural Exchange” specifies that this “shadow” is the history of colonialism, and that the “world events, past and present” are the world-historical waves of decolonization and revolution that animate the visitor’s questions. Instead of the technological and commercial changes heralded by the “cellophane signs” of a technocratic Cold-War America, Hughes points the actual changes of globalization:

COME WHAT MAY—THE SIGNS POINT:
GHANA GUINEA
 AND THE TOLL BRIDGE FROM WESTCHESTER
 IS A GANGPLANK ROCKING RISKY
 BETWEEN THE DECK AND SHORE
 OF A BOAT THAT NEVER QUITE
 KNEW ITS DESTINATION. (90)

If the shouts, whistles, sounds, songs, clamors, cries, and stutters that recur and percuss throughout *ASK YOUR MAMA* are oriented toward and *from* the decolonizing outside, then “THE SIGNS POINT” not only to the changing world outside the United States (Ghana gained independence in 1957, Guinea in 1958), but also to claiming Harlem and other urban ghettos, as well as the American ship of state, as unsure participants in this global history of the nation that doesn’t quite know its destination or itself.

Formatting for Impossibility: *MAMA*’s Parodic Address

In a brief “Foreword” to *The Free Lance Magazine Anthology of Poetry* (1952), Hughes wrote that “words are the paper and string to package experience, to wrap up from the inside out the poet’s concentric waves of contact with the living world” (9.488). In a sense, the incongruity of this strange mixed metaphor (package-waves) offers a useful way of thinking about the tension between form and format embodied in the anthological poetics of *ASK YOUR MAMA*. The material wrapping in Hughes’s formulation might be thought of quite literally as the publicity materials Hughes and agents at Knopf authored to package the poem for reviewers and readers. The widening “concentric waves of contact” offer in turn an idealization of the poem’s circulation and an ideal vision of the extensivity of its reception.

As scholars have long observed, marketing, publicity, and poetics often go together in Hughes’s work. In this respect, as the archive attests, *ASK YOUR MAMA* represents a kind of culmination. Consider three lines that the journalist Carl Bloice quotes in his review of *MAMA*: “WHEN THEY ASK IF YOU KNEW ME, / DON’T TAKE THE FIFTH AMENDMENT: TELL ’EM LIKE IT IS: TAKE YOUR CUE FROM NKRUMAH, NASSER, ZIK AZIKIWE, KENYATTA, TOURÉ: TELL ’EM: ASK YOUR MAMA.”⁵ These lines do not appear in Hughes’s poem. They are most likely a promotional blurb, part

of a package of materials Knopf prepared as part of its publicity campaign for the book. Advising readers not to take the fifth, they cannily exploit the rhetorical situation of the McCarthy era informant. In this respect, they echo the paranoid structure of address that Hughes ventriloquizes and parodies in a series of microdialogical scenes:

THOSE SIT-IN KIDS, HE SAID,
MUST BE RED!
KENYATTA RED! CASTRO RED!
NKRUMAH RED!
.....
HOW ABOUT THAT NAACP
AND THE RADICALS IN THAT
THERE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE?
AIN'T YOU GOT NO INFORMATION
ON DR. ROBERT WEAVER? (73)

Hughes does here what he mostly avoided doing when he was called to testify before the Senate's Permanent Subcommittee in 1953: he names names. James Eastland, for instance, the Democratic segregationist on the Subcommittee, is named three times in the poem. In this sense, *ASK YOUR MAMA* builds a counter-canon of names named while simultaneously underscoring the ways in which names are both overdetermined and underdetermined—and differentially weighted—depending on the publics and scenes of address in which they are encountered.

Though they are less subtle than the actual lines of Hughes's poem, the promotional lines Bloice quotes in his review are written in the same majuscule typeface, and Bloice does not indicate their provenance in his review. These parallels between the promotional poetry and the actual poetry begin to suggest how the poem's anticipated reception—those emanating waves of contact—are built into the book's format and material packaging. As Meredith McGill writes, attending to "format reminds us that 'reception' is not separable from and subsequent to book production." The design of *ASK YOUR MAMA* offers a remarkable proof of this claim. Designed by Vincent Torre for Knopf, Hughes's lines of

poetry were printed in all capital left-justified letters. The lines alternated in brown and blue ink across beige-colored pages. This unique design was intended as an homage to Duke Ellington's ambitious multi-movement jazz suite *Black, Brown, and Beige*. Though it failed to garner acclaim in 1943 (Hughes was among its only reviewers), Ellington hoped that the concept album's re-release in 1958 would speak more powerfully and propitiously to audiences about their historical moment.⁶ Ellington described his project as a "tone parallel to the history of the American Negro," a phrase that illuminates the differences between the two projects even as it draws them into a relation. In *MAMA* the printed sequence of twelve "moods for jazz" returns us to the format of the book even as it sounds reminders of America's colonial history alongside the cascading names of anticolonial leaders and newly decolonized states in Africa and the Caribbean.

Three other key features of the book's format—the typography, the "Liner Notes for the Poetically Unhep" appended to the book's end, and Hughes's "score" for the poem (musical notations, which appear in italics in the right hand margins)—appeared quite late in the compositional process. The left-justified capital letters, for instance, only figure in the late versions of Hughes's poem—for most of its drafts, Hughes wrote the poem in standard letter case. As Kathy Lou Schulz observes, the all-caps typeface, known as "Egyptian" serif or block or square serifs, is evocative of newspaper headlines (as at the end of Hughes's well-known "Ballad of the Landlord"), telegrams, concert posters, and advertisements (as in his poem "Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria"). Their lateness in the genesis of the poem is suggestive of the importance of these typographical features to Hughes's anticipation of the book's reception as well as to Knopf's publicity campaign.

While the score acts like a kind of metacommentary, the all-caps lines in the left-hand margin propel down the page in a seemingly undirected headlong rush. Some passages

are undoubtedly Hughes at his most ungrammatical and disjunctive. Overall, the sustained visual presentation embodies the tensions that structure the parallels between the columns and draw our attention to the visual distance between them. The book's central visual challenge to readers is to move imaginatively across these margins and their various modalities of address, from print to score, format to form, and back. As Hughes explained it in a draft of an unpublished publicity note he authored for Knopf:

The book, subtitled *12 Moods for Jazz*, Hughes feels is like a recording with six tracks to a side. Since current LP records all have liner notes, why not a poem? The Hughes notes by Hughes comment not only upon the mood and meanings of the poetry, but go beyond ~~that~~ them into the realm of free association, which the poet claims jazz itself does—so when you have finished the liner notes, you ~~go back~~ return to the poems to find out what the notes mean. (“Liner Notes Used In a Book for First Time”)

The cross-referential reading practice Hughes endorses here gives the lie to the notion that he expected only “squares” or “readers ignorant of black music and black history” to read them (Rampersad ix).

At the same time, this challenge underscores a more fundamental tension organizing the collection. The design and format of *ASK YOUR MAMA* announce the poem as a turn away from the filmic, the collage, and the bop poetics of *Montage of a Dream Deferred* and toward the book. The very formatting of the book—from color of the ink, to the typeface, to the scoring, to the “Liner Notes,” and the horizontal page orientation—all suggest that *ASK YOUR MAMA* is not so much an allegory for the literary endeavor to *write* the music *in*, so much as a treatise on the poetry book's staggering, inventive, playful capacity to register the dramas of address as no other form can. Hughes's turn to the book, then, was also a renovation of the book. I turn now to the argument that this renovation should be understood as a parodic reorientation of address.

Addressing a “Nation by Proxy”: Minimal Conditions and the Logic of the Slip

In a 1961 letter to Matt and Evelyn Crawford, Hughes enclosed a copy of his translation of Guillén's "Little Rock." In the margin, near a reference to his attendance at the White House as an honored guest of the poet Léopold Senghor (the new president of Senegal) and the State Department's sponsorship of his participation in the Lagos Arts Festival, he joked that "it's good to have a 'nation,' even if by proxy" (*Letters from Langston* 336). The underside of Hughes's joke points to his sense of the doubly compromised, fluid status of his citizenship, underscoring his perception that his American-ness has always been enclosed in scare quotes, as well as the fact that even this qualified marker of national belonging had been temporarily granted and might just as easily be revoked. The joke also suggests that Guillén's anticolonial interpretation of Little Rock speaks to, if not provokes, the question of what it means to have a "nation" by proxy and in the first place.

Hughes's marginalia raises questions not only about the relationship between his cultural nationalism and the transnationalism evident in his anthology projects, but also about the parodic function of *ASK YOUR MAMA*'s global address. In Bakhtin's account of the parodic function of novelistic discourse, parodists write with the power of the nation state behind them. But along with his joke, Hughes's anthologies, Guillén translations, and poetry suggest that he was not writing so assuredly. If we can identify in Hughes's translation of "Little Rock" an assimilationist strategy that Vera Kutzinski shows Hughes practiced throughout his earlier translations, we can also see in Hughes's strategic enjambments, and in the very decision to translate this poem and share it in his correspondence, another strategy as well, a working out of how to incorporate vernacularity into a global address. Moreover, if both of these aspects of Hughes's translation—the investments in assimilation and in the vernacular—are understood as constitutive of a practice of the impossibility of anthologizing blackness in general and of Guillén's dialogical poetry in particular, then Hughes's use of the

dozens in *ASK YOUR MAMA* may be read as the last in a series of responses aimed at anticipating the mercurial dynamics of white and black publics that Hughes was frustrated by throughout his career.

On the one hand, Hughes's turn to the vernacular in *MAMA* is in keeping with his longstanding interest in vernacular forms. On the other hand, it is also indebted to the microdialogical poetics of the name in "Little Rock" and more generally to the global address of *The Dove of Popular Flight*. Hughes's translation of "Little Rock" thus demonstrates that he learned from Guillén's midcentury poetry how to revise his own internationalism without sacrificing his investment in vernacularity. Guillén executes this reorientation toward the global through the relay of poetic genre. In *Dove* he writes an *ars poetica*; a canción puertorriqueña [Puerto Rican song]; "Tres canciones chinas" [Three Chinese Songs]; "Tres canciones chilenas" [Three Chilean Songs]; a parodic elegy on the death of Senator McCarthy; five city poems (addressed to Kingston, New York, Panama, Madrid, and São Paulo); Bulgarian and Guatemalan ballads; a "son" for the Brazilian painter Candido Portinari; a "Ronda" [Round]; an epitaph; an epistle, and a poem addressed to Sputnik, whose thirteen lines in all-caps imitating "TELEGRAMAS" [TELEGRAMS] and "PÁNICO Y EDICIONES / EXTRA DE LOS PERIÓDICOS" [PANIC AND EXTRA / EDITIONS HOT OFF THE PRESS] anticipate the typeface of *MAMA*.

Like Guillén's earlier criollo poetry, *Dove* has often been read as prefiguring the Cuban revolution, or even contributing to it. In this interpretation, Guillén the poet remains first and foremost of a multiracial revolutionary Cuban nationalism. But Hughes's borrowings from Guillén's internationalist address suggests that the relation of both poets to midcentury nationalisms is more complex. Hughes's translation of "Little Rock" suggests that he also takes from Guillén a new way of incorporating the heterogeneity of

“vernacularity” into a global address. As Kutzinski reminds us, the vernacular is “not a language as such, but a relation between one language situation and another.” In Hughes early poetry, vernaculars are “represented as dialects and sociolects” in which “the perplexities and possibilities of translation within what is commonly perceived as a single language alert us to the cultural multiplicities into which that language breaks down upon closer scrutiny” (163). In *ASK YOUR MAMA*, Hughes takes advantage of this distinctive impossibility—of the particular way that the vernacular signals the breakdown of language into multiplicity—by extending the vernacular into scenes of address that it necessarily disrupts by virtue of not pertaining to the “single language” that governs the scene. By using the dozens and its structure of address, the vernacular’s particular disturbance of the standardizing function of national language becomes lightly parodic.

The title phrase “Ask Your Mama” derives from the dozens, an African-American vernacular practice, typical of masculine youth culture, in which participants trade a series of “your mama” barbs, each attempting to rhetorically best the other through invective.⁷ The flexible, dialogic structure of address built into the game allows Hughes to enlist the iterative back-and-forth of insult and one-upmanship as a variable refrain that lends the poem its twelve-part structure. That is, across the breadth of *ASK YOUR MAMA* the practice of the dozens is far more important *structurally* than it is as a mere insult or series of insults. In Hughes’s hands, the point is not that the dozens hits a specified addressee particularly hard, but that its recognizability as a generic practice enables readers to perceive the conditions of addressability that work upon the poem’s various speakers and interlocutors. The very title invokes the modes of address and social practice the dozens relies on, then, but at the same time, it projects this address beyond any particular localized, vernacular scene.

Another way of saying this is that the speakers in *ASK YOUR MAMA* address their retorts not to one but to various “mamas”: the mother country; the mother tongue; white America; the mothers of the white interlocutors whose interjections punctuate the poem; and the mother whose child sincerely asks her for money to see *Porgy and Bess*. Though these retorts are staged dialogically, they rarely lead to responses. Instead, the refusal to respond is part of the point: the address opens up through refusal to a multiplicity of addressees and a wide range of tones, textures, and untranslatable words and phrases. The speakers who adopt the rejoinder—and may just as capriciously abandon it—not only reject the everyday racism of an insensitive or careless question from a white interlocutor, but also refuse to answer, explain, justify, or otherwise “own up” to white racial epistemologies. Thus they refuse the position of the native informant, that expelled figure and global subject, who is both present and unacknowledgeable, “needed and foreclosed,” as Gayatri Spivak defined it (6). And by refusing to be native informants, Hughes’s speakers refuse to translate their cultural knowledge into more familiar, saleable genres. They reject the assumption that black artists should serve as cultural translators who, when called upon, will explain black life to their white interlocutors.

The logic of the “slip”—of putting someone in the dozens before they realize it—depends on a tacit understanding of minimal conditions for belonging to a public. That is, auditors often don’t know they have been implicated in the game as targeted addressees until they’ve been taunted, and then it’s too late—they’ve already lost. Moreover, *ASK YOUR MAMA* does not stop at putting the poem’s white interlocutors, anticommunist interrogators, and cultural power brokers, into the dozens: these efforts are all part of the poem’s larger ambition to imagine that global decolonization will ultimately give white segregated America the slip (“YOUR MAMA IS YOUR COUNTRY”). The particular logic

of “slip”—the way in which an addressee unknowingly becomes interpellated into the dozens—parodies the essential minimal condition for entry into a public. As Michael Warner explains, that condition is merely that one “comes into range” of the address (64). One can become a member of a public without being directly addressed or embraced by it as a recognizable or addressable subject. Hughes’s slipping of white America into the dozens thus reverses the way in which black people come into range of white news (as Simple explains it) or midcentury black literature comes into range of normative literary discourse. In this sense, the gesture echoes Hughes’s and Bontemps’s inclusion of “Tributary Poems by Non-Negroes” in *Poetry of the Negro*.

In another sense, the use of the vernacular, together with the internal dialogism of the poem, stresses the way in which decolonization opened up a space for African-Americans to redefine their orientation to emergent global publics abroad and at home. Through his unpublished translation of Guillén’s “Little Rock,” his anthologies, his correspondence, and his poetry, he envisioned the possibilities for cross-cultural exchange by staging its scenes of direct address from the outside, from publically voiced perspectives of unnamed, anonymous, non-native, figures—a visitor from Africa; political and cultural actors recently returned home; a member of the black bourgeoisie; an aspiring black internationalist; the abuela and the morena; and the child who wants to see a show her mother can’t afford. These figures collectively refuse the roles of native informant and cultural authority, and assert their contemporaneity. Hughes’s particular contribution lies in his attempt to bring the possibility of redefinition back: in effect, by writing from the outside, to reimagine the conditions of addressability for black life, and bring the space of urban America into range of the global address of decolonization.

If Hughes's engagement with the anthology's postwar proliferation exposes the limits not only of monolingual lyric address, but also of the genre system more generally—of how poetry's communicability is constrained by the way it is organized through tradition, canon, genre, and idiom—then it also shows that the practice of translation energized these constraints, loosening them in some instances, tightening them in others. And if for Spicer the anthology proved to be a counter-model of the outside, a counter-occasion against which to pose the address to publics and persons, for poet-anthologists like Langston Hughes and Elizabeth Bishop, to whom I turn now, anthologization's primary effect was that poetry became a register of the multiplicity of address, not its attenuation.

Notes to Chapter 2

¹ Hughes's decision not to translate "yanqui" is also telling. Even though the word derives from the English "Yankee," a regional descriptor for a New Englander, Guillén's "yanqui" performs as a synecdoche for all of the imperialist United States. Indeed, the alignment of "yanqui" with Faubus, the notorious Arkansas governor's surname, supports this reading: "yanqui" is used as a common descriptor discourse on U.S. imperialism in the Americas, and thus also helps to explain why Hughes chose this particular poem to translate and share in his correspondence.

² The choice by Armstrong, Ellington, Hughes and others to participate in these programs anticipates how later postcolonial writers, in Sarah Brouillette's account, did not resist or directly oppose commodification, but instead consciously interacted with the publication, distribution, reception, and sale of their work. Brouillette's insight helps to explain Hughes's insistent association of poetry with other forms of cultural production—including the anthology. As Karen Jackson Ford points out, Hughes had a far more complex, heteronomous sense of the relationship between making poetry and, as he once famously put it, "making poetry pay."

³ Hughes asked Knopf to send copies of *ASK YOUR MAMA* to "personalities"—Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Lena Horne, W.E.B. Du Bois, Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus, James Baldwin, Mahalia Jackson, and Adam Powell, among others; and "poets and writers," including Ezra Pound, Lorraine Hansberry, Melvin Tolson, John Ciardi, and Norman Mailer. In addition to this range of potential addressees, Hughes sent individual sections of *MAMA* to a remarkable range of magazines, from the avant-garde publications like Russell Atkins's lesser known *Free Lance* and Amiri Baraka and Diane Di Prima's *Floating Bear*, to the more mainstream *Poetry* and *The Crisis*. The Acknowledgments page of the 1989 edition of *ASK YOUR MAMA* included in Hughes's *Collected Poems* only lists *Poetry*, *The Crisis*, *The New Republic*, *Voice*, and *Jazz Today*—not the more radical publications. See "Possible Magazine Publication."

⁴ A note at the end of Hughes's "Suggestions for Publicity and Promotion" states: "Personal letter to each of persons mentioned in ASK YOUR MAMA."

⁵ See Dace 643.

⁶ The connections to Ellington's album do not end with its historical project or color scheme. One section of *ASK YOUR MAMA*, "Bird in Orbit," elegizing Charlie Parker, is titled after Ellington's "Orbit." For more on Hughes's review of Ellington's 1943 program, see Barg and van de Leur, 428.

⁷ For more on the literary dozens, see Wald, 63-77, 154-55.

Chapter 3: Elizabeth Bishop's 'Bloody Anthology' and the Making of *Geography III*

Introduction

Scholars of Bishop's work and of twentieth-century poetry more generally have increasingly turned their attention to the poetry of the Americas as an object of analysis. This chapter contributes to this ongoing work the argument that genre theory and historical poetics offer strategies for reading the multiple addresses and publics of this poetry. In spite of renewed attention to Bishop's work in Brazil, the anthology she co-edited with Emanuel Brasil, *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry* (Wesleyan UP, 1972), remains understudied today. Drawing on recent scholarship (by Rachel Galvin, Justin Read, and Roland Greene, among others) that turns to the Brazilian cultural theorist Haroldo de Campos to interpret the complexities of literary relationality and change, I read *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry* alongside Bishop's late poetry. The translation anthology works through Bishop as a transhemispheric relay that reanimates poetic genres and subtends a parodic anthological poetics of misrecognition.

In "Da Razão Antropofágica: A Europa Sob o Signo da Devoração" [Anthropophagous Reason: Dialogue and Difference in Brazilian Culture], De Campos argues that "...the cannibal was a polemicist (from the Greek polemos, meaning struggle or combat), but he was also an 'anthologist'" (160).¹ I foreground this less well-known remark to put some daylight between my focus on anthologization and the approaches of these other scholars, and also to clarify how I read Bishop's "cannibalistic" practice. Whereas de Campos, like other Brazilian poets, situates the cannibal-as-anthologist in a masculine scene of devoration and "transcreation"—an aggressive, violent incorporation of the textual "virtues of the dead man" and his power—in her poetry Bishop's anthological practice is more specifically aimed at cannibalizing the gendered literary norms of the Anglo-American

genre system. Above all, Bishop cannibalizes the norms of the dramatic monologue—the signature anthological genre of the Victorian poetess and a mainstay of mid-twentieth-century U.S. poetics—by assuming a position that is perpetually situated outside of this system and yet simultaneously intimately familiar with it.² In her poems, this practice gets expressed through scenes of address that simultaneously invoke and distance themselves from the recognizable conventions of the dramatic monologue. These scenes of misrecognition redistribute the energies of the dramatic monologue into a series of staged “microdialogues” that foreground the partiality and incompleteness of generic identification—the failure, as it were, of the generic to fully translate or cohere, to uphold the reading norms of a given public, and to do the communicative work genre is supposed to do.

While she was still living in Brazil, Bishop made the case for the power of English literary genre and form. Tom Robbins, in a 1966 review, records Bishop as remarking, “We have a wealth of forms of our own that are suitable to our language. I mean English forms, not American. We’re still more English than anything else, and this ‘American language’ which Williams Carlos Williams was always talking about is nonsense. We’re writing better English poetry than the English are writing at present, so why not be proud of it?” (*Conversations* 34). Bishop’s remarks frame her embrace of English literary genre as a move against the nativist edge of Williams’s radical experimentation, the San Francisco Renaissance poets’ inheritance of Pound’s Sinophilia and West Coast poets’ more general interest in Eastern literary form and tradition, and likewise position her against the Poundian model of creative translation that produces “versions” of poems (like Lowell’s 1961 *Imitations*, which “[Lowell] admitted were so ‘reckless with literal meaning’ as to ‘have dropped lines, moved lines, moved stanzas, changed images and altered meter and intent’”

(*Translation Changes Everything* 176)). Genre here is political, transnational, anti-nativist, reactionary and partial: Bishop's "we" preserves some forms of literary nationalism (Englishness) in order to pitch out against others (Williams's or the Beats' projections of Americanness). But given this, what is especially surprising is the degree to which, in her "English" poems, the interplay of generic recognition and social misrecognition depends on the Brazilian poetry she read, translated, and anthologized.

Bishop's later work—especially in the "Brazil" poems of *Questions of Travel*, "Under the Window: Ouro Preto," the poems of *Geography III*, and the late poems "Santarém" and "Pink Dog"—foregrounds, rather than minimizes, scenes of address that dramatize the interplay of generic recognition and social misrecognition. By highlighting this interplay, this work arguably functions as a means of aesthetic differentiation, enabling Bishop to distance herself from the various forms of poetic address associated with confessional, Beat, and second-wave women's poetry and poetics, as well as from the "seriousness," erudition, and myopia of her favored modernist forbears, Moore, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot.³ What differentiates *Geography III* from Bishop's explorations of the sociality of address in the sixties and in her final poems, is its distinctive anthological overlay.

Across the ten poems of *Geography III*—"In the Waiting Room," "Crusoe in England," "Night City," "The Moose," "12 O'Clock News," "Poem," "One Art," "The End of March," "Objects and Apparitions," and "Five Flights Up"—Bishop incorporates the addresses, themes, and sometimes particular lines of Brazilian poetry she translated and anthologized into scenes of address that play out against a backdrop determined above all by one normative midcentury poetic genre: the dramatic monologue. The genre—which rose to prominence in the nineteenth century through Poetess anthologies, and has since been called one of the most important poetic innovations of the nineteenth century—remained

surprisingly resilient in the twentieth century. At midcentury, it was featured prominently not only in New Critical anthologies, but also in the influential criticism of Randall Jarrell (and in his poems as well). In 1940, for instance, Jarrell argued that “modernistic” poetry was “the culminating point of romanticism,” in no small part because the “qualities of typical modernist poetry” are that “poetry is primarily lyric, intensive...poems usually have, not a logical, but the more or less associational structure of dramatic monologue” (86). As Stephanie Burt explains,

In Jarrell’s critical prose, ‘dramatic monologue’ is a neutral description of an historically important kind of poetry. (Jarrell wrote in 1942: “The dramatic monologue is primarily a departure from the norm of ordinary poetry; but in modernist poetry this departure *itself becomes the norm*.”) But “dramatic” is always a word of praise, and it came to name a virtue he sought for himself.”

If “All Jarrell’s most distinctive poems exhibit *some* features we associate with the dramatic monologue,” Burt argues, they also reconfigure these features, “distribut[ing]” them “over many poetic subgenres because the dramatic monologue’s special starting point becomes the self conscious goal of the Jarrell poem: to acknowledge a lonely speaker by placing her inner, imagining self in a potentially shared, interpersonal world” (159).

As Burt incisively puts it in her reading of Jarrell’s use of the dramatic monologue, this is the individuated subjectivity that perceives the social, desires it, but remains apart from it. Yet what Bishop stresses, unlike Jarrell, is the force of being addressed without being recognized. That is, in Bishop’s poems that hew most closely to the conventions of the dramatic monologue, she traces the experience not of a “lonely speaker” but of a generic figure—an identifiable, but ultimately, misrecognized part of the social. And the social itself, and its constitutive relations, remains “vague”—defined, that is, by vagueness and illegibility. The “really lofty vagueness” of Brazil, as she once described it to Marianne Moore,

heightened her sense of the social as difficult to read and understand, on the one hand, and as the creative substance of her intimacies, on the other (*Library of America* 803).

Throughout her career, Bishop often drew on key genres of a broader Spanish and Latin American poetic tradition to investigate and respond to this vagueness. Genre is thus the key means by which Bishop writes in the light of Spanish and Latin American poetry as well as in light of Anglo-American literary genres. At the time of her death, in fact, she left a series of notes for a proposed book-length project—an elegy for her longtime lover, Maria Carlota “Lota” Costallat de Macedo Soares, to be titled, simply, *Elegy*—that included passages from well-known elegies by Federico García Lorca and Miguel Hernández. She also consistently incorporated distinctively textured Latin American genres other than the elegy into her work. For instance, scholars have shown how her ballad “The Burglar of Bablyon” draws on the *literatura de cordel*, a cheap print genre of popular songs associated with the northeastern region of Brazil, as well as her on her translation of parts of João Cabral de Melo Neto’s Christmas verse drama, “Morte e Vida Severina” (“The Life and Death of a Severino”); and how her late poem, “Pink Dog,” parodies the global hit “The Girl from Ipanema,” whose lyrics were composed by the poet Vinícius de Moraes.⁴ In addition to Cabral de Melo Neto’s play, Bishop translated de Moraes’s 1937 “Soneto de Intimidade” [Sonnet of Intimacy] for *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry*. In general, the poems selected for the anthology—which include other sonnets and a “poema de natal” (Christmas poem) by de Moraes; a “rondó” [rondeau] and a “centão” [cento] by Manuel Bandeira; a “redondilha” [rondel] by the experimental Oswald de Andrade; an elegy by Joaquim Cardozo; two sonnets and a “balada” [ballad] by Cecília Meireles; and a dramatic monologue by Murilo Mendes—tend to exhibit a notable degree of genericness or formal recognizability. This is a feature, not a bug: Bishop and her co-editor strategically chose

poems for “the American reader” (a term Bishop on the basis of their perceived translatability into recognizable English literary genres.

While the recognizability of form and genre in *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry* may capture the attention of its readers, the translated poems themselves court, and even embrace, misrecognition. I contend that this embrace is activated by translation, and heightened by anthologization. More specifically, the chapter’s final section argues that the dynamics of genre (mis)recognition at work in the anthology subtend the modes of address and publicity explored in *Geography III* (FSG, 1976). As she translates and anthologizes Brazilian poetry throughout the sixties, the orientation, structures, and scenes of address of her own poems change. Rather than present speech acts from unitary, stable speakers directed to specified addressees, Bishop’s later poems increasingly mobilize generic conventions in order to stage scenes of misrecognition that dramatize the ways in which subjects may be addressed and misrecognized at once. These scenes also underscore how addressed language circulates beyond specified speakers and addressees, implying—to borrow a line from Bishop’s translation of Octavio Paz’s “Objetos y apariciones” (“Objects and Apparitions”)—that in her poetry things don’t “hurry away from their names”; rather, names hurry away from their objects, especially when those objects are persons.

Bishop stages these scenes within Anglo-American literary genres she assumes her readers will recognize. Her poems thus create a dialectical interplay between generic recognition and social misrecognition that undoes the normative “triangulated” structure of direct address typically associated with both lyric and dramatic monologue. Bishop’s reflections on translation and anthologization—first as an observer, then as a translator, and later as an anthologist—mark an important origin point for this push-and-pull between generic recognition and social misrecognition, and as a result, help to illuminate how this

dynamic works across the interstices of the Brazilian and American literary fields. That is, the scenes of misrecognition in her later poems invoke proximity to recognizable Anglo-American genres and generic figures only to withdraw from their most salient contours. The presence of the addressed language of others—often explicitly or implicitly under the pressure of translation—works at cross-purposes to the conventions of direct address, making the limitations of lyric modalities of private communication palpably clear.⁵ Direct address in these scenes—under a window in a literary provincial Brazilian town, on a boat, at the desk of a poet-cum-television news broadcaster, in a bus traveling to Boston, on Crusoe’s island, and most famously, in a waiting room—is not actually direct but continually vulnerable to indirection, and it travels not between speaker and addressee, but across many microdialogical encounters between many speakers and many addressees. In some instances, the fiction of *a* or *the* speaker, a central fiction of the dramatic monologue and of New Critical close reading practice, is not simply multiplied, but diffused, such that the poems aren’t really interpretable in terms of speakers and addressees at all. Instead, objects, captions, animals, images, and texts all variably and vociferously interject, and this polyvocality surges into the substance of the poem with minimal commentary or framing. The result is a picture of poetry always in the process of being reconstituted by the talkiness of social relations, always drifting beyond its seeming origin or locus.

This reading is at odds with the generally shared sense among Bishop’s critics that *Geography III* is Bishop’s most introspective and personal book (where “introspective” and “personal” are basically synonymous terms).⁶ I read *Geography III* as her most anthological and social work, an attempt to engage more directly than ever her fascination with the sociality of address and the conditions of addressability that exists at constituent heart of her later poetry. Of course, to argue that *Geography III* is more about the “sociality of address”

doesn't necessarily exclude the "personal"; in fact, Bishop claimed translating, anthologizing, and editing as highly "personal" activities, but in a way that flouts the normative assumptions underpinning the term. Bishop's scenes of misrecognition trade on the minimal condition for inclusion in a public—that of being merely in range. Their core drama depends on a dynamic of being included in a textual public but not directly addressed by it or its members. As such they are about the desire to be addressed as a recognizable kind of person and as a recognizable member of a public. They are also, therefore, about the frustration of that desire, about the experience of being or becoming generic, an identifiable, but ultimately, misrecognized part of the social—an Elizabeth, a Crusoe, a pink dog, "the American poet," a woman poet, a poetess. Yet Bishop's persistent, abiding interest in genre and form is not about miscommunication, mistranslation, or misunderstanding per se. Her work consistently seeks, rather, to understand what and how misrecognition communicates across the public intimacies of social life and literary culture. Rather than read her investment in poetic genres as exclusively anti-social, reactionary, or prejudicially Anglo-American, then, my approach focuses on how the interplay of recognition and misrecognition in Bishop's poems is performative and generative, elaborating a transhemispheric anthological poetics.

The stylized, lightly parodic dynamics of misrecognition that structure the internal dialogism of Bishop's work and *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry* disclose their orientation to the *New Yorker* public for which Bishop primarily wrote. As Fiona Green argues, Bishop's poetry is constituted in many ways by the "semi-detached reading practices" that the *New Yorker* sponsored in the literary work and advertisements featured in its pages (810). Such reading practices arguably inform not only Bishop's *New Yorker* poetry, but also her editorial decisions and translations for the "American reader" of her anthology of Brazilian poetry. The genericness invoked by Bishop's poetry and the poetry she translated

for the anthology suggests that by translating genre Bishop found a way to make Brazilian poetry amenable to the reading practices of her *New Yorker* public. Even when meaningfully positioned against the immodesty and indecorousness of Beat and confessional poetics, the primacy of genre in her poetry and translations might be read as accommodating the liberal desire to imagine a subjectivity that has things “both ways,” imagining itself “free from the grip of consumer desire,” as Green writes, while simultaneously indulging in the postcard pleasures of browsing the Americas (811).⁷

At the same time, however, in the anthology as well as in her own poetry, this genericness and the semi-detached reading practice it encourages are also lightly parodic, suggesting that as a transhemispheric relay, genre in Bishop is more dynamic than stable. In the next section, I turn to a close reading of Bishop’s “Under the Window,” to argue that as a lightly parodic, pseudo-dramatic monologue, the poem’s microdialogical scene of misrecognition evokes this critique but also revises it. “Under the Window” attends less to consumerist desire of midcentury car culture than to a semi-detached reading of the address of the bumper, which joins the talk of others, implicating them in its indirect range. That indirect address itself is only one of many, ranging from the women and men to the “seven ages of man” at the poem’s end, a figure that invokes the rich literary genealogy of fountain poems that share an origin in the Horace’s ode on the fons Bandusiae (826). To read “Under the Window” this way suggests a picture of midcentury U.S. poetry as an emergent art responsive to mass subjects and mass publics, which summons an anthological poetics animated and conditioned by the contradictions of semi-detached, middle-class reading practices. It is also a poetry engaged in a process of becoming differently conscious of itself—a process shaped through and in relation to the anthology of translations. This process entailed for some a reckoning with these very reading practices, with the tensions

and stresses bound up in the simultaneous struggle to address persons and publics. As such, it is also a poetry written in and against the generic grain of the anthology itself.

“But this is *isn’t* my world—or is it?”

For Justin Read, mistranslation is “the central communicative feature of American life as portrayed by Bishop” (300). Yet Bishop’s translations, anthology, and later poetry disclose a more specific concern—not with “American life” per se, but rather with the communicative features of genre and figure. This concern emerges from the interstices of Anglo-American and Brazilian literary culture, and extends to the ways that generic recognition and misrecognition infiltrate social life and public discourse. That is, in the broadest sense, Bishop’s cannibalization of Latin American genres is at once indicative of her dual position in Brazilian and the U.S. literary fields, and of her struggle to incorporate her lived experience of Brazil into her writing. In a passage from a 1942 letter to Moore about Neruda, for instance, Bishop admits in a parenthetical aside “(my Spanish leads to so many misunderstandings)” (*One Art* 107).

This kind of acknowledgment will become a refrain in her correspondence from Brazil. Bishop could read Spanish, French, and Portuguese well enough, but she could not speak Spanish or Portuguese proficiently. In a 1966 interview, she remarked, “I don’t read [Portuguese] habitually—just some newspapers and some books. After all these years, I’m like a dog: I understand everything that’s said to me, but I don’t speak it very well” (Monteiro 19). She relied on intermediaries—above all, on Lota—to help her navigate the cultural worlds in which she moved. Bishop’s lack of fluency helps us to understand the many errors in Bishop’s translations, but her self-awareness also points to complex role misrecognition plays in her poetics. It is partly because Bishop never learned Portuguese well, in other words, that her letters and her poems represent sociality in Brazil as

multifarious—vague, erotic, frustrating, charismatic, confusing, affectionate, estranging, politically treacherous, and crucially, gestural.

In 1954, two years after her letter to Moore, she remarked to Pearl Kazin, “And I haven’t told you half of what I’d like to, just vaped on with my vague thoughts about Brazil... any writing about people living in foreign countries interests me now; I feel I have to develop some kind of intelligent attitude to it and learn to like it more than I do, see more of it, *use* it somehow.... That *vagueness* about history, society—even their own geography seems to swamp one, sometimes...” (*Library of America* 803). This letter suggests that Bishop’s interest in genre, and specifically, the English travel narratives and anthropological studies of Brazil that she bought and read (“any writing about people living in foreign countries”) is partly attributable to her perception of the “vagueness” of her experience of Brazil. But it is her generalized anxiety and sense of urgency about the meaning of her experience in Brazil, how to “use it,” and whether she belonged meaningfully in Brazil’s worlds, that ultimately motivates so much of her work. Questions of *meaning* and belonging are once again mediated through genre.

In a letter Robert Lowell, Bishop characterizes her desire to “*use* it somehow” in even more anxious terms. After describing with typically scrupulous attention a memorable part of a trip to the Amazon that she took with Lota, she admits:

But I worry a great deal about what to do with all this accumulation of exotic or picturesque or charming detail, and I don’t want to become a poet who can only write about South America, etc—it is one of my greatest worries now—how to use everything and keep on living here, most of the time, probably, and yet be a New Englander-herring choker-bluenoser at the same time... (*Library of America* 834)

Paulo Henriques Britto, a Brazilian translator and astute critic of Bishop’s poetry, cites this passage as evidence for his argument that as a “cultural intermediary,” Bishop chooses to retreat whenever possible to the safety of Lota’s circle and her houses in Samambaia and

Ouro Preto rather than make a more concerted effort to understand the country, its languages, cultures, and poetry. But as Katrina Dodson has shown, Bishop's literary interest in Ouro Preto broadly aligns with Brazilian intellectuals and modernists' interest in the "historical-cultural cachet" (90) of the region of Minas Gerais, which culminated in the Brazilian government's designation of Ouro Preto as one of the first large sites for cultural preservation (74). Thus in Bishop's late poem "Under the Window: Ouro Preto," the old fountain is a scene of address: what bubbles up is language made possible by, and mediated through, a doubled sense of Ouro Preto as a distinctively Brazilian and simultaneously universal literary topos:

The conversations are simple: about food,
or, "When my mother combs my hair it hurts."
"Women." "*Women!*" Women in red dresses

and plastic sandals, carrying their almost
invisible babies—muffled to the eyes
in all the heat—unwrap them, lower them,

and give them drinks of water lovingly
from dirty hands, here where there used to be
a fountain, here where all the world still stops.

As the opening stanza suggests, the poem is built out of the pieces of addressed language that reach the window from the fountain below. After the first verse commenting on the "simplicity" of the conversations, talk seems to take over the body of the poem. At the same time, however, its simplicity is thrown into question, or relief, by its qualified status as poetic speech: the scene unfolds in tercets comprised of iambic pentameter. By the third verse, the description of "Women in red dresses," though not in quotation marks, so echoes the talk of women—"Women." "*Women!*"—that it works like free indirect discourse: it virtually joins the conversation, signaling participation in the scene below.

In the poem's second half, overheard addressed language extends from the colloquy of women to trucks and the men who drive them:

A big new truck, Mercedes-Benz, arrives
to overawe them all. The body's painted
with throbbing rosebuds and the bumper says

HERE I AM FOR WHOM YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING.
.....

Meanwhile, another older truck grinds up
in a blue cloud of burning oil. It has

a syphilitic nose. Nevertheless,
its gallant driver tells the passers by
NOT MUCH MONEY BUT IT IS AMUSING.

"She's been in labor now two days." "Transistors
cost too much." "For lunch we took advantage
of the poor duck the dog decapitated."

Addressed language arrives mediated not only through the particular homosociality of the gatherings around the fountain, a classic locus amoenus, but as the title, italics, and capitals in this passage remind us, through translation. That is, to borrow from Rebecca Walkowitz's account of the born translated novel, translation in "Under the Window" is both medium and origin: the poem is "written as translation" and written, in a sense, "from translation" (4). Translation is a condition of address, then, and it animates the central question the poem turns over. As Bishop put it in a 1964 letter to Lowell, that question is one of belonging: "But this *isn't* my world—or is it?" (*Words in Air* 531). Bishop will return to this question throughout *Geography III*, where in various scenes of misrecognition questions the nature of her belonging, both to the language of her surround—in the sense of being addressable—and to discursive worlds and textual publics. In this latter sense, the question of belonging pertains to the boundary conditions of addressability marked out by the interactions between the Anglo-American and Brazilian literary fields, genre systems, and media ecologies. In

“Under the Window,” this question remains unresolved, embodied in the tension that inheres in a model of poetry that never finally claims the mediated content of overheard translated language, even as the poem capably parses its world through the recognizable normative blank verse of “English poetry.” This tension is nowhere more present than when, as in the final stanza quoted above, the content of the poem is the overheard itself, and the verses are comprised entirely of quoted speech.

A brief comparison of “Under the Window” and Carlos Drummond de Andrade’s “Mãos Dadas” (“Hand in Hand”) illuminates the way in which the vectors of gender, genre, and field inflect Bishop’s translations of Drummond de Andrade’s poems as well as her anthology.⁸ In the second and final stanza of “Hand in Hand,” the poet asserts:

Não serei o cantor de uma mulher, de uma historia,
 não direi os suspiros ao anoitecer, a paisagem vista da janela,

 O tempo é minha matéria, o tempo presente, os homens presents,
 a vida presente. (42)

(“I won’t be the singer of some woman, some tale,
 I won’t evoke the sighs at dusk, the scene outside the window,

 Time is my matter, present time, present people,
 the present life” [43]).

In “Under the Window,” Bishop listens to the women and their histories (the word in Portuguese is *historia*), evokes their sighs, and deliberately details “the scene outside the window”; we gather from the poem that the past lives in the present through the fountain, and that the present itself is transpersonal, involving everyone in range in its address, whether they are under the window or behind it.

The title, “Under the Window: Ouro Preto,” also points to the poem’s engagement with the question of worldly belonging as a question of addressability: all Ouro Preto is, as it were, “under the window.” The layered partialities of the poem, from the dissolved

like bits of mirror—no, more blue than that:
like tatters of the *Morpho* butterfly.

The mode of relationality being worked out here—one body of liquid permeating another, one verse, one enjambment, one margin annotating another—reaches for something other than the purely mimetic or purely transformative, and, I would argue something more than the conjoining of classic (“seven ages of man”) and modern (trucks, oil). The residue of this gathering at the fountain, of all this talk and refreshment, is neither a fragmented reflection—“bits of mirror”—of the social nor an idealized scene of the possibilities of pure circulation. The “tatters” of the iconic blue *Morpho* hang loose from the main body of the social, perhaps, but their brokenness also reminds us that they remain a part of language’s dress—and address. The relation in this scene, then, is not made of verisimilitude, but of a desire for similitude; the final activity of the poem is a likening—less hanging *from* than clinging *to* this sociality.

In “Under the Window,” a poetics of semi-detachment effectively describes the partial non-identity with the public below the window, but also of the textual public of readers of the *New Yorker*. Stranger sociability in the poem thus raises the question of what it would mean to be addressable and recognizable within either, or both, of these publics. The final figure of the poem illuminates the partial, tenuous nature of belonging in either scene, suggesting this semi-detachment less as definitive of a shared space than as an effect of shared membership in a temporary public. What the persons passing by this fountain—and the poem itself—share is co-presence and estrangement through circulation. They stop not only for water, but to become addressable. The “semi” or partial nature of detachment embodied in the final tattered figure of the poem gestures to a recognizable whole threaded through with morphological possibility—of attachment or reattachment, of change.

Bishop's *TIME-Life* Brazil book; her essays, stories, and reviews; her translations of Brazilian literature (in addition to translating poetry, she translated Helena Morley's *Minha vida de menina* [*The Diary of Helena Morley*] and five stories by Clarice Lispector); the anthology; and her prolific letter writing all attest to the ways in which she did succeed at "using" her Brazilian experience. Her archive leaves a record of other projects—a book of essays on Brazil; a translation of a work of architecture; a second anthology of Brazilian poetry; her final *Elegy*; and drafts of talks and lectures, among others—that remain incomplete, but stand as further evidence of her efforts. Nevertheless, in what follows I take her "greatest worry" as a provocation, too, to read her work for the ways that partiality becomes definitive of the scenes of misrecognition at the heart of her artistic practice—central to her translations, anthologizing, editing, as well as to the making of her poetry.

"An Ineffable Racket": Recognition and Misrecognition in *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry*

In this section I show how dynamics of misrecognition and recognition in *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry* are expressed in the tensions between the modes of address operative in the anthology's discursive framing and in the poems themselves. These tensions multiply because of the way in which the anthology's selections exert pressure on the anthology's stated principles: thus the recognizable poetic genres and forms that dominate the anthology serve as a stronger, but unstated, principle of organization and selection than chronology, and the critique of gender in the "Introduction" is both substantiated and undermined by the representation of poets and the gendered logics of the poems themselves. In other instances, these tensions show up in Bishop's translations. In every case, however, they point to the way in which the practices of anthologization and translation both expand and complicate midcentury modes of address, introducing a

raucous, multidirectional polyvocality that challenges some of the key norms of lyric reading, including those expectations that Bishop variously fulfilled and departed from over her career. The end result, however, as I argue in the final section, is that *Geography III*, the book of poems Bishop began working on while completing *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry*, is anthological not only because, as scholars have convincingly shown, Bishop draws on the language and narrative content of her translations to write poems that look back to her childhood, but also because from its title and epigraph on, *Geography III* inquires into modes of address that cut across the twelve discrete, separately bounded poems that comprise the book.

While the literary anthology itself had come to be widely perceived among poets as a dominant genre in midcentury period, the anthology of translations sustained its paraliterary status. This is especially true for Bishop's co-edited anthology: only one anthology of Brazilian poetry was published in the United States before Bishop's: John Nist's *Modern Brazilian Poetry* (Indiana UP, 1962). Given this, the institutional sponsorship for Bishop and Brasil's project—most prominently, by the Academy of American Poets, but also by The Center for Inter-American Relations and The Tinker Foundation—was crucial to its success. Yet from her correspondence and critical accounts of the anthology's production, it's also clear that Bishop's name-recognition and prestige as an award-winning poet played a no less crucial role in the anthology's publication. While Bishop participated actively in the making of the anthology—she included her own translations; solicited the fifteen translators and revised, sometimes in spite of their resistance, their translations; and edited the introduction—from the perspective of the institutions sponsoring it, Bishop's prestige, rather than her labor, legitimized the anthology and made it a project worthy of investment. As a prized poet writing poems often situated in Brazil and published in the *New Yorker*,

Bishop's name lent to the anthology the cultural authority she famously disavowed, offsetting its paraliterary status, and increasing the chances of its successful reception.

The launch party celebrating the anthology's publication—at which Bishop was the guest of honor—might be thought of as evidence of this dynamic. The party was attended by more than 400 members of the literary community, including writers, poets, administrators, translators and luminaries. The selection of the poems themselves are likewise structured by an orientation strategically meant to ensure the anthology's successful reception: Bishop and Brasil included not one, but two poems titled “Mapa” [Map]—a title shared by one Bishop's most well-known early poems. Reviews—excerpted on the back of the book—likewise drew on Bishop's reception in the U.S. as a poet of geography. In the *New York Times*, the Harvard critic Helen Vendler suggested that the anthology was a “powerful atlas” that gave readers access to a “spiritual cartography” in its infancy, “only being begun.” The *Library Journal* suggested that the anthology would “stimulate exploration of one of the liveliest and most imaginative literary cultures of the Western hemisphere,” rhetoric that echoes Vendler's problematic assumption that the anthology could open a belated, Keatsian window on a world less lost than never before so well looked into. In her review, Vendler takes up the position occupied by Keats's reader in “On First Looking into Chapman's Homer,” and the modernist Carlos Drummond de Andrade becomes “a planet” or “an ocean.” If Keats authorizes the encounter with de Andrade, Wordsworth authorizes Vendler's reading of Joaquim Cardozo, who “draw[s] the last somber logic from the Wordsworthian backward glance toward childhood.” Bishop's poetry, of course, often explored similar ground. But if the reception of the anthology in the United States was mediated through and authorized by a normative Romantic tradition, that reception only

heightens the contradictoriness of Bishop's position between the U.S. and Brazilian literary fields.

On the one hand, the "Introduction" to the *Anthology* straightforwardly takes on a gendered discourse determined and shaped "among men," and notes on the first page that "Almost anyone—(any man, that is, for until very recently poetry has been exclusively a masculine art in Brazil)—with literary interests has published at least one book of poems..." (xiii). Indeed, among its thirteen poets, there is only one woman—Cecília Meireles—who herself remained marginal to the canon of Brazilian poetry for much of the second half of the twentieth century. In the same breath, however, the "Introduction" laments that "In the United States only a Pound or a Ginsberg receives as much attention from the press, but for different reasons and in different tones" (xiii). The "Introduction" thus directly comments on the access masculinity grants to the literary field and to the media ecology of Brazil, and extends this commentary to the U.S. literary field as well. At the same time, many of the anthologized poems themselves wear this privileged access on their bodies.

This privilege is chillingly clear in a prose poem like Bandeira's "Tragédia Brasileira," for instance, where the narrator casually remarks that Misael, a 63-year old civil servant who rescues Maria Elvira from "the life" on the street, "could have beaten her, shot her, or stabbed her" for taking a boyfriend—but does not. The poem ends when Misael, "bereft of sense and reason," murders Maria Elvira and the police find her body. But it is also evident in the many poems organized around family patriarchs—like Drummond de Andrade's—and in poems more obliquely critical of the gendered logics of mass culture, as in Oswald de Andrade's remarkable "Reclame" ("Advertisement"), in which the advertisement addresses a feminized public of consumers of women's products. If this public wants to smell good and look good, the logic goes, they must not simply buy the advertised commodities, but buy

them through the “sole distributor,” a “Mr. Fagundes.” Likewise, João Cabral de Melo Neto’s “Os Vazios do Homem” (“The Emptiness of Man”) and “O Urubu Mobilizado” (“The Drafted Vulture”) skewer the spongy, vacuous ideals of the “liberal professional” and “civil servant.” Yet neither Oswald de Andrade, nor Neto, nor much less Bandeira, fundamentally question this logic as powerfully as Meireles does in “Balada das Dez Bailarinas do Cassino” (“Ballad of the Ten Casino Dancers”), where the work of performing femininity for male consumers (“Fat men...in massive tedium”) is an exhausting, deadening process akin to mummification (38-41).

Perhaps no poem in the anthology more than Vinícius de Moraes’s ironic anti-blazon “Receita de Mulher” (“Woman Recipe”) speaks to the masculine privilege the editors question in the “Introduction,” because it simultaneously takes apart the gendered aesthetics of beauty and winkingly reasserts masculine authority in the process. “As muito feias que me perdoem / Mas beleza é fundamental” (104) (“May the very ugly ones forgive me, but / beauty is fundamental” [105]), the poem begins.

É preciso
Que haja qualquer coisa de flor em tudo isso,
Qualquer coisa de dança, qualquer coisa de *haute couture*
Em tudo isso... (104)

(“It is necessary
to have something of the flower in all this,
something of dance, something of high fashion
in all this...” [105])

Even as the poem knowingly parodies the gendered conventions of the blazon, the poetic form that disembodies the body by prizing—and prising—its parts; even as it ironizes everything from “Greco-Roman” standards of feminine beauty to the imperative that a woman’s “closed eyelids / recall a verse of Eluard’s”; even as it brings into its orbit aspects of feminine embodiment typically left out of the blazon, like “sweet armpit turf with its own

aroma”—de Moraes’s clever poem nonetheless ultimately displays only its mastery of this knowledge and its rhetorical strategies: to adapt a phrase from its final lines, the poem becomes the redundant, “inaudível canto / Da sua combustão” (the inaudible song / of [its own] combustion” that it means to undermine.

Such poems simultaneously speak to the gendered, unevenly distributed economies of privilege and access in U.S. and Brazilian media to which the editors draw our attention, but they also showcase the limits of anthology itself. Indeed, the editors openly admit that the anthology “is more representative of the editors’ personal tastes than all-inclusive” (xv). Yet because of Bishop’s involvement, this admission is clearly meant to be a net gain for readers: the “personal” nature of the anthology is thus meant as a recognition of the partiality and judiciousness of the anthology: it’s not just a selection, it’s selective. To follow Augusto De Campos, however, we can also discern a distinctive cannibalist logic operative in both Bishop’s take on the normative masculinity of the scene and her and her co-editor’s claim on the “personal” nature of the project. Jeff Berglund contends that “The fundamental meaning of cannibalism, of the outcome of cannibalization, at least, is its estranging, de-familiarizing experience (*I become you*).” But as we have seen throughout these chapters, the definitive operation of the anthologist is not to become a *you* but to aspire to become a *we*. Bishop was highly ambivalent about this aspiration: while she expressed concern that she would be perceived and treated as a “cultural authority” on Brazil in the United States, she also benefitted from, and sometimes encouraged, that very perception.⁹ This ambivalence is inscribed in the discursive framing of *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry*, where the “we” of Brazilian poetry is immediately questioned, both in light of its overwhelming masculinity, and in terms of its more symbolic power relative to that of poetry published in England and the United States.

The anthologists' cannibalist logic is apparent in way the editors stress the relationship between Brazilian poetry and Anglo-American genre and form. This relationship is evident in the structural tensions between the "Introduction" and the translations. The first poems of the anthology are by Manuel Bandeira, the "father" of modern Brazilian poetry and the author to whose memory the anthology is dedicated. The first two poems—"O Último Poema" [My Last Poem] and "Antologia" [Anthology]—are self-portraits and self-addressed retrospectives; the opening poem, "My Last Poem," looks backward and forward, both initiating the selection and framing Bandeira as authorizing precursor and forebear. The poem is translated by Bishop, and thus likewise asserts her authoritative presence as editor and translator. In the second poem, "Antologia," Bandeira brazenly and playfully updates the tradition of the cento, which typically copies recognizable lines from famous authors, and instead creates a poem of lines drawn from his own corpus of poetry. The poem includes a footnote from a letter from Bandeira to Odylo Costa Filho, in which he explains that the poem is a cento comprising "versos ou pedacos de versos meus mais conhecidos ou mais marcados da minha sensibilidade, e que ao mesmo tempo pudesse funcionar como poema para uma pessoa que nada conhecesse da minha poesia" [5 editors' translation; lines or parts of lines of mine, the best known or most marked by my sensibility, which at the same time could function as a poem for a person who knew nothing of my poetry"].

By his own account, Bandeira's "cento" serves a pedagogical function: it provides an ideal introduction to his work, a mini-anthology for an anthology. Indeed, its closing verses, "A mesa posta, / Com cada coisa em seu lugar" [5; The table set, / With everything in its place], embodies and comments on the anthology's metapoetic arrangement of selected poems for readers. At the same time, however, readers situated in the United States would

be unlikely to be able to discern which of his verses were “best known or most marked by [his] sensibility,” since even a verse like “Vou-me embora pra Pasárgada” [I’m going away to Pasárgada!], which would be immediately recognizable to Brazilian readers familiar with Bandeira’s popular 1954 memoir *Itinerário de Pasárgada* [*The Road to Pasárgada*] (or his poem by the same title), would not be recognizable for non-Brazilian readers in the U.S. Instead, what “Antologia” communicates, beyond gesturing to the existence of a larger body of work to which these lines refer, is form itself as a dynamized principle of selection and relation across which recognition and misrecognition play a constitutive role. At the beginning of *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry*, “Antologia” thus frames, comments on, and embodies the central dilemma and creative potential of translating form.

Moreover, while her anthology and letters describe Manuel Bandeira as “the” poet of Brazil, Brazil’s “leading poet” (her scare quotes), and the father of modern Brazilian poetry, Bishop also confided to the poet May Swenson that “to tell the honest truth, I don’t think much of his poetry, even though I know I am missing a lot of the charm of his language. He’s like a very weak, simple Cummings when he’s good. But now he’s old and spoiled...” On the one hand, such criticisms are motivated less by her reading of Brazilian literature than by her sense of the distinctive role patrimony plays in the Brazilian field: “If you come from the right family and publish one book, you’re made for life here—there’s even a saying to that effect. And delicate and musical and everything else—nothing seems solid or really ‘created’—it’s all personal and tending to the frivolous. One good [Dylan] Thomas poem is worth all the South American poetry I’ve ever seen—with the possible exception of some of Pablo Neruda, when he isn’t being communist” (*Library of America* 809). Thus the dynamic constraints and affordances of cultural comparison that organize much of Bishop’s work are in many ways embodied in *An Anthology* and encapsulated by Bishop’s reference, in a letter

to Lowell, to *An Anthology* as a “bloody anthology.” In her letter, the phrase does double-duty, calling attention to Bishop’s tendency to Anglicize and to how that tendency shapes the anthology’s picture of modern Brazilian poetry’s investment in English literary genres. Against this tendentious grain, I also invoke the phrase in this chapter’s title to draw out the ways in which the poems in the anthology, and those in *Geography III*, variously antagonize the reading norms of the Anglo-American genre system. In *Geography III*, as we will see, this antagonism is heightened by the Bishop’s practice of cannibalizing the gendered logics that animate these norms.

This tension between the shiftiness of Bishop’s position and her reception is evident in many of her translations. Consider her understudied translation of Cardozo’s “Elegia Para Maria Alves” [Elegy for Maria Alves]. The poem’s four stanzas detail four offerings—flowers, fruits, “terras” (“earths”), and waters—that the elegist brings to the graveside. The names of these offerings in Brazilian Portuguese are evocative of the different temporalities and origins in space that the poem brings into relation through the present tense of elegiac address. Thus among the flowers there are “perpétuas” (“everlastings”), and among the fruits “São araçás silvestres, cajás de cêrcas nativas, / Pitangas, maracandubas, corações de rainha...” (“Are wild guavas, plums from native hedges, / Surinam cherries, star-apples, queens’ hearts”). The elegist explains that like the “terras” the third stanza catalogues, the flowers and fruits “—De muito distante vieram” (“Come from far away”):

São areias do Rio Doce e da Piedade
 Barros vermelhos das ribanceiras do Mar
 Argilas das “Ruínas de Palmira” com as suas côres
 De arco-iris naufragado entre os morros de Olinda.

Bishop translates this passage:

Sands from Sweet River and from Piety,
 Red grains from the shores of the sea,
 Potters’ clays from the “Ruins of Palmyra” with their colors

Of rainbow shipwrecked on the hills of Olinda.

What is especially noteworthy here is Bishop's decision to translate "Rio Doce"—a river in Brazil—and Piedade—a municipality of São Paulo—as "Sweet River" and "Pietry," and yet leave "Olinda," a coastal town in northeastern Brazil, untranslated.

This same inconsistent mistranslation of toponyms occurs in Bishop's translation of Manuel Bandeira's prose poem "Tragédia Brasileira" [Brazilian Tragedy]. The poem narrates the events leading up to the murder of "Maria Elvira na Lapa" ("Maria Elvira of the Grotto") by "Misaël," a "funcionário da Fazenda" ("civil servant in the Ministry of Labor"). The strangeness of the translation begins in the relay of this information in the first sentence: Lapa is a neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, not "the Grotto." Maria Elvira, the poem continues, was "prostituída, com sífilis, dermite nos dedos, uma aliança empenhada e os dentes em petição de miséria" ("prostitute[d], syphilitic, with ulcerated fingers, a pawned wedding ring and teeth in the last stages of decay"). Misaël, the poem suggests, attempts to "help" Maria Elvira by taking her out of "da vida" ("the life") and "instalou-a num sobrado no Estácio" ("install[ing] her in a two-story house in Junction City") where he "pagou medico, dentista, manicure" ("paid for the doctor, dentist, manicurist") and "Dava tudo quanto ela queria" ("...gave her everything she wanted").

Estácio, like Lapa, is a neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro, whereas Bishop's choice, "Junction City," suggests she intended to stage her version not as ironic "tragedy" but as a kind of Western. The resulting translation is so strange it could hardly be called "literal," "faithful," "accurate," or "modest"—none of these adjectives, much less "domesticating"—would adequately explain the non-sensical tour the translation embarks on. After the poem introduces the main drama—that Maria Elvira as soon as she "se apanhou de boca bonita,

arranjou logo um namorado” (discovered she had a pretty mouth, she immediately took a boy-friend).

Misael não queria escândalo. Podia dar uma surra, um tiro, uma facada. Não fêz nada disso: mudou de casa.

.....
Tôda vez que Maria Elvira arranjava namorado, Misael mudava da casa.
Os amantes moram no Estácio, Rocha, Catete, Rua General Pedra, Olaria, Ramos, Bonsucesso, Vila Isabel, Rua Marquês de Sapucaí, Niterói, Encantado, Rua Clapp, outra vez no Estácio, Todos os Santos, Catumbi, Lavradio, Bôca do Mato, Inválidos...

(“Misael didn’t want a scandal. He could have beaten her, shot her, or stabbed her. He did none of these: they moved.

.....
The lovers lived in Junction City. Boulder. On General Pedra Street, The Sties. The Brickyards. Glendale. Pay Dirt. On Marquês de Sapucaí Street in Villa Isabel. Niterói. Euphoria. In Junction City again, on Clapp Street. All Saints. Carousel. Edgewood. The Mines. Soldiers Home...”)

Bishop alters what is most “Brazilian” about Bandeira’s “Brazilian Tragedy”—the names of streets and neighborhoods that Misael, Maria, and Maria’s “namorados,” move through over the course of the poem.

In Cardozo’s elegy, Bishop also notably edited out the pattern of interjections, signaled with em dashes, that interrupt the progress and pretense of a singular voice narrating each stanza. When Bishop changes the interjection of the first stanza from “—Filhas que são, modestas, de um sol de outubro—” to “—Modest flowers of an October sun—” she cuts out the daughters (filhas), inevitably making the mention of “filhas” in the second stanza confusing. Thus Cardozo’s “—Filhas, também, de um sol que tu não viste—” becomes Bishop’s “(Daughters, too, of a sun you did not see).” The shift from em dash to parenthetical is characteristic of Bishop’s later poetry—readers might recall the parentheticals in “In the Waiting Room” “(I could read)” and the final em dash of “Crusoe in England,” for instance (“—And Friday, my dear Friday, died of measles / seventeen years ago come March”), though most of the poems are marked by this polyvalent orthography of

exteriority and interiority, including “The Moose” and “The End of March,” and the memorable endings of “One Art” and “Five Flights Up.”

In Bishop’s translation of Cardozo’s elegy, however, she turns what was an interjection into an aside, so that that parenthetical marks the language as confiding rather than interruptive. The result is an interiorizing move that turns our attention away from the poem’s other mode of address. This second mode is less elegiac (I to you) than self-reflexive (I to I, and I to poem): it performs a kind of metacommentary that reflects on the workings of elegiac language and elegiac address, as well as on the object of the elegy itself, suggesting that the poem might also be included among the multi-sourced, comingled flowers, fruits, earth, and “ancient waters” the elegy assembles. Moreover, this second mode is crucial to the poem’s final stanza, which hinges on a shift from the explicit address to the elegized in the first verse—“Assim, Maria, trago-te flôres, frutos e terras...” (“Thus, Maria, I bring you flowers, fruits, and earths...”)—to the final suggestive verse, in which the speaker acknowledges that the “waters” he pours on these objects are “por mim, por ti, por todos” (for me, for you, for all of us). The concluding phrase, “all of us,” explicitly expands the poem’s address to include the wider range of objects, speakers, and addressees that implicitly drive it forward.

In her translations, Bishop modified the stanzaic structures and punctuation of many poems, and her changes often change the direction, scope, and texture of the poetic address. At the same time, Bishop’s translations suggest that the tension between genre and address is a structural feature of the anthology. That is, while scholars have pointed to the thematic connections between the work of individual authors—e.g. Clarice Lispector’s stories, João Cabral de Melo Neto’s Christmas verse drama, Carlos Drummond de Andrade’s familial poetry—and Bishop’s poetry, they tend to overlook the animating formal tensions between

genre and address that work across individual poems and the anthology's discursive frames. A brief look at the modes of address in the poetry of Cabral de Melo Neto and Drummond de Andrade's poetry and the introduction will suggest that what connects these poets to Bishop are not only shared thematic interests but also shared modes of address.

All of Drummond de Andrade's poems that Bishop translated are about address: in "Viagem Na Família" ("Travelling in the Family"), for example, the poem addresses (and is dedicated to) Rodrigo M.F. de Andrade, the poet's father, twenty years after his death.¹⁰ The poem's spindly stanzas all end with a refrain—"Porém nada dizia" ("But he didn't say anything")—until the last four, where the refrain modulates slightly. The long "A Mesa" ("The Table") is addressed to the "velho" ("old man") in the second person who is absent from the table around which generations of family members are gathered into a loquacious party until the table is "repleta / ... maior do que a casa" ("replete / ... bigger than the house") and finally "vazia" ("empty"). The four stanzas of "Não Se Mate" ("Don't Kill Yourself") are self-addressed, and hinge on the tension between self-knowledge—what "você" (you) knows about love—and what "ninguém sabe" (nobody knows). The latter phrase repeats at the end of each stanza like a variable refrain, such that the third stanza reads:

O amor, Carlos, você telúrico,
a noite passou em você,
e os recalques se sublimando,
lá dentro um barulho inefável,
rezas,
vitrolas,
santos que se persignam,
anúncios do melhor sabão,
barulho que ninguém sabe
de quê, praquê. (64)

("Love, Carlos, tellurian,
spent the night with you,
and now your insides are raising

an ineffable racket,
 prayers,
 victrolas,
 saints crossing themselves,
 ads for better soap,
 a racket of which nobody
 knows the why or wherefor" [65]).

The interiorized "ineffable racket" of "Don't Kill Yourself" is perhaps the best phrase to describe the multiplicity at work in the poems Bishop translates and in her own poetry. As I have been arguing, the mode of address is a crucial frame for understanding how this multiplicity means: that is, the "ineffable racket" of Drummond de Andrade is a register of self-address *and* the address of non-specified address of "prayers, / victrolas, / saints crossing themselves," and significantly, "ads for better soap." The passage illuminates self-address as a mode of public address, the self as subject of mass publicity, and the anthologized, translated poem as a special kind of poem of populated solitude. Drummond de Andrade thus wittily turns the private self-address of the poem-suicide note inside out. He both pays homage and playfully rewrites the first poem of the anthology, Bandeira's "O Último Poema" ("My Last Poem"), in which Bandeira expresses the desire that his last poem have "A paixão dos suicidas que se matam sem explicação" (2) ("The passion of suicides who kill themselves without explanation" [3]). Whereas Bandeira's five lines present the fantasy of the poem as a final subtraction (without intention, tears, scent, limpidity, or explanation), Drummond's multitudinous racket builds by addition: it overexplains.

Taken out of one nexus of context, citation, reference, signification and implication, the modes of address in "Don't Kill Yourself" make humorously apparent the discursive character of poetry, and the creative nature of translation. The way in which the poem rewrites Bandeira also more generally points to the cross-referentiality of the anthology, evident not only in the way poems talk to one another through selection and proximate

relation, but also through dedication—Cecília Meireles dedicates a poem to Mário de Andrade, João Cabral de Melo Neto to Vinícius de Moraes. Yet the most significant forces of cross-referentiality are form, genre, and address. In addition to the most recognizable among these that I’ve mentioned above, there are map poems (Murilo Mendes, Marcos Konder Reis) that might be read in conjunction with Bishop’s famous poem by that title; cemetery poems (Cardozo, Neto); Christmas poems (de Moraes, Neto); cloud poems (Neto, Gullar), horse poems (Meireles, Mendes), and many poems about childhood. The elegiac mode pervades the selections in the anthology, no doubt in part because Bishop completed it with her coeditor in the wake of Lota’s suicide, but also because the elegiac continues to be perceived as far more modally capacious, and more recognizable to the “American Reader,” than any of these kinds of poems in particular.

To take one final example, consider “Poema de Sete Faces” (“Seven-Sided Poem”), in which the address modulates between the conventional, triangulated address of the lyric, self-address, second person address to “meu Deus” (my God) and the “mundo” (“Universe,” in Bishop’s translation), and, in the final stanza, direct address to the reader:

Eu não devia te dizer,
mas essa lua
mas êsse conhaque
Botam a gente comovido como o diabo. (62)

(“I oughtn’t to tell you,
but this moon
and this brandy
play the devil with one’s emotions” [63].)

The direct address of the first line of the stanza shifts, as Bishop’s use of “one” suggests, to an address to the many. Drummond’s phrase is “a gente”—more literally, people—anyone who feels “comovido,” upset, moved, or otherwise touched by the combination of moon and cognac. The final stanza thus opens its range of address to include anyone. The ending

of “Seven-Sided Poem” expands the range of implication and scope of the address. Similarly expansive gestures occur at the end of “Travelling in the Family” (“The waters cover his moustache, / the family, Itabira, all”) and “Elegy for Maria Alves” (“Waters wept for me, for you, for all of us”). All of these poems thus express one of the most salient features of subjects of mass publicity—the recognition that one is partially made up and by the “ineffable racket” of others; and therefore that addressing a public entails the recognition that one is a partial stranger to oneself. Indeed, Drummond de Andrade’s figure for the noisy subjectivity of publics in “Don’t Kill Yourself”—the “cry” in the dark theater—usefully illuminates this aspect of publicity, and links it to the staged scenes of address of *Geography III*. This is the open secret of the theatricality of poetic self-address, which always performs as a vocalized but unattributed expression in public that circulates in the dark.

Bishop’s decisions suggest that she did not always opt for the values so often ascribed to her translational practice—literalism, faithfulness, precision. Bishop’s mistranslation of toponyms also introduces a larger question about readings of Bishop that present her as a quintessential poet of “geography” or “geographic feeling.” This later phrase, from Susan Hollister’s astute interpretation of Bishop’s engagement with geography over the course of her career, usefully illuminates the relationship between affective, unauthoritative knowledge gained from the experience of geography, and the formal, academic study of the discipline. As Hollister argues, the questions that frame *Geography III* rely on the creation of an “invented scene” in which a student reader must “direct her gaze all around an unnamed map.” The questions, she avers, “insist on the spatial nature of cartography while disrupting any consistent view of the space depicted” (413). This seems right: *Geography III* does not offer a “spiritual” atlas or developmental cartography, as Vendler reads it, but a spatialization of an invented scene. Hollister’s core claim—that

Bishop's poetry often seeks to "affirm only that 'we' all live within geography's multiple scales and inherit or claim some combination of allegiances likely to contradict one another"—identifies this scalar movement toward a "social imagination" in many poems. "Turning thought from a single scene to other, larger and multiple spaces," she concludes, "exposes this basic and minimal commonality" (420). To this basic and minimal commonality of social feeling we can add addressability—the social fact that we are addressed and addressable—a social and generic dimension crucial to the invented scenes of Bishop's later poetry.

Objects and Apparitions of Address in the Dark Theater of *Geography III*

As in "Under the Window," translation intensifies the experience of misrecognition in the poems of *Geography III*. This is perhaps most obviously the case in Bishop's translation of Paz's "Objects and Apparitions," which presents as Bishop's own poem until we arrive at the poem's end. But in subtler ways, translation also intensifies this experience in the other poems of *Geography III*, which all differentially redistribute the energies of the dramatic monologue and its inhabited modes of address. Effectively, this redistribution is also anthological—not specific to any one poem, but a constitutive feature of the book and the conditions of address it explores. At the same time, proximity to the dramatic monologue allows Bishop to modulate and reflect on these conditions and in the experiences of recognition and misrecognition. Proximity, not similarity: to borrow a phrase from her letters describing Jarrell's work that equally applies to her, Bishop was wary of being "too much in the genre" (528). Bishop's capacity to create scenes of address enabled her to move agilely in and out of the genre as she conducted her self-reflexive poetry inquiry into the conditions of addressability. The dramatic monologue in many ways enabled this inquiry; as

she remarked in an interview, it permitted her “to say all kinds of things you couldn’t in a lyric” (Monteiro 26).

In her later poems, the overheard becomes the constitutive substance of Bishop’s poetry, suggesting that the “kinds of things” Bishop couldn’t say increasingly involve things she doesn’t say. Or more precisely, the subject position of the overhearer or eavesdropper—typically, the lyric reader in the triangulated model of lyric address—occupies the position reserved for the speaker in these poems; and the speaking subject that is often aligned with or a surrogate for the poet speaks little or not at all. As readers we do not so much overhear as read the overheard. What is relayed through the poem is thus a partial inquiry into public language—sometimes attributed, spoken, and specified, but often unattributed and unspecified—as it mutates, taking on new meanings, shedding others.

No poem more iconically demonstrates this inquiry than “In the Waiting Room.” There, cannibalism speaks through the caption and yellow margins of the *National Geographic*, initiating the formative scene of misrecognition that the poem reflects on:

Osa and Martin Johnson
dressed in riding breeches,
laced boots, and pith helmets.
A dead man slung on a pole
—“Long Pig,” the caption said.

The cannibal scene in “In the Waiting Room” emerges from a more complex comic legacy that Jan Niedervan Pieterse traces in his work on representations of Africa and blackness in Western culture. Writing to Bishop in 1958, Lowell related “the story about the Brazilian cannibal boy watching a jet plane and asking his mother if it were good to eat. She said, ‘It’s like lobster, hard on the outside, but sweet on the inside.’ Glad you’re still on the outside” (*Words in Air* 331). Bishop responded: “I like your joke about the airplane—that is exactly what those Indians are like” (332).¹¹ Lowell’s joke draws on the comic legacy of what

Priscilla Walton calls “techno-cannibalism”; and is emblematic of two key shifts in the discourse of cannibalism that occurred in the twentieth century. The first is a turn away from the view of cannibalism as threatening, and toward ironic or humorous treatments of cannibalism; the second is a concomitant shift toward the cannibal as a gazing subject rather than merely an object of a colonial or imperial gaze.¹² Though “In the Waiting Room” doesn’t treat cannibalism humorously, the poem shares both the racial paranoia that structures this imagery and the fundamental breakdown between “inside” and “outside” that Lowell gladly preserves. Lowell’s remarks also speak to the crucial indeterminacies of inside-outside that Lee Edelman underscored in his now classic reading of “In the Waiting Room.” The scene of cannibalism, as Edelman might argue, is a scene of reading, one that depends less on its content than on its captioning; that is, on its framed address to the viewer, that, according to the poem’s punctuation, interrupts the description of the scene to literally speak: “—‘Long Pig,’ the captain said.”

The cannibal scene of Bishop’s poem is thus one of the cannibal coming home to Worcester, Massachusetts; but it is also about the *National Geographic* as the medium and format for this homecoming. That is, like Lispector’s story, “In the Waiting Room” cannily changes the cannibalist logic from “I become you,” as Berglund puts it, to “I become them”—(“But I felt: you are an *I*, / you are an Elizabeth, / you are one of *them*.”). This logic is structurally similar but different from De Campos’s anthologist, who cannibalizes the work of others in a transcreative process by which “they” becomes “us.” For upon becoming a captive member of the magazine’s publicity, Bishop’s imagined six-year old surrogate marks this moment of becoming as one of repulsion. The desire for disidentification, and the fear of misidentification, define what it means to be addressed, at first by the magazine—its cover, articles, and words—and then, by extension, anyone.

Becoming a subject of mass publicity, the poem suggests, involves the realization that while one is always and forever addressable, being addressed does not mean one may be recognized as one wishes. It is only when the projection of a six year-old girl becomes a “we” that the very nature of her self-address becomes questionable: (“But I felt: you are an *I*, / you are an *Elizabeth*, / you are one of *them*”). In a sense, then, Bishop’s child reads “through” the pages of the magazine in order to read beyond them. That said, the poem is also an expression of the limits that impinge on the desires that animate this scene of becoming. As Edelman notes, the limits are not deterministic, or occasioned by strict boundaries; they are in fact occasioned by the readerly confrontation with the indeterminacy of such identifications.

When the cannibal addresses the room, then, “home” itself, and the boundaries of subjectivity—and genre—are thrown into question. In other words, the scene of reading is a scene of misrecognition: “In the Waiting Room” reflects on the very limits of the reading norms entailed both in the popular magazine and in the normative poetic genre the poem carries with—the dramatic monologue. If, as Jeff Burglund argues, cannibalism presents a supreme site of misrecognition, in “In the Waiting Room,” cannibalism frames that site and stages it through the dramatic monologue. But if “In the Waiting Room” can be read as a dramatic monologue, then the address of the caption in the *National Geographic* destabilizes the genre’s key features: locodescription, monologism, and generic representation. It is not simply the fact that the magazine is there, or that others with their bodies are in this room; rather, as Edelman argues, it is that *reading* is the means by which one takes in a text and a room, a contingent, interpretive process that remains frighteningly partial and illegible. Bishop’s “you are an *Elizabeth* / you are one of *them*” is in this regard a recognition of her

being brought, without her consent, into this order of name and address, but also that partial illegibility and misrecognition—of oneself and others—are also qualities of social belonging.

While I do not have space to discuss all of the other poems in *Geography III* in such detail, this self-reflexive inquiry into the conditions of addressability continues throughout the book. The adjacent poem, “Crusoe in England”—the closest to a dramatic monologue—is framed by an account partially about why membership in textual publics always involves dynamics of inclusion and exclusion:

A new volcano has erupted,
the papers say, and last week I was reading
where some ship saw an island being born
.....
They named it. But my poor island's still
un-rediscovered, un-renamable.
None of the books has ever got it right. (*Library of America* 151)

Thus even as Bishop's surrogate Crusoe explains in subsequent stanzas what the papers miss, the poem is framed, motivated, and mediated by what “the books” and “the papers say.” What they say, however, is less important than how and why they say it—by the recursive process of rediscovery and renaming that structures and ensures their ongoing production. One of the ironies the poem explores is that as Crusoe shifts between subject and object of address on the island—addressing himself (“I told myself / ‘Pity should begin at home’”); “reciting to [his] iris beds”; being included in the “questioning shrieks, the equivocal replies” of the goats and gulls—he finds “time enough to play with names.” Another irony is that after he leaves the island he becomes like the goat he dyes “bright red / ...just to see / something a little different” (155)—an object among objects destined for the “local museum,” unrecognizable to himself because he is unrecognizable to others, no longer circulating, no longer included in their shared meanings.

“The Moose” likewise follows a characteristic trajectory: the first twelve stanzas inhabit a position outside a bus on its way to Boston, recording observable and imagined details, before following a passenger—“a woman...brisk, freckled, elderly”—inside. It is at this moment in the poem when it becomes about address: the woman speaks to the driver (“A grand night. Yes, sir / all the way to Boston”) and then, Bishop writes, “She regards us amicably.” And out of that overheard speech and the grandeur of the passenger’s feminine regard, Bishop builds the rest of the poem. The “we” temporarily formed by the elderly woman’s address moves in and out of the poem, modulating with other groupings, such that Bishop writes two stanzas later of “an old conversation / —not concerning us, / but recognizable, somewhere, / back in the bus.” And, as in “Under the Window,” some stanzas become almost crowded with overheard speech. The poem thus turns on the distinctive, estranging perception of recognizing an address specified for one person in the dark but being outside it and listening nonetheless. The stanzas shift from recording what is being said to how it’s being said to imagined or projected speech:

“Yes...” that peculiar
affirmative. “Yes...”
A sharp, indrawn breath,
half grown, half acceptance,
that means, “Life’s like that.
We know *it* (also death).”

After the moose appears in the road and stops the bus, these conversations are interrupted and reoriented: everyone in the bus has become an object of the moose’s regard as “she looks the bus over, / grand, otherworldly.” The last spoken words of the bus driver—“Look at that, would you”—embodies the poem’s inquiry into what it means to be looked over and looked at—to be regarded, seen, temporarily part of a shared condition of addressability, recognizable but outside of the range of another’s concern. The driver’s remark not only raises the question of what exactly the passengers were all looking at—and what they were

seeing—but also, and perhaps more to the point, acts as a question itself. The driver’s “you” is both inclusive—addressed to everyone in the bus—and impersonal—addressed to no one in particular.

In the understudied prose poem “12 O’Clock News,” the questions of what it means to be a subject of publicity and to belong to and address different publics reach a kind of culmination. Here, the dramatic monologue becomes cannibalized and redistributed through a war reporter’s address to a mass public. Bishop’s prose poem questions what it means to “know,” to be objects and subjects of mass publicity in the era of the U.S. war in Vietnam. The poem does this work by bringing the unspeaking objects on the newscaster’s desk—italicized in the left margin in small font—into relation with the objects being described. By the poem’s end, these latter objects have shifted from evidence of the “backwardness” of this country to a heap of dead soldiers, which, the newscaster concludes, are “proof...either of the childishness and hopeless impracticality of this inscrutable people, our opponents, or of the sad corruption of their leaders” (164). As this ending suggests, the key condition of addressability in the poem is defined and described by the newscaster’s “we,” which disregards both the objects he describes in the “present situation” and the objects on the desk, all of which pertain to or serve the production of writing and knowledge. The shift from the scene of address in “12 O’Clock News” to the painterly scenes in “Poem,” “The End of March,” and “Objects and Apparitions” in many ways crystallizes the way in which description itself functions as a interrogative mode of address—a means of questioning what it means to address and be addressed by the world. Unlike the dog and bird in “Five Flights Up,” the final poem in the collection, these poems do not “know everything is answered, / all taken care of, / no need to ask again.” They ask again, and again.

Notes to Chapter 3

¹ De Campos's essay is an important part of the larger flourishing of the *Noigandres* group of concrete poets in midcentury Brazil and the recuperation of the Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade's 1928 "Manifesto antropófago" (Cannibalist Manifesto). While Bishop and Brasil included four of de Andrade's poems in their landmark *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry*, Bishop did not include a mention of de Andrade in the literature section of her TIME-LIFE book on Brazil, and derided (and conflated) both the "god-awful concretionists" and the "Neo-Concretionists" in Brazil in her letters. In spite of this dismissiveness, the challenge to think of the cannibal as an anthologist is useful because it clarifies the degree to which Bishop's embrace of Latin American literary genres and forms was neither literal nor appropriative in any simple sense. While Bishop and her co-editor Emanuel Brasil include three of Oswald de Andrade's poems in *An Anthology of Twentieth-Century Brazilian Poetry*, and describe him as "the most radical poet of the 1922 movement," Bishop excludes him (and de Campos) entirely from the section on Brazilian literature in her Time-Life book *Brazil*, and repeatedly expressed her preference for the poets Manuel Bandeira, João Cabral de Melo Neto, and, above all, Carlos Drummond de Andrade (xviii). (In contrast, she describes concretionism in letters to Lowell as "sad" and "god-awful.")

² Though Lévi-Strauss did not discuss the kind of cultural practice De Campos and Bishop practice, in "We Are All Cannibals," he argues, "So varied are the modalities of cannibalism, so diverse its real or supposed functions, that we may come to doubt whether the notion of cannibalism as it is currently employed can be defined in a relatively precise manner" (88).

³ As Gillian White reminds us, the "modest, open space" that Bishop often advocated for in interviews and letters expressed an oppositional stance toward these poetries.

⁴ For readings of "Pink Dog," see Cucinella, Neely, and Schwartz.

⁵ For more on the similar ways in which "moments" or "acts" of translation work in Bishop's prose, see Read.

⁶ In an important departure, Bonnie Costello sought to dispel this tendency, arguing persuasively that we should read Bishop's poetry as "a configuration of various social impulses struggling toward transition, and as a meditation on the very problem of negotiating a relation between particular experience and the generalities of language" rather than in biographical or personal terms ("Elizabeth Bishop's Personal Impersonal" 334). Yet even as she made this case again a decade later in *The Cambridge Companion to Elizabeth Bishop*, she acknowledged that "biographical readings have prevailed" (83). While Costello was speaking in both instances specifically about "Crusoe in England," the problem persists on a far greater scale. In the same collection of essays, Bishop's longtime editor and friend, Lloyd Schwartz, identifies a shift from the "privacy and reticence" of Bishop's early poetry to the "suddenly, startlingly, more openly personal" *Geography III*, which, he contends, is "overflowing with the expression of personal feelings" (141).

⁷ On Bishop's resistance to the immodesty of Beat and confessional poetics, see White.

⁸ "Hand in Hand" is from Drummond de Andrade's 1940 collection entitled *Sentimento do Mundo* (*Feeling of the World*); it contains, as Drummond de Andrade's translator Richard Zenith remarks, "a number of overtly political, left-leaning poems," and inaugurates the poet's foray into communism. The hands in the poem deliberately echo those of the title poem, which are "symbols of a new concern—that of working for humanity, whose struggles the poet shares" (xix). It is perhaps unsurprising that Bishop did not choose to translate any poems from the collection, and selected only two poems dating from the

period when de Andrade was closest to party politics. By contrast, she selected four from the modernist period.

⁹ See, for instance, Millier 424.

¹⁰ Notably, the translations retain the British spelling, a practice parallel with the *New Yorker's* style.

¹¹ Pieterse points out that the representation of the cannibal as chef or gourmand is the “icon of the colonized savage and a pacified Africa.” We can find this kind of humor at work in Bishop’s poem for Frank Bidart, inscribed in Fannie Farmer’s Boston Cooking School Cookbook—“You won’t become a *gourmet* cook / By studying our Fannie’s book—Her thoughts on Food & Keeping House / Are scarcely those of Levi-Strauss” (*Library of America* 254).

¹² For more on techno-cannibalism, see Walton 3.

Chapter 4: Kenneth Koch in the Presence of Latin American Poetry Anthologies

The Anthological Poetics of Kenneth Koch

Taking the poetry of first generation “New York school” artist Kenneth Koch as a representative example, this chapter begins with the thesis that anthologies are neither anathema to the “new poem of the twentieth century” heralded in Koch’s well-known early poem “Fresh Air,” nor to the more general literary production and circulation of the avant-garde. I turn first to a close reading of “Fresh Air” in order to unpack Koch’s anthological poetics and to set up the core argument that, born under the sign of translation, Koch’s counter-anthological poems increasingly turn to other languages and literary traditions to elaborate a giddy, unembarrassed apostrophizing from the outside. These impulses can be found throughout Koch’s work. In an early letter to Frank O’Hara, for instance, Koch imagined the project of “making a public for ourselves” partly through O’Hara’s “beautiful prose style,” which could also, he suggested, be used as “an introduction to a cheap little anthology of poems by our gang” (qtd. in Schneiderman 358). Koch thus considered a “cheap little anthology” as a natural and integral part of making the New York school’s emerging public. Likewise, O’Hara assembled what he called “a little anthology of what Mr. Koch’s work resembles” as part of an unpublished essay in defense of his friend’s first book of poetry, which had been torpedoed in *Poetry* magazine (qtd. in Schneiderman 356). And of course, the term “New York School” itself originates in a little anthology—John Bernard Myers’s *The Poets of the New York School* (Tibor de Nagy Gallery, 1969)—and gets quickly reproduced by “second generation” New York School members Ron Padgett and David Shapiro, in their co-edited *An Anthology of New York Poets* (Random House, 1970).¹ This nexus of anthologies around the New York school thus supports the general idea that

anthology-making is a catalyst of, rather than an obstacle to, literary change in the second half of the twentieth-century.

In subsequent sections, I trace the publication history of “Some South American Poets,” Koch’s parody of the Latin American poetry anthology, to show how the “little anthology” functions as a creative, intermediary genre between the little magazine and mainstream canonical anthologies. I pursue two claims about the role of the Latin American anthology in the making of twentieth-century literature. The first is that the publication of Koch’s parodic anthology in the sixth and seventh issues of the little magazine *Mother: A New Journal of the Arts* between 1965 and 1966 marks a key moment of genre consciousness, one that signals widespread recognition of the Latin American poetry anthology *as a genre*. This recognition underscores the anthology’s function as a catalyst of the postwar transformation of poetic address. The second claim is that the parodic address of Koch’s anthology poem gets “refunctioned” or repurposed as the publication context changes. In *Mother*, the most immediate object of Koch’s parody is the cohort of deep image translations and anthology projects that appeared in the first half of the sixties in little magazines like Robert Bly and William Duffy’s *The Fifties* and *The Sixties* and Jerome Rothenberg’s *Poems from the Floating World*. With its later appearance in *Pleasures of Peace and Other Poems* (Grove, 1969), however, the Latin Americanism of antiwar poetry anthologies that proliferated in second half of the decade becomes an additional target.

These anthologies frequently projected “Latin American” poetry—especially of the Chilean Pablo Neruda and the Peruvian César Vallejo—as a politically gravid and inherently “antiwar” poetry in deep, natural synchrony with the protest literature then emerging in the United States. Rather than appropriate the anthologization and translation of Latin American poetry as a badge of antiwar affiliation or an “authentic” style of cultural rebellion and

revolutionary “depth,” Koch’s fake anthology offers the “Latin American” as a kind of Borgesian fiction, a pleasurable chimera, over which parody itself presides. Anthology-making and translation are treated as creative activities that belong to the book’s longer catalogue of irreverent “pleasures of peace.”

At the level of content, *The Pleasures of Peace and Other Poems* nominates eating, sex, flirting, reading, and thinking among such pleasures, as well as the those of travel, sociability, art, knowledge, reference and collection. The somewhat predictable nature of this list is part of the point: war impinges on, if not annuls, the iterative activity of pleasures like these for large swaths of people. By endowing such pleasures with a playfully textured, supple contingency, Koch’s poetry invites us to remember and preserve them:

I called this poem
Pleasures of Peace because I’m not sure they will be lasting!
 I wanted people to be able to see what these pleasures are
 That they may come back to them.” (229)

Yet Koch’s poem also reminds us that these pleasures are poetic: “And then too there’s the pleasure of *writing* these—perhaps to experience them is not the same” (229). At the formal level, these pleasures involve, among other things, the ludic, combinatorial delights of list-making, genre play, stylization, and address itself—“talking *to*”—as Koch would later call it in his teaching anthology, *Making Your Own Days* (60, emphasis added). In that anthology, Koch singles out personification and apostrophe not only as the two central ways that poetry “talk[s] to,” but also as the key “inclinations of the poetry language.” Thus, as I argue in the final section, the theory Koch advances and articulates in his teaching anthologies and through his poetry is a theory of address. It is a theory indebted to his study of French and Italian languages and literary traditions, as well as to his effort to use poetry to “talk to” the poetry-reading publics created and organized by mainstream anthologies.

Koch's anthological poetics begin where his story of the avant-garde begins: with "Fresh Air," perhaps the most well-known poem from his oeuvre. "Fresh Air" was first published in 1957 in the last issue of an iconoclastic little Harvard College magazine, *i.e.*, *The Cambridge Review*; it was later anthologized in Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry, 1945-1960* (Grove, 1960), and later appeared in Koch's volume *Thank You and Other Poems* (Grove, 1962). Since its appearance in Allen's anthology, Koch's poem has often been cited as a kind of manifesto of the "new American poetry," but as Josh Schneiderman has shown, the poem emerged more immediately out of the exchange about Koch's first book poetry between Harry Roskolenko and Frank O'Hara's in *Poetry* magazine, which Roskolenko had panned in the July 1954 issue. In a longer, unpublished response to Roskolenko's charge that Koch's poetry was "tasteless, futile, noisy and *dull*," O'Hara argued that Koch envisioned poetry "not a matter of taste 'but rather one of public responsibility.'" Though we rarely think of O'Hara, Koch or other New York school poets in the same breath as that of "public responsibility," Schneiderman's archival work suggests that we should, precisely because they understood that, as Koch acknowledged in his letter to O'Hara, while the public they created wouldn't be "the same public as Partisan Review etc ... it may consist of a lot of the same people."

"Fresh Air" emerges from these exchanges, then, as a poem that means to create a public. Its five sections set out to do so by staging a series of parodic addresses, first to "assembled mediocrities" of the Poem Society—a thinly disguised portrayal of Roskolenko, Donald Hall and others—then to likeminded arbiters from the "publishing houses and universities" who rule over "the young poets of America"; then to "poems addressed to Jane Austen, F. Scott Fitzgerald / To Ezra Pound, and to personages no longer living / Even in anyone's thoughts"; then to the magazine publics of *New World Writing*, the *Hudson Review*,

Botteghe Oscure, *Encounter*, *Partisan Review*, *Sewanee Review*, and *Kenyon Review*; and finally to the air itself, personified as an art student (122-126). “Fresh Air” is parodic in two senses: it parodies the pedantic address “to the myth / And the Missus and the midterms” that Roskolenko, and poets like Donald Hall, the Agrarians, and others engaged in, and it parodies the limited horizons that these poet-critics envision for poetry and its readers. Koch thinks of these horizons in terms of addressability—that is, in terms of the specific delimiting conditions in which poetry speaks to and for publics, and in terms of the specific kinds of objects that are addressable in this poetry. The new American poets perceived the midcentury conditions of addressability to be determined by two dominant institutions of postwar literary culture—publishing houses and the university—and therefore saw teaching anthologies as formalizing these conditions, because these anthologies featured assumptions, if not explicit arguments, about how poetry should be taught, read, and understood.

For Koch, the project of “mak[ing] a public” for New York school poetry under these conditions meant addressing “a lot of the same people” whose sense of poetry was shaped by these institutions. “Koch understood that the New York school’s self-fashioning would mean addressing existing readers within an already-existing public, represented here by the politically acceptable, taste-making *Partisan Review*,” Schneiderman writes. “He further recognized that this could happen only if the group created itself as something other than a self-sufficient avant-garde by allowing its texts to circulate among those of the dominant culture” (360). “Fresh Air” thus parodies the “Poem Society” and the “Modern Poetry Association” less as failed institutions than as failed spaces of circulation. Rather than destroy these institutions or abandon them altogether, Koch’s poem proposes a poetry of “clarity and excitement” that will ventilate them. More circulation, in other words, not less (as on a strict coterie model), will save poetry and its readers from the “kingdom / of

dullness.” As an alternative to a backward-looking, regretful poetry that is always in search of some “deep relation / to human suffering,” “Fresh Air” offers a poetry of the pleasures of circulation—of associational byways, surface play, surfeit, surprise, linguistic adventure, gaudiness and song. It is a poetry decidedly in favor of its time—to borrow from the title of one of O’Hara’s poems—a poetry that embraces the present, and wants to be alive in it, and to include as much of the delights of being alive as possible. The anthology is a key medial form for these ambitions—for the making of an inclusive poetry of the present and for the making of a public through increased circulation.

The anthology enters near the end of “Fresh Air,” in a “barnyard” scene—a reference to the realm of Agrarian poets like John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Robert Penn Warren, who meant to call on the past as a “rebuke to the present,” as Ransom said in 1956. There, a surrogate of the poet is given three “lessons” on how to write a successful poem:

My first lesson. “Look around you. What do you think and feel?”

Uhhh ... “Quickly!” This Connecticut landscape would have pleased Vermeer. Wham! A-Plus. “Congratulations!” I am promoted.

OOOhhhhh I wish I were dead, what a headache! My second lesson: “Rewrite your first lesson line six hundred times. Try to make it into a magnetic field.” I can do it too. But my poor line! What a nightmare! Here comes a tremendous horse,

Trojan, I presume. No, it’s my third lesson. “Look, look! Watch him, see what he’s doing? That’s what we want you do. Of course it won’t be the same as his at first, but...” I demur. Is there no other way to fertilize minds?

Bang! I give in... Already I see my name in two or three anthologies, a serving girl comes into the barn bringing me the anthologies,

She is very pretty and I smile at her a little sadly, perhaps it is my last smile! Perhaps she will hit me! But no, she smiles in return, and she takes my hand.² (127)

Here being anthologized (appearing in “two or three anthologies”) appears to lead inevitably to canonization, anthology pieces, and imitation, and thus to the end of smiles and the kind of poetry of everyday, minor pleasures that Koch advocates for. But this is a caricature—both of anthology-making and of normative attitudes toward anthologies. The passage and

the poem in general actually hold open the possibility that anthologies might actually be generative, that they might, in Koch's mock-pedantic phrase, "fertilize minds." Rather than the "gloop" and gloom of a more familiar postwar telos—where anthologization signals a kind of terminus, or the beginning of the end of any kind of vital poetry—the poem continues, and with it, the anthology's fate remains open-ended. For the anthology is the form that mediates the exchange of smiles and the closing, revelatory turn to fresh air: "My hand, my hand! what is this strange thing I feel in my hand, on my arm, on my chest, my face—can it be...? it is! AIR!" (127).

From "Fresh Air" to "Some South American Poets": Parody's Little Anthology

Publics

Just as Koch's parodic address in "Fresh Air" airs out the conventions of midcentury poetry then being taking up in university and mainstream magazine publics, so too the parodic address of "Some South American Poets" playfully renovates a discursive stable of genres, tropes, and figures, that emerged with the proliferation of Latin American poetry anthologies in the late fifties and early sixties. Organized around an invented Argentine movement called "Hasosismo," Koch's parodic anthology is comprised of fake translations of poems by fictive poets, including eight by Jorge Guinhieme, father of "the hasosistic school of Argentine poetry" and its consummate practitioner; ten poems from a second generation of four imitators; a manifesto by Guinhieme on "The *Hasos* in Argentine Poetry," which includes a tissue of representative definitional examples—also made up—of what *hasos* is and is not; some pseudo-critical "Reflections On *Hasosismo*" by one Omero Pecad from his pseudo-critical fictive monograph, *Studies for a Leftist University*; and four additional poems.

While the address of “Fresh Air” is explicitly oriented toward widely circulating magazines like *New World Writing*, *Botteghe Oscure*, *Encounter*, *Partisan Review*, *The Sewanee Review*, and *The Kenyon Review*—all of which the poem names—the address and orientation of “Some South American Poets” are initially more implicit and circumscribed. The anthology first appeared as “Five South American Poets” in the sixth and seventh issues of *Mother: A Journal of New Literature*, a little magazine founded at Carleton College by the future art critic Peter Schjeldahl and Jeff Giles. Schjeldahl modeled *Mother* on the avant-garde New York school magazines *Locus Solus*, edited by John Ashbery, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler, and Harry Mathews and *C*, edited by Ted Berrigan, which he encountered on a trip to New York. *Mother* was subsequently transplanted to the city, and later to Buffalo, where different editors worked on different issues.

The immediate public of Koch’s parody is thus the readers of *Mother*. The anthology bears the marks of this address most clearly in the poems of “Juan Garcia [*sic*].” In the second stanza of “Plaint,” Koch writes:

What, O rolling native mountains whose fascist resistances
Strike against the mutinied hearts of mothers, of orphans, of knees
Of silence, what are your invocations, to me, and to my mother poets,
What emblems do you carry for us? (198)

The fake anthology enables Koch to parodically enlist pastoralism and the poetic genre of the “complaint” to experiment with poetic address. Thus the apostrophe to the “rolling native mountains,” which in the previous stanza is the “rolling mountains of my native fascist unconscious mother,” stages a mode of mock-pastoral address in order to speak to the “mother poets” printed and circulated in the magazine. More broadly, “Plaint” is indicative of the way in which the Bakhtinian encounter with the Latin American poetry anthology reanimated poetic genre and redistributed the energies of apostrophe, personification, and poetic address. Thus, Koch’s parodic anthology is organized by a host

of pseudo-poetic genres: in addition to the poem resembling a complaint or lament, Koch writes poems resembling odes (“To a Dream” and “Ode to Guinhieme”), ballads (“Cancion [sic] de Noche,” sonnets (“October on the Railroad” and “Meadows”), epigrams (“Music”), and even a septet (“Homage”). The energy of the parody derives from the degree to which Koch travesties the conventions of these recognizable forms, including their conventions of address.

The main formal strategy Koch adopts for his anthology might be reasonably described as Borgesian. As Jonathan Mayhew observes, the title of the founding text of Jorge Guinhieme’s invented movement, *The Streets of Buenos Aires*, echoes the title of Borges’s 1923 book of poetry, *Fervor de Buenos Aires* (151). More significantly, Koch’s use of fictive excerpts from longer poetic oeuvres, prose homages, and critical studies that don’t exist recalls Borges’s well-known minimalist strategy of writing summaries and commentaries on “vast books” that don’t exist.³ But by creating an anthology of such texts, Koch in a sense out-Borges’s Borges. “Some South American Poets” has three overlapping elements: a biographical or more properly genealogical fiction, through which Koch indicates that the poets of the “hasosistic school” are still alive and writing; a series of excerpted poems by Guinhieme from *The Streets of Buenos Aires*, which Koch casts as an ongoing serial poem; and perhaps most notably, Guinhieme’s nested selection of excerpts of poetry that the author emphatically claims illustrate the use, abuse, or absence of the “*hasos*.” These latter claims are comical in part because the rubric of the “hasos” remains mystified and enigmatic. In spite of Guinhieme’s many examples and emphatic explanations, the “hasos” is an implausible code that requires an impossible decoder. Guinhieme’s insistence, through a host of absurd tautological statements, that the code does exist, only amplifies the absurdity.

Guinhieme's claims are also comical because the fictive critiques levied at *hasosismo* are equally mystifying. Koch's decision to include both manifesto-like claims on behalf of his made-up school *and* putatively "leftist" critiques of it suggests that, as in "Fresh Air," what is being parodied is less a specific poem or author than the dominant modes of stylization and discursive framing of poetry then in circulation. That framing includes the claims to distinction made on behalf of the poetry, the overwrought declarations of their significance and authenticity, the genealogical organization of generations into generic representative figures of a "school"—and so on.

Koch's parody also goes further than Borges because he dispenses with most of the recognizable traits of the objects he is parodying: there's no hypercanonical object at stake here. Instead, to borrow from Mikhail Bakhtin, Koch parodies the "conceptualizing discourse," stylization, and "homogenizing myths" of the Latin American poetry anthologies that proliferated in the period. The masculinist discourse and mythography of the "deep image" turn Latin American poetry into a "vigorous," revolutionary, tradition of "Spanish" surrealism; as a result, they produce a series of translations that, in Jonathan Cohen's words, are characteristically and "highly impressionistic" (179). "Some South American Poets" parodies the discourse of this stylized poetry, and in doing so, counters the empty pretense to serious depth with a poetry of playful surfaces. At the same time, Koch's parodic anthological poetics foreground and embrace the kinds of context loss anthologies produce and scholars and critics lament. Koch's poetry presents context loss as a crucially generative phenomenon of comparative poetics—an integral, counterintuitive dimension of the interanimating presence of Spanish and Latin American poetry and the making of U.S. literature.

In his recent reading of “Some South American Poets,” Harris Feinsod argues that Koch’s poem participates in a longer tradition of heteronymy that stretches from Valéry Larbaud and Fernando Pessoa to Octavio Paz. “Koch’s heteronyms,” Feinsod writes, “reduce the hazy contours of Latin American poetic history to the imitable stylistic tics.... of a late Parnassian, a tellurian popular front surrealist, a nativist, a diplomat, and a young Marxist guerrillero” (*Poetry of the Americas* 334). But whereas Feinsod contends that Koch enlists heteronyms to (re)invent cosmopolitan modernism, “intervene in Latin American literary history” and “respond to a 1967 crisis in cosmopolitan performance,” I would argue that rather than the kinds of richly textured heteronyms we see in Pessoa, Koch creates shallowly generic figures. He creates these figures *because* they are generic; that is, because they’re produced in and circulated through the anthologization and translation of Latin American poetry in the United States. If Koch’s primary object of parody is the anthology of Latin American poetry, then as the publication contexts I examine here suggest, the intervention is not in “Latin American literary history” per se, but, in an emergent instrumentalist, appropriative *reading* of that history.

Two dominant assumptions of this reading emerge through the anthologization of Latin American poetry. The first is symbolic: Latin American poetry can “revolutionize” U.S. poetry: the “Latin American” in this case signifies antagonism toward prevailing norms of mainstream U.S. poetry. As Feinsod observes, “a symbolic politics based on Latin American revolution was a major style of U.S. cultural rebellion” (“Fluent Mundo” 213). By midcentury, the Latin American poetry anthology had become a significant means by which to conduct this rebellion. As such, to borrow from Jeremy Braddock, the midcentury Latin American poetry anthology is not “provisional” in the same way that “the occasional, coterie, or interventionist” modernist anthology was; however, it’s clear that Bly,

Rothenberg, Kelly, and many others wanted their anthologies of translations to make claims on the social, to serve as “a means of intervening in and reforming cultural practice” (Braddock 18). For Bly, this intervention took the form of a rebarbative response to the degradations of the dominant male culture suffered at the hands of three generations of “old-fashioned,” servile, poetics and their French surrealist roots—to which in various polemical essays Bly counterposed his nebulously termed “Spanish tradition” and “Spanish surrealism.”⁴

The publication of “Five South American Poets” in *Mother* helps to lend further credence to Terence Diggory and Jordan Davis’s contention that the Koch’s anthology is a parody of the “deep image.”⁵ “Deep image” little magazines like Robert Bly and William Duffy’s *The Fifties* and *The Sixties* and Jerome Rothenberg and Robert Kelly’s *Poems from the Floating World* cast translations of Latin American, Spanish, French, German, and Swedish poetry in the functional role of supporting their attacks on the poetry of the establishment. Here, too, the anthology form played a distinctive role. As Jed Rasula notes, Rothenberg explicitly envisioned *Poems from the Floating World* as an “‘on-going anthology’ of the deep image”; and Bly put out anthologies of twenty poems of Pablo Neruda in 1962 and of César Vallejo in 1964 through the press associated with his magazine (30).⁶ Like the New York school poets, the “deep image” poets created these little anthologies in order to intervene in and challenge what they perceived as the dominant verse culture. While they shared a common foe in the New Critics, the “deep image” poets—and especially Koch’s classmate at Harvard, Robert Bly—perceived the ills of mainstream literary culture and the solutions to those ills differently. Bly became associated with the “deep image” through his repeated contention that the image in American poetry, inherited from modernists like Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and William Carlos Williams, lacked psychological “depth.” He further argued

that only a psychic reorganization of “inner feeling” could provide such depth; and that such a reorganization would have to come from outside of the canon of Euro-American literature.

Thus by translating and anthologizing “revolutionary” Latin American poets like Neruda and Vallejo, Bly believed that he could show readers what was sorely missing from U.S. poetry. In his detailed account of the “deep image,” Jed Rasula writes:

The Midwest of Bly and Wright converged with the metropolis of Antin and Rothenberg in a commitment to translation as *recovery* of an untapped potential for English-language poetry, rendering in a distinctively American idiom the enigmatic volatility of the subconscious and the pre-rational, manifested in work by poets like Federico García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, César Vallejo, George Trakl, André Breton, and Vicente Aleixandre. From about 1961-1965, “deep image” served simultaneously as spiritual intoxicant and technical device; it was a way of embracing foreign poetry as a revitalizing tactic, attaining “more of the joy of the unconscious” as Bly put it. (“Deep Image” 30)

As Rasula’s language suggests, the “deep image” was a baldly appropriative poetics: “deep image” poets sought through translation to recruit “foreign poetry” for the “recovery” and “revitalization” of U.S. poetry; they saw they could appropriate and use this poetry as a “spiritual intoxicant and technical device.” Jonathan Cohen, writing specifically about translations of Neruda in the fifties, concurs: “translating Neruda became part of [poets like Bly and W.S. Merwin’s] efforts to revitalize American poetry” through an “impressionist style of translation” (179-80). At the same time, however, Rasula does not consider the actual practices of translation that these poets engaged in, or consider the “deep image” itself *as* a practice of translation.

This is because for Rasula, the “deep image” is ultimately Poundian, and the centrality of translation to the Poundian project is about making it new. As a result, Rasula’s reading ultimately suggests that the significance of translation to deep image poets in particular and midcentury poets more generally might be understood as extending or

corroborating Hugh Kenner's basic thesis about Pound—that the significance of translation to American poetry in the twentieth century should be thought of in terms of the success of the appropriation. The “real achievement” of Pound's *Cathay*, Kenner argued, “lay not on the frontier of comparative poetics, but securely within the effort...to rethink the nature of an English poem” (199). In other words, with a little extrapolation, we could read “deep image” translations as inventions of “Latin American poetry” in English *as* English poetry, or better, as American poetry.

Attending to the mediating and parodic functions of the Latin American poetry anthology helps to qualify the notion that a strictly Poundian practice of translation runs through midcentury U.S. poetic practice. I would argue instead with Rachel Galvin that we have to consider the *relationality* and the presence of the poetry itself even when—or perhaps especially when—that relation is baldly appropriative. As Galvin concisely puts it, the “translations of Bly, Wright, and Eshleman may be appropriative, prone to deforming tendencies, and conditioned by cultural bias and geopolitical privilege, but we must understand the Deep Image poetic as resulting from its relation to the work of Neruda and Vallejo, regardless of how idiosyncratically it is translated” (“Poetic Innovation” 363). By extension, we can also read Koch's “Some South American Poets” into this relation, as an anthological heir of the “deforming” or deformed tendencies of the deep image. To do so, however, we have to recognize that Koch finds such tendencies generative: through them he invents a new set of “networks of signification, linguistic patterns, vernacular networks, and rhythms” that the deep image poets generally destroy as they anthologize and translate Latin American poetry for their own ends.

To take one example, consider these two pages from the seventh issue of *Mother*. Visually, Guinhieme's “Reflections on ‘Hasosismo’” embodies what Barthes in “The

Death of the Author” famously called a “tissue of quotations”; it entertains in part by because the piling on of representative excerpts far exceeds the content of Guinhieme’s “reflection.” Excerpting as a mode or practice of “criticism” is itself parodied here, not only for the patina of “authenticity” it lends to the text, but also for the Borgesian way in which this kind of compression enables a kind of parody of maximalist pretension. The excerpt as a means of designating literary value is thus also an object of parody. Part of the irony of “Reflections on ‘Hasosismo,’” in other words, is that Guinhieme’s “criticism” attacks an effete academicism by claiming to be non-academic, but relies on recognizably academic protocols to point this out. This kind of rhetorical maneuvering is actually fairly easy to find among the different manifestos and essays of the “New American” poetry, but Bly’s use of it in his polemical essays of *The Fifties* and *The Sixties* is especially illustrative of the practice.

“If we keep our eyes too closely on poetry in English,” Bly wrote in the first issue of *The Fifties*, “we see, when we look for something new, nothing but Eliot, Pound, Williams, and others, but if we look abroad we see some astonishing landscapes: the Spanish tradition of Neruda, and Vallejo...; the Swedish tradition of Ekelof; in the French, Char and Michaux, in the German, Trakl and Benn—all of them writing in the new imagination” (38). A year later, calling these poets the true “teachers,” Bly argued: “If we have vigorous teachers we write strong, vigorous poetry, but those teachers, those poets, write, as they always do, in other languages—not our own. They write in the Spanish tradition, suddenly reborn in the last fifty years...poetry which has found a way to include not only more of the mood of modern life than any before, but also more of the joy of the unconscious.” Bly often associated this “Spanish tradition”—in which he often lumped Neruda and Vallejo together with Lorca, Juan Ramón Jiménez, and Antonio Machado—with “Spanish surrealism” in

order to further his project of altering the course of American poetry and his position within it.

In part, Bly's "Spanish surrealism" was an effort to distinguish "deep image" poetics from French surrealism. As he explained it in one interview, in French surrealism the "images don't have a 'center'" or "depth."⁷ To further this distinction, Bly often turned to Vallejo and Neruda. He quoted a well-known couplet from an untitled posthumous poem of Vallejo's: "A cripple walks by giving his arm to a child. / After that I'm supposed to read André Breton?" But Bly's interpretation of Vallejo's rejection of French surrealism is problematic insofar as he uses Vallejo in order to authenticate a new, alternative pan-Spanish surrealism of the Americas. In his notorious essay "autopsying" French surrealism, as well as in earlier texts, Vallejo levied some of his fiercest attacks at Latin American poets who, in his view, were making a "literatura prestada"—a borrowed literature, more imitative than inventive (204). Likewise, while Neruda's early poetic trilogy *Residencia en la tierra* is a remarkable surrealist text, Neruda swerves hard after that surrealist experiment—most memorably toward epic, ode, and autobiography—never to return.

Observing Bly's use of Neruda to reject, or at least disavow, the U.S. reception of "French surrealism," Tom Boll argues that Neruda for Bly "is a compensatory figure, fashioned from Bly's own desires and ambitions" (126). Similarly, Clayton Eshleman remarked in 1972:

...there is something at work behind Bly's translating that is more important to him than any foreign language or poet: this something is a stance toward American poetry, a kind of Poundian hangover, which says, in effect, that there is nothing of value in 20th century North American poetry. THEREFORE Bly will translate Neruda ... to teach us what a 'real' poem is and to whom we should bow. Bly's translations are *versions of his doctrine*. (qtd. in Cohen, 182)

When Bly set out to revolutionize U.S. poetics, his “revolution” began with a transformation of the image, which entailed a psychic reorganization of “inner feeling” achieved, as Dennis Haskell argues, through the rational manipulation of irrational materials. What is particularly striking is that Bly chose to conduct this project through translation, the little magazine, and the little anthology. Bly’s conviction, as Robert Von Hallberg puts it, that “psychology determines political history, that the family romance is at the base of American politics, and that the American social status quo is mad” effectively meant that in order to alter the course of American poetry, he had to figure his domestic project “outside” of it (47).

Like James Laughlin’s translation projects with *New Directions*, Rothenberg and Bly’s efforts to address mainstream and experimental poetry publics through the little anthology and small press appear to confirm Gisèle Sapiro’s conclusion that “translating literary works is a mode of accumulating symbolic capital for newcomers in the publishing field,” especially because such ventures tend “not to have the economic and symbolic resources necessary to attract American authors” and pay the “high advances on royalties that their agents demand.” If we understand the stylistic signature of this symbolic capital as a mix of impressionistic translation and cultural rebellion, and we recognize that the little anthology was the crucial intermediary medium by which translated poetry was circulated beyond the little magazine, then Koch’s choice to parody the specific form of the Latin American poetry anthology makes sense. Koch summons the Latin American poetry anthology as a distinctive genre, a public, recognizable form through which he can take a position in the literary field and enter the struggle with and for representation.

At the same time, however, this Bourdieuan framework cannot fully explain the parodic function of “Some South American Poets,” which is essentially creative: because Koch has conjured these translations out of the fresh air of his milieu, his anthology not an

exceptionally imitative or merely derisive mock-document. Scholars of parody regularly make the point that parody is never merely imitative or negative.⁸ Moreover, when translation is involved, the traditional “doubleness” of parody, as theorized by Linda Hutcheon, Mikhail Bakhtin, Margaret A. Rose, and others, opens up. As Dorothy Wang asks in her study of John Yau’s *Genghis Chan: Private Eye*: “But what if parody’s codes are multiple, intermixed, and difficult to ‘decode?’” (208) Wang writes that in Yau’s work “target discourses are not easily identifiable; they drift in the background, omnipresent, not as discrete texts but as something larger, more diffuse, and pervasive...” (208). A similar case can be made for “Some South American Poets”: because translation is at once so central and so displaced, the address of the texts in Koch’s anthology drifts, making it especially amenable to further iteration.

There are important differences, of course: Wang argues that the parodic function in Asian-American poetry differs from Bakhtin’s account of parody’s function in the novel because these poets are already “alien,” and therefore, unlike Bakhtin’s protagonists, do not have the power of the nation state behind them. Koch’s parody of the “homogenizing myths” of the “deep image” poets is written with the power of the nation state behind him, to be sure. But it is the Latin American poetry anthology that makes this mythography of the “alien” visible and available as a target, and licenses Koch’s poetry of surface pleasure, verbal materialism, and uncritical reading. “Some South American Poets” thus travesties the “serious word” and homogenizing conceptual discourses of New Critics, mainstream anthologists, magazine poets, and deep image poets alike. The poems, manifesto, and critical reflections in Koch’s anthology all exist, as the etymology of *parodia* suggests, “between,” “alongside,” and “opposed” to the Latin American poetry being translated and anthologized in the period. This is to suggest the perhaps obvious, but important point: Koch’s parody is

not antagonistic toward the genre of the Latin American poetry anthology in any simply derisive, imitative, or facetious way; instead, “Some South American Poets” builds on the earlier staging of address in “Fresh Air” to create a far more thoroughgoing experiment in anthology-making, translation, address, and language play.

The Pleasures of Peace and the Latin Americanism of Antiwar Anthologies

When it was first published in the sixth and seventh issues of *Mother*, “Five South American Poets” appeared with two different cover pages that were later removed when it was republished in *The Pleasures of Peace and Other Poems*. The cover pages present Koch as editor, translator, and anthologist, who has selected these “documents” and “poems” because they are particularly exemplary or representative of “hasosismo.” Without these pages, Koch’s authorship of the poems is foregrounded, and the poetry’s status as selected translations from a larger fictive corpus is subordinated. As a result, the question of the relationship of Koch’s parodic anthology to the other poems in the volume becomes more important. In *Pleasures*, “Some South American Poets” becomes one anthology among others. Indeed, *The Pleasures of Peace* is a meta-anthological book, an anthology of anthology poems, of poems that act like anthologies: “A Poem of the Forty-Eight States,” as its title suggests, addresses the states of America (and many cities) by name, including them in an ebullient, Whitmanesque embrace; “Faces” anthologizes “the face(s) of Modern Art,” and over the final nine pages, the title poem, “The Pleasures of Peace,” playfully collects and reflects on the daily enjoyments of peacetime as a kind of antiwar gesture.⁹

“The Pleasures of Peace” is a loosely narrative, dialogic poem that follows the competition between “Giorgio Finogle” and “Kenneth Koch” to write the winning poem for the “Peace Award.” Comically, they are both writing an antiwar poem titled “The Pleasures of Peace.” The opening stanzas work like “Fresh Air,” insofar as they begin with a

scene of address—a gathering of the “Poem Society” in “Fresh Air,” and a gathering at a “beer parlor filled with barmaids and men named Stuart” in “Pleasures” (228). Into this parlor “Giorgio Finogle” is introduced as a poet who had written “an imitation of the latest Russian poet, / The one who wrote the great ‘Complaint About the Peanut Farm.’” Giorgio explains that his Poem is “not a parody at all, / I just claimed it was, out of embarrassment. It’s a poetic present for you all, / All of whom I love!” Thus Koch’s poem sets the terms for reading “The Pleasures of Peace” in relation to parody and imitation in the opening stanza.

The subsequent stanza jumps forward, projecting the first of a series of pseudo-critical responses to the already published book. The first is by a “Professor” who exclaims, “I love your work, *The Pleasures of Peace*... / I think it adequately encompasses the hysteria of our era / And puts certain people in their rightful place. Chapeau! Bravo!” A late stanza is almost entirely comprised of a chorus of responses: “‘A wonder!’ ‘A rout!’ ‘No need now for any further poems!’ ‘A Banzai for peace!’ ‘He can speak for us all!’ / ... / ‘Epic!’ ‘The worst poem I have ever read!’ ‘Abominably tasteless!’ ‘Too funny!’ ‘Dead, man!’” and so on. The difference between the two, however, is that the first “Professor” addresses “Kenneth Koch”—one of several instances where Koch is addressed in dialogue—whereas the latter address is to a reading public. At other points “Pleasures” stages a direct address to the “most perfect and most delectable reader” (229) and to “all the poets who take dope” (231). In between these catalogues of pseudo-critical praise and rebuke, Koch narrates various run-ins with Finogle, describes their follies and foibles—at one point Giorgio jumps out of a window for peace, and, from the hospital, proposes defenestrating the hospital bed for the same—and highlights their efforts to compose their catalogues of the pleasures of peace. The lists themselves are organized formally by anaphora and epistrophe, and impelled forward by a long, expansive Whitmanic line.

In various interviews, Koch, a veteran himself, claimed that “The Pleasures of Peace” was written as “a protest against the Vietnam War,” before adding that he “found [he] couldn’t write very well about the horrors of war.” Instead, “it ended up being a celebration of the peace movement,” he remarked, “which was very exhilarating.”¹⁰ Indeed, the third stanza, with breezy grandiloquence, begins by saying as much:

So now I must devote my days to The Pleasures of Peace—
To my contemporaries I’ll leave the Horrors of War,
They can do them better than I—each poet shares only a portion
Of the vast Territory of Rhyme. Here In Peace shall I stake out
My temporal and permanent claim.

To an extent, Koch’s papers corroborate this account. Over the course of extensive revisions, he deleted any lines from the poem that appeared to deal more directly with “the horrors of war.” In one draft, for instance, Koch writes that his poem is against “a literature / of grief and violence”; in another, he explains that “A problem however / is that the Jungle already exists. We have built it. It is there, formed by / Capitalism and greed....” Koch also deletes the telling, self-addressed, self-admonishing lines, “And why don’t you make it faggier and more humorous / and desperate and black and hideous, as war actually is” (“Pleasures of Peace material”).

Such revisions illuminate the boundaries that shape the poem into a poem about “pleasure”: it is not a poem that earnestly explains the problems of war or of the literature of war; it does not attempt to define war by negating it or describing it. And while drawing, always, on the worldly stuff of the world (“One single piece of pink mint chewing gum contains more pleasures / Than the whole rude gallery of war!”) it is not a poem of mimesis, but of verbal materialism. Thus Koch’s revisions also suggest that we shouldn’t take him at his word. “Pleasures” is less as a “celebration of the peace movement” than a formal

experiment, a challenge to write a poem in which the pleasures of mock-epic narrative and the pleasures of anthology-making collide through the form of the catalogue.

Nowhere is this collision clearer than in the many drafts in which Koch experimented with different endings. The published version of “Pleasures” concludes with sweeping rhetorical gestures to persistence, ongoingness, and atmospheric ascent that close in the final line with an address to Peace itself:

And leaping into the sailboats and the sailboats will go on
 And underneath the sailboats the sea will go on and we will go on
 And the birds will go on and the nappy words will go on
 And the tea sky and the sloped marine sky
 And the hustle of beans will go on and the unserious canoe
 It will all be going on in connection with you, peace, and my poems, like a Cadillac
 of wampum
 Unredeemed and flying madly, will go exploding through
 New cities sweet inflated, planispheres, ingenious hair, a camera smashing
 Bandinage, cerebral stands of atmospheres, unequaled, dreamed of
 Empeacements, candled piers, fumisteries, emphatic moods, terrestialism’s
 Crackle, love’s flat, sun’s sweets, oh Peace, to you.

By contrast, several drafts conclude with Giorgio’s remonstrations to end the poem differently. In one, Koch adds an “epilogue part,” to which Giorgio retorts, “which is like a cigar butt...and has no place in your epic!” Another ending invokes “the heavier atmosphere / Of breathing and threatening war” that “America / Herself may charge indifferently through” before declaring “Peace, the queen of the earth.” After which, Giorgio interrupts:

You are getting too high up in this poem
 And will have to bring it down at the end. As I see it,
 Koko, the whole problem
 Is getting reality into it sufficiently. Giorgio, my old friend,
 I couldn’t agree with you more. Yet feeling is feeling. And deception
 Is deception. I’m confused but I do know what I want. You want peace, Giorgio
 said, it would appear.
 I think your verses already make that clear.
 Now what about a different subject to make it end?
 Peace, yes, here goes, all right? O Love, descend! Finiscit epos. (“Pleasures of Peace
 and Other Poems”)

Another ends: “Oh it begins with you / And finally, I think, ends with you. But in between / Hello! Bethink you! Finiscit L’antologia di Peace.” Above this final line, Koch wrote in pencil: “I am making this anthology of peace” (“Pleasures of Peace and Other Poems”). While he ultimately chose none of these endings, they all point to key features of Koch’s verbal play—a self-reflexive dialogism; a linguistic combinatorialism, yoking the Latinate “finsicit” with the Greek “epos,” epic or song, and working as well with the Italian “antologia di peace.” This kind of mixing suggests a lack of interest in fidelity to meaning, psychic depth, or linguistic integrity: we hear an early instance of this when the “Professor” misreads the poem as against “the hysteria of our era” and exclaims “Chapeau! Bravo!” combining French and Italian. It also invites us to read Koch’s poem and volume as a whole as a metanarrative, dialogical “anthology of peace” in which the cataloguing function dynamizes the scenes of address that mutate across the book, injecting them with a complex multidirectionality and open-endedness. The open-ended, iterative, non-narrative quality of the epic catalogue also helps to explain why Koch struggled with the poem’s ending.

That Koch builds into the opening of “Pleasures” a misreading—that the poem is against the “hysteria” of antiwar protest—suggests that, as with “Fresh Air,” Koch’s ambition is to address a mainstream public without compromising his aesthetic prerogatives. Thus while it is possible to read the proliferating scenes of address in anthology poems like “Fresh Air,” “Pleasures” or “Some South American Poets” as avant-garde experiments in self-narrativization, we can also read the addressivity of such poems as reflective of their orientation to textual publics. “Pleasures,” in this regard, is specifically organized by its address to the antiwar literary public created largely by American Writers Against the Vietnam War, an organization founded by Bly and David Ray in 1965, which coordinated antiwar readings, teach-ins, rallies, and demonstrations across college campuses. As Michael

Bibby has shown, this public was sustained by the anthology.¹¹ In the later publication context of *The Pleasures of Peace and Other Poems*, then, “Some South American Poets” becomes part of Koch’s broader effort to formulate a counter-anthological poetics that addresses this literary antiwar public.

What was true for deep image anthology projects in the first half of the sixties was true for antiwar anthologies in the second half, when Latin Americanism, broadly conceived, brought together a textual public organized against the U.S. war in Vietnam. Koch’s parody thus draws our attention to a distinctive U.S. fantasy of the Latin American as lending a generative conceptualizing discourse, homogenizing mythography, and stylizing coherence of such anthologies. The popular 1967 *Where Is Vietnam? American Poets Respond*, for instance, edited by poet, communist, and radical anthologist Walter Lowenfels, presented Neruda and Vallejo as culminating figures presiding over of a long list of poets included the anthology, and imbuing them therefore with a Latinized spirit of resistance.¹² U.S. poets could assign this role to Neruda in particular because he was already an internationally recognized poet who spoke out vehemently against the war. (The inclusion of Vallejo is perhaps more fantastical.) This practice was widespread among U.S. poets: in addition to Bly, Wright, Rothenberg, and Kelly, Neruda’s other translators, editors, and anthologists promoted his critiques as part and parcel of his poetry.

As Neil Larsen argues, the Latin Americanism of the antiwar movement in the U.S. was propelled by a practice of reading “North by South”—a practice undergirded less by self-obsession than by a “crisis of self-authorization” (15). Koch’s parodic anthology discloses and trades on this reading practice and the way in which this crisis becomes narrativized as the avant-garde’s story of itself. Yet even as the expanded address of “Some South American Poets” in *Pleasures* brings to the fore this distinctive “North by South”

reading practice evident in and circulating among antiwar literary publics, there's a further paradox. Neither in *Pleasures of Peace* nor in his papers is there any evidence to suggest that Koch is drawing on any particular "South American" poet or tradition. On the contrary: the drafts of "Some South American Poets" indicate that he is more often relying on Italianate grammatical structures to construct vaguely "South American" Hispanophone ones. For instance, he initially titled Guinhieme's "Cabana de Turistas, Calle de Suenos [*sic*] (Dreams)" "Cabana *di* turistas, Calle *di* Sueñas [*sic*]." He later corrected his Italian "ofs" to Spanish ones. In the final versions of the invented translations, many "errors" remain: in addition to the impossible names Koch invents, there is plenty of "lexical impoverishment"—missing accent marks, tildes, etcetera—as well as mock-Spanish, like "dollaro."

In this regard, it matters that "Some South American Poets" appears in *Pleasures* between "Ma Provence," a short, bilingual poem; "Coast"; and "Seine." As these titles suggest, Koch's aesthetics are indebted to and oriented by French and Italian cultures, languages, and literary traditions—not those situated in the Americas. Among Koch's *New Addresses*, poems "To the French Language" and "To the Italian Language" appear, but there are no poems addressed to Spanish or Brazilian Portuguese, or to indigenous languages for that matter. Instead, Koch foregrounded the importance of French poetry and the French language to his poetry throughout his career.¹³ In a note he wrote in 2002, on the occasion of the publication of his early poems, Koch reflected that his experience of French poetry and the French language was an experience of understanding and misunderstanding at the same time.

... Words would have several meanings for me at once. *Blanc* (white) was also *blank* and, in the feminine, *Blanche*, the name of a woman. The pleasure—and the sense of new meanings—I got from this happy confusion was something I wanted to re-create in English.

This double or triple quality of words that I imperfectly understood, along with the repetitions, substitutions, and interruptions that for me seemed to go with it,

including the abundant use of quotations and exclamations, once I began to hear them all together, constituted a way of using language that was very stirring to me and seemed to mean a lot. It gave me a strong sensation of speaking the truth; it seemed what had to be said (at least what had to be said by me). (*Collected Poems* 3)

Koch's embrace of "understanding and misunderstanding" as an essential part of the "happy confusion" of translation leads to a very different kind of translational poetics than the impressionism of the "deep image" poets. For Koch, meaning in translation resides specifically in this combination and estrangement of poetry's addressivity, its ability to communicate before it is understood.

Paradoxically, the baldness of the appropriation of Latin American poetry by poets like Bly, Wright, and Eshleman made it a generative object for parody. In fact, all of these poets freely admitted—even boasted—that they had not "learned" the language. In a letter Wright, for instance, Bly remarked that "If you can translate from French, you can certainly translate from Italian—they are the same language. I translate from Spanish too, and don't know any of them—(there is something noble about translating poems from a language in which you don't know a word)..." (130).¹⁴ In a sense, Bly's logic suggests that precisely because the "deep image" is not wedded to linguistic concerns, it may proceed to the "density of emotion," the "dark waters" of deep feeling, psychic interiority, Yungian consciousness, etc. By contrast, Koch's immersion in French and Italian languages and literary traditions paradoxically enabled him to parody this kind of approach to translation. Koch did not need to marshal the complexities of Neruda and Vallejo's changing politics; or recognize that what Neruda scholars describe as the interiorizing reality of *Residencia en la tierra* might actually be consonant with some deep image practices; or record the particular deformations and distortions of deep image translations; or even know that these translators first proceeded without knowing the language, and hardly paid Neruda anything for them. What is important to Koch, rather, are the claims the "deep image" poets made on behalf of

these translations, and the forms and styles that subtend these claims—the mythography of authenticity and revolution; the interpretive frameworks of depth and masculinist recovery; the fetishization of technique. It is this discursive apparatus that Koch travesties.

As John Guillory observed, the problem that contests over anthologies and canons turn on has to do in large part with the ideology of tradition, which “collapses the history of canon formation into an autonomous history of literature which is always a history of *writers* and not of writing” (63). This point turns out to be crucial to the logic of the excerpt that energizes Koch’s anthology. “Homage to Jorge Guinhieme,” published in *Paris Review* 47 (1969), adds four brief prose “tributes” by poets about their encounters with Guinhieme and an additional set of poems from Guinhieme’s “continuing life work, *The Streets of Buenos Aires*” (*Art of Poetry* 72). Neither the tributes nor the poems were included in *Mother* or in *Pleasures*; instead, the headnote indicates that they were “originally published in *Milagro* (XCVII-4) earlier this year.” *Milagro* is a fictive literary magazine, and as such marks an extension of the literary and institutionally creative character of Koch’s postwar experiment. Koch’s principal target, as the title “Homage to Jorge Guinhieme” suggests, is the structure of homage that underwrites so many the “deep image” translations. In Koch, this structure is visible in the poems of the subsequent generation of “hasosistas”—writers—which function as homages to their founder. Thus Juan Garcia [*sic*] has a poem titled “Homage” (1964) that Guinhieme excerpts in order to show how hasosismo works. Another of the statements published in the *Paris Review* collection of “Homages” is authored by “Fidelio Corazon [*sic*]” or Faithful Heart (notably missing an accent); and Jorge Foxe-Mariño, in his statement, recalls how Guinhieme said “Yes, I have read your poems. You are the speaker of a new generation. ... [but] Do not forget the achievements of those who have come before. A shallow and tinny contemporaneity is no substitute for the *basos* of the heart!” (73). Thus

homage is less about “authenticity” than about the self-replication of authenticity—it’s a literary logic of reproduction. By focusing on homage as a structural feature of “deep image” anthologies, Koch’s parody exposes a paradox: “revolutionary” internal feeling (“depth”) has to be transposed or back-formed onto the external representation—most often in the form of uncritical praise—of the writer. Koch’s *Hasosismo* thus exposes the self-serving relation between tradition and homage: homage shores up the praiser’s reputation even as it conceals, or makes secondary, the author function.

Avoiding the “Lyrical Trap”: Koch’s Teaching Anthologies and the Inclinations of *New Addresses*

If the anthology formally, conceptually, and thematically organizes the address of *The Pleasures of Peace*, it also inaugurates Koch’s career-long experimentation with personification and apostrophe, which culminates in *New Addresses* (2000), his penultimate book of poems. More specifically, the line running from *Pleasures* to *New Addresses* suggests that Koch’s anthological poetics are always pedagogical. Koch is perhaps more well known as an anthologist and teacher than as a poet. He edited several highly successful teaching anthologies, including *Sleeping on the Wing* and *Making Your Own Days*. This last offers a particularly productive angle from which to interpret the anthological-pedagogical dimensions of Koch’s poetry, especially because in approach, style, and content, it runs explicitly counter to the New Critical project of “understanding poetry” through the generic practice of close reading. A advocate of surface reading *avant la lettre*, Koch attacked the “Hidden Meaning assumption, which directs one to more or less ignore the surface of the poem in a quest for some elusive and momentous significance that the poet has buried amid the words and music” (111). In his long poem “The Duplications,” Koch summed up the work of teaching anthologies like Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren’s *Understanding*

Poetry and Brooks's *The Well-Wrought Urn* as “awful jereboams, to *irony, ambiguity, and tension*” (*On the Edge* 402).¹⁵ The central emphasis in “Some South American Poets” on the technique of the *basos*—“the art of concealing in one line what has been revealed in the previous line”—embodies Koch's creative attack on New Critical mystification. “The *basos* adopts an ‘art of concealment,’” Feinsod rightly argues, “in order to expose it as a syntax of obfuscation.” Koch's parodic anthology, like his teaching anthologies, suggest many ways in which he approaches the question of how to “understand poetry” in deliberate contrast to the reading norms of New Criticism and the Chicago School.

A useful contrast with Koch's pedagogical poetics might be drawn with his contemporary Charles Olson, the “crucial figure,” in Alan Golding's words, “for the ways in which he furthered and transformed a Poundian tradition of pedagogical avant-gardism: locating that pedagogy within an experimental academic institution; opening his poetry, in a way that Pound never did, to academic tropes; and foreground pedagogy as a constitutive feature of postmodern poetics” (98). Koch's teaching anthologies, like his anthological poetics, do not engage in Olson's Poundian update, nor in his didactic coterie address to the privileged “few of us there are / who read.” And while Olson imagined a master-pupil relation through his work as administrator and instructor at Black Mountain College, Koch remained comfortably within an English department at an ivy league institution—Columbia University—for his entire career. Likewise, Koch's more general interest in circulation, publicity, and mainstream publics mean that it makes little sense to situate his pedagogical poetics in relation to the “continuing conflict between the public (didactic) impulse and the (private) impulse toward the preservation of coterie” that Golding traces from Pound's anthologies through Olson to the Language poets (102).

Nonetheless, pedagogy, mediated through an anthological poetics, animates Koch's renovation of apostrophe and personification. It is no accident, for example, that most of the poems in "Some South American Poets" are organized around scenes of instruction. "Boiling Water," the first poem in the anthology, begins with an address to the "Father... princely teacher"; the second poem features an "old commonwealth teacher... fastened to his desk"; in "Pleasure Street" a "mathematics teacher studies nightly / to find the stars"; and "Luis de Calliens" begins his poem "The Morgan Library" "I, Luis de Calliens, Spanish teacher / And South American poet, as I am known..." (194-96). These scenes of instruction function as occasions for extravagant personification and apostrophe through which Koch dramatically exits from what he called the "lyrical trap." In *Making Your Own Days*, Koch writes that one of the specific attractions of long poems is "being able to be many characters and to be in many places, to transcend the person and to find the excitement of the personal in what before was impersonal and distant" (124). In a Q & A session with students at Naropa University in 1979, he described this "trap" in narrative terms, as an imperative to "begin at the beginning, [and] go on chronologically to the end." He also described it as a kind of entrapment in the fiction and feelings of a solitary lyric speaker, and encouraged students to write plays as a "good way out."

I mean, the trap – that you can only express the main feeling that you're having – "Oh Nancy, where art thou?" – Like, you really have to say what you feel about the grapes, or about the grape-pickers, or whoever. To write a play, you can be the bad capitalist, the good grape-picker, the bad grape-picker, the grape, the tree, the wine, the orange, you can be everything. And it's like, you can be on all sides of everything (which, in fact, one is). What... The position one takes is the result of choosing. But there's a kind of poetic truth also in expressing everything. You know, one finally decides against violence, but there's that violent self in one too.

Koch's fullest theorization of a poetry capable of "expressing everything" comes in *Making Your Own Days*. There, he advances the notion that poetry is "a separate language" (14).¹⁶ He

calls this discussion the “main innovation” of the book, and explains what he means by way of Paul Valéry’s notion that poetry is a “language within language,” that is that it operates within but apart from the ordinary, everyday uses of discursive language (19). Koch uses this central idea of poetry as a separate language to explain “how poems are written and how they can be read” (19). His theory of how poetry is thus intimately connected to the kind of uncritical reading practice, to use Michael Warner’s term, that he endorses.

The most forceful elaboration of his theory appears at the end of his chapter, “The Inclinations of the Poetry Language”:

The poetry language is distinguishable from ordinary language, out of which it is made and of which it is variant, by the structural role played in it by music. This musical language shows inclinations to compare, to personify, to apostrophize, to lie, to boast, to tell secrets, to give advice, to constantly change, and to organize what is said in it into works of art; these characteristic kinds of utterance tend to bring together a multiplicity of words and experiences and to connect them in ways that confer, at least momentarily, knowledge and power on those who speak the language. Thanks to this intellectual and verbal power, poets are able to say things—important, enhancing, and empowering things—that can’t be said without it. It’s a language that gives pleasure and communicates while doing so. (70)

Koch’s thinking is closer to T.S. Eliot’s famous claim that “poetry communicates before it is understood.” For Koch, however, poetry communicates before it is understood precisely because of its distinctive capacity to stage, modulate, and combine different modes, styles, and objects of address.

Yet while the idea of poetry as a separate language is pedagogically useful, it’s actually distinct from Valéry’s notion that poetry is a language *within* language, or, we might say, within discourse. Rather than practice poetry as a language *apart*, Koch formulates his poetry through the anthology as a language *from the outside*—a language written, as Bakhtin wrote, “with another’s eyes, from the point of view of a potentially different language and style” (60). Koch’s later address “To the French Language” dramatizes how writing, anthologizing,

and translating in the light of other languages and literary traditions involves a process in which even modes of self-address and self-recognition become estranged. “To the French Language” begins:

I needed to find you and, once having found you, to keep you
 You who could make me a physical Larousse
 Of everyday living, you who would present me to Gilberte
 And Anna and Sonia, you by whom I could be a surrealist
 And a Dadaist and almost a fake of Racine and of Molière. I was hiding
 The heavenly dolor you planted in my heart:
 That I would never completely have you.

Everyday living here becomes mediated through the encyclopedic dictionary, a process both freeing and limiting. Before the sense that the language will never be mastered or understood completely, Koch becomes a kind of anthological composite, a figure of the poet freed from the imperatives to mean, to make sense, “a surrealist / And a Dadaist and almost a fake of Racine and of Molière.” The poem thus deliberately draws our attention not to meaning but to meaning’s fugitivity and incompleteness. “To the French Language” embraces the awkwardness and arbitrariness language acquisition, the inevitable confusion and misunderstanding involved in learning another language. These are registers of poetry’s capacity to renovate the oldest of poetic genres, the love poem:

And one April morning, when I woke up, I had you
 Stuck to the tip of my tongue like a Christmas sticker
 I walked out into the street, it was Fleurus
 And said hello which came out Bonjour Madame
 I walked to the cr  merie four doors away and sat down.
 I was lifted up by you. I knew I couldn’t be anything to you
 But an aspiring lover. Sans ego. It was the best relationship
 Of relationships sans ego, that I’ve ever had.

 But I have loved you. That’s no flattering statement
 But the truth. And still love you, though now I’m not in love with you.
 The woman who first said this to me nearly broke my heart,
 But I don’t think I’m breaking yours, because it’s a coeur
 In the first place and, for another thing, it beats under le soleil
 On a jeudi or vendredi matin and besides you’re not listening to me
 At least not as you did on the days

I sat around in Aix-en-Provence's cafés waiting for you
 To spark a conversation—about nothing in particular. I was on stage
 At all times, and you were the script and the audience
 Even when the theatre had no people in it, you were there.

In addition to the inventive address to a language itself, Koch's final lines explodes the conventional ways that we tend to think about lyric address.

Jonathan Culler, for instance, has also acknowledged the importance of Valéry's "Poetry and Abstract Thought" to his own thinking about the lyric, and indeed Koch's conceptual vocabulary overlaps with Culler's in a number of somewhat surprising ways. At the same time, however, Koch's experiments with poetic address suggest very different conclusions than those Culler arrives at. Fundamentally, they do not share Culler's view of the "embarrassment" of apostrophe, a claim that begins for Culler in the critic's unwillingness to consider the figure itself, but which ultimately migrates in his most recent work on the theory of the lyric to the poets themselves. About Koch's *New Addresses*, Culler writes that Koch "exploit[s] the comic possibilities of apostrophe," which "is amusing...because it takes to an extreme a fundamental gesture of lyric, mocking its pretensions to transform objects of attention into potential auditors, yet slyly expanding our imaginative possibilities...." Yet Culler's notion of the "pretensions" and embarrassment of apostrophe notably rely on specific critical readings of neoclassical and Romantic poetry: Culler cites Earl Wasserman and M.H. Abrams as two examples. We could say that what Culler calls "embarrassment" is rather an historical norm of interpretation. Koch uses apostrophe and personification to avoid the "lyrical trap" set by such normative reading practices.

Thus whereas Culler stresses the "highly optative character" of apostrophe—its tendency to express "wishes, requests, demands that what ever is addressed do something

for you or refrain from doing what it usually does,” the concluding lines of “To the French Language” deliberately upend the directionality and agency implied in such injunctions.

I was on stage
At all times, and you were the script and the audience
Even when the theatre had no people in it, you were there.

These lines possess addressivity, we could say, without addressing anyone or anything in particular. They draw attention to the addressable character of public language, and to the conditions of addressability through which language attaches to particular objects. This is because these conditions are not only addressed to language-in-translation, but from it. “It is, after all,” Bakhtin concludes, “precisely in the light of another potential language or style that a straightforward style is parodied, travestied, ridiculed.” It is this *potentiality* that Koch’s poems, from “Fresh Air” to “To the French Language,” summon in order to remake poetic address; it is a potentiality necessarily made visible through midcentury print culture. In other words, as at the conclusion to “To the French Language” Koch’s poems everywhere exhibit “a sense that words have ‘conditions attached to them.’”

In an interview with his former assistant, Jordan Davis, Koch remarked, “There may be a perfectly serious poem, a good poem . . . and some other person writes a parody of it and one line of the parody may have more truth than the whole original poem, or at least be freer to reach the intoxicating heights that sometimes seem where truth is from.” Heights, not depths. The perception of truthfulness, in this formulation, derives neither from the masculinist poetics and cultural politics of the practitioners of “deep image,” nor from the New Critical poets. Instead, it is an effect of the heights of poetic invocation, the unembarrassed pleasure and gratuity of silly, indirect or open-ended apostrophizing.

Translation is a crucial decentering, defamiliarizing, practice in this regard—a key means for midcentury poets to respond to habits and practices of lyric print culture. While I

think it is demonstrably true that what Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins call “lyrical reading” remains a normative practice, that reading is itself part of a lyric culture that twentieth-century poets write toward and against. Indeed, part of the history I have been tracing through the Latin American poetry anthology is the history of how genre mutates through it, enabling writers to write “from the outside” and experiment in remarkably various ways with making poetry. They are not only rethinking and retheorizing composition, but doing so fundamentally in relation to address, in relation to the recognition that to write poetry is to write in the presence of anthologies, to write medially, to, for, and against distinctive, myriad, and often conflictual publics. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, this mutation of genre—like that of the anthology itself—continues to persist. This is not because anthologization equals canonization, or because anthologies enshrine reading norms, but because, as the history of the anthologization of Spanish and Latin American poetry in the midcentury period attests, anthology-making reanimates linguistic and genre consciousness; discloses the tensions between format and form as well as those between context and context loss; redistributes the energies of poetic genre; and spurs on the heteroglossia, mutation, and dialogism characteristic of book-length poems. The poetry being made today does not point to the conclusion that poets, with their readers, *also* assume that all poetry is “lyric”; indeed, arguably, poetry today is more generically diverse than ever: odes, ballads, georgics, eclogues, ghazals, catalogues, epics, annotations, info-poems, and new print and digital poetic genres proliferate. Though various claims have been made about the death of the poetry anthology in the twenty-first century, literary history suggests otherwise. Alongside poetry’s ongoing proliferation and irreducible diversity, the anthology persists.

Notes to Chapter 4

¹ The poets Charles North and James Schuyler also edited two anthologies—called *Broadway* and *Broadway 2*—of poetry and sketches by New York School poets and painters.

² The overdetermined sexist choreography of the wordless encounter between and a surrogate for the poet and a “serving girl” no doubt speaks to the masculinism of the era that has been well studied by Rachel Blau Duplessis, Michael Davidson, and others; and anthologies are of course one site where the “poetics of manhood” plays out in representational, allegorical, thematic, and formal terms.

³ In the 1941 prologue to *Ficciones*, Borges writes, “The composition of vast books is a laborious and impoverishing extravagance. To go on for five hundred pages developing an idea whose perfect oral exposition is possible in a few minutes! A better course of procedure is to pretend that these books already exist, and then offer a [summary], a commentary” (15). Koch records a conversation he had with Borges when both were professors at Columbia University:

Borges told me that the way to become a short story writer was as follows. He had been a poet and he had been in a very bad automobile accident. He had hurt his skull and there was a very great possibility that there was damage to his brain, and he was afraid to write poems because he was afraid there was damage. So he wrote out Pierre Menard and sent it out as a piece of true literary criticism to the greatest magazine of Argentina, *Sur*...He wrote stories as criticism to prove he hadn't lost his mind...And without remembering what Borges had said I began to write stories.”
(*Collected Fiction of Kenneth Koch* iv-v)

⁴ See, for instance, the first and second issues of *The Fifties*, pages 38 and 47 respectively.

⁵ See, for instance, *Encyclopedia of the New York School Poets*, 325.

⁶ For more on the history of the “deep image,” see Rasula, “Deep Image,” 30-31. Though Rasula does not engage the question of translation directly, the anthology of translations has always been a central, intervenient form for Rothenberg's poetic projects.

⁷ See www.roberbly.com/int_4.html.

⁸ See, for instance, Hutcheon.

⁹ The drafts of Koch's book offer further evidence that the underlying activity and organizing impulse of the book—in sum, the engine of these poems—is anthological. Initially, for instance, Koch had gathered four poems—“Poem,” “Heanorupeatomos” “An X-Ray of Utah,” and “Doestoevsky's *The Gambler*”—under the heading “A Small Anthology.” These poems appear in sequence in the published version of the book, but without the titular rubric to further organize them into a unified sequence.

¹⁰ See for instance John Stoer's interview with Koch.

¹¹ Bibby writes, “between 1967 and 1973, at least nineteen antiwar-related anthologies were published by mainstream presses” (160).

¹² American Writers Against the War included the publication of *A Poetry Reading Against the War* (The Sixties Press, 1967). Authors involved in the umbrella organization included Galway Kinnell, W.S. Merwin, Allen Ginsberg, Adrienne Rich, Grace Paley, Robert Lowell, and Douglas Kent Hall. The cover of Lowenfels's anthology advertised work by James Dickey, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Stanley Kunitz, Denise Levertov, and Robert Lowell. It included the work of 87 poets. Lowenfels also edited *In the Time of Revolution: Poems from Our Third World*, a collection of African-American poets; *From Belly of the Shark: a new anthology of Native American poems by Chicanos, Eskimos, Hawaiians, Indians, Puerto Ricans in the*

U.S.A., with related poems by others (1973); and in the wake of the military coup in Chile in 1973, *For Neruda, For Chile: an international anthology* (1975).

¹³ In an interview with David Shapiro, Koch remarked: “When I first went to France I was 23 years old. I knew French but not very well. I read a lot of French poetry and enjoyed reading it, even though I didn’t entirely understand it. And I was interested in this quality that a work of literature could have — that it could be exciting and at the same time slightly incomprehensible. I wanted to get this kind of quality into my own work, the excitement and mystery of a language that is not entirely understood but suggests a great deal.”

¹⁴ Galvin points out a similar dynamic in Eshleman’s approach to Vallejo. See “Poetic Innovation,” 364.

¹⁵ The second edition of the flagship New Critical anthology, *Understanding Poetry: An Anthology for College Students* appeared in 1950; the third in 1960.

¹⁶ Similarly, in *Sleeping on the Wing*, he encourages beginning readers and writers to think of poetry as a “foreign language.”

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