Introduction

"*Compañero*, Respect Your Vocation!": Improvisations for a Workaday Crisis

VICKY UNRUH

VICKY UNRUH, who teaches Latin American literature and culture at the University of Kansas, is the author of *Latin American Vanguards: The Art of Contentious Encounters* (U of California P, 1994), *Performing Women and Modern Literary Culture in Latin America* (U of Texas P, 2006), and numerous essays in journals and books. She coedited (with Michael J. Lazzara) the critical collection *Telling Ruins in Latin America* (Palgrave, 2009). Her current project examines the postutopian afterlife of revolutionary ideology in Cuban cultural activity of the post-Soviet era.

In Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabío's Oscar-nominated Cuban film *Fresa y chocolate* (*Strawberry and Chocolate* [1994]),[1] a gay intellectual dissident, Diego, asks a straight young communist university student, David, why he is studying political science if his passion is to write. "Because . . . one should study something that's useful to society" ("Porque . . . uno tiene que estudiar algo que sea útil a la sociedad"), David explains. But Diego brings David up short: "*Compañero*, respect your vocation!" ("Compañero, ¡la vocación se respeta!").[2] In context this advice is paradoxical. On the one hand, Diego's counsel that David put his talents ahead of societal needs is consistent with the clandestine tutorial that Diego gives David on Cuban and international artists and intellectuals proscribed by the revolutionary state. The subversive advice also typifies the critique of state orthodoxy characterizing Cuban cultural expression since the post-Soviet era, which began in the early 1990s. But the admonition to respect one's vocation—framed with the requisite, solidarity-building "*compañero*"—also echoes the reverence toward work inscribed in the 1959 revolution's utopian tenets and its interpellation of revolutionary subjects. Later Diego further complicates this reference. Having lost his job as a journalist for contesting state censorship of experimental artists, Diego—now blacklisted in the cultural sphere and believing his only option to be manual labor—explains to David why he must leave Cuba: "What will *I* do with a brick in my hand? Where will I put it?" ("¿Qué hago yo con un ladrillo en la mano? ¿Dónde lo pongo?").

Critics have highlighted the film's impulse to reconcile the revolution with its dissidents and rectify past wrongs against homosexuals periodically consigned to punitive camps.[3] Diego, we learn, made

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every effort in his youth to be a dutiful revolutionary, aiming to become a teacher and join volunteer literacy campaigns. It was the revolution, he notes, that prevented him, as a gay man and as the proprietor of a "thinking mind," from making a useful contribution or fulfilling his vocation. A mentor to aspiring artists, Diego gives David an impromptu tutorial in cultural literacy that fills the gaps in David's state education. But Diego's comments on fidelity to a vocation and aversion to manual labor also mark the resurgence in this film's post-Soviet epoch of unresolved tensions inscribed in the revolution's pervasive ideology of work. Although the film's action unfolds in 1979,[4] its dominant structures of feeling locate *Fresa y chocolate* firmly in the early 1990s, when it was made—that is, the "Special Period in Times of Peace" ("Período Especial en Tiempos de Paz"), an official designation for the economic implosion following the end of the Cold War and the Soviets' departure from the island in 1990.[5] The film's Special Period markers include a pervasive aura of disenchantment, images of extreme material scarcity, and a critical nostalgia not only for banned aesthetic icons of the prerevolutionary past but also for the idealism of the revolution itself.[6]

Offering frequent glimpses of the burgeoning informal economy keeping countless Cubans afloat in the post-Soviet era, *Fresa y chocolate* also projects the Special Period's critical but nuanced take on the ideology of work instilled in the years immediately following the revolution's victory. But as a foundational element of the revolutionary state's overhaul of Cuban society, this discourse of work exhibits a striking afterlife in cultural expression, even as Cuban citizens have experienced dramatic reconfigurations in their everyday work lives since the Soviets' withdrawal of support. Short-term Special Period measures addressed extreme shortages through the tight rationing of food and fuel, the widespread use of ubiquitous Chinese bicycles for transportation, and a curtailment of the workday. Longer-term strategies to restore economic equilibrium included the reorientation of Cuba's trade relations toward the West; initiatives to attract foreign investment in joint ventures; a focus on raising revenues from industries other than sugar, the country's prime export, like tourism and mining; and market-oriented internal reforms such as the creation of a two-tiered monetary system keyed in part to hard currency, the authorization of small farmers' markets and more-autonomous cooperatives, a measured authorization of small businesses and self-employment, and a sharp increase in permissible remittances to island families from Cubans living abroad (Brenner et al. 111–16; Gott 286–98). Changes that have followed Raúl Castro's assumption of his brother Fidel's presidential powers in 2006 include greater access to consumer goods and, most recently, the right to buy and sell homes and cars. One result of this integration of quasi-capitalist measures into a socialist context has been a resurgence of profound inequalities, intensified along gender and racial lines; a heightened visibility of distinctions Cubans would once have attributed to class; and a rise in the number of citizens subsisting through work in the informal sector. As Ariana Hernandez-Reguant observes, "The double economy . . . corresponded to a two-tiered quotidian experience," a complex social restratification in which "a discourse of possessive individualism began to take hold" even as some "mourned the socialist values of altruism and solidarity" (8). The Special Period also witnessed a crisis of cultural authority in literary and cinematic expression.[7] But neither economic hybridity nor the concurrent cultural opening gave way to the political changes once anticipated in the perception that Cuba was in transition. Instead, flexibility in economic options for Cuban citizens has been punctuated by periodic initiatives in ideological retrenchment, as the state has sought to incorporate

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capitalist strategies into reformulated socialist principles without relinquishing centralized control over economic or political life.

Artistic renditions of the discourse of work in post-Soviet Cuba unleash all the anomalies and contradictions of this scenario. But although Cubans and Cuba watchers often underscore the exceptionalism of Cuba's revolution and of its precarious post–Cold War situation, these critical recastings of revolutionary work ideology evoke the kinds of questions—about other geocultural locations, historical periods, and literary-cultural traditions—explored through other disciplinary and theoretical optics by the contributors to this issue of *PMLA*, dedicated to the special topic of work. The historical trajectory of Western capitalism, particularly of late capitalism, constitutes the backdrop for many pieces in this issue, whereas Cuba, although embracing selective capitalist elements to fend off economic disaster, could be characterized as the embodiment of late-twentieth-century socialism under siege. But its singularities notwithstanding, the Cuban case foregrounds the power of a sudden financial crisis to catapult the secure into precariousness and shake up a society's dearly held guiding myths about the value of work and the equality of access for citizens.

It was probably no accident that the idea to initiate a special issue on work emerged at the *PMLA* Editorial Board's May 2009 meeting, less than eight months after the culminating events in the 2008 crash shook the international financial system. As *PMLA* goes to press with this issue, the unresolved consequences of those events are still reverberating in citizens' lives. Zuccotti Park, where the original Occupy Wall Street protesters took up residence in fall 2011, is a mere six-minute walk north from MLA headquarters in New York, and in October 2011 the Editorial Board conducted its business amid the Occupy din. Such events matter for the work that we—as teacher-scholars of languages, literatures, and cultures—do, a subject taken up by some *PMLA* contributors. In this context of enduring economic crisis, Cuba offers a rich example of the resonance of international economic relations with local performances of citizenship through work and challenges us to consider what happens when any deep-rooted, exacting ideology of work—socialist or capitalist—is abruptly unmoored from citizens' everyday enactments of worker roles. Tapping into the inventive repertoire for reinforcing and unpacking received truths that storytelling, image making, and language play offer, literary-artistic representations of such everyday practices can bring into relief the dynamics between a powerful work ideology and its discontents, reveal inequalities and tenuous forms of making or unmaking a living that an official work ethic often obscures, or illuminate the intricate relation between work and identity narratives. They can also tease out the far-from-simple ties between the privileging of particular artistic forms or conceptions of literature and art and the manner in which human communities think and talk about work and workers.

I shall return later to the inventive ways this issue's authors address such larger questions. In posing the Cuban case as an entrée to the special topic, I want to focus on artistic enactments of the relation between a deeply ingrained work ethic under siege and the self-apprehended identity of citizens,[8] a tie complicated in epochs of economic uncertainty and improvisational hybridity. In her research on Havana's self-employed workers of the Special Period and on Cubans working with foreign investment companies who navigate between capitalist and socialist models, the anthropologist-lawyer Emma Phillips notes that as "worker subjectivities are reconstructed to encompass a growing range of individual choices and opportunities, new ideas evolve about who is a productive member of society" ("Dollarization" 357). "[C]hanges in the regulation of labor," she

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affirms, "have implications for . . . changing self-conceptions," new identities that "may *t* become constitutive of fundamental social change . . . not easily captured by the binary of communism/capitalism" ("Maybe" 306; my emphasis). Phillips's words illuminate the ideologically hybrid interpellations of Cuban subjectivity implicit in Diego's injunction "*Compañe* , respect your vocation!"

In his remark vocation embodies the paradoxical tension between an ethics of social utility or the market on the one hand and a call to individual fulfillment on the other, a tension that Raymond Williams, in tracing the history of the key word *wor* , might attribute to the fact that in Euro-American culture the identification of work with a paid job is a relatively recent phenomenon. But even as it acquires this dominant denotation, the word's fundamental association with any kind of activity, effort, or achievement persisted (335). A dynamic between physical work and cultural activity, moreover, is inscribed in the etymological ties between the word *c* and productive labor, as in cultivation or husbandry. Williams describes a trajectory in the meaning of *c* from tending animals to tending human minds, from material activity such as work to the intellectual, the spiritual, and the aesthetic (87–90). These links not only reveal the implicit ties between literature and work in Western culture, they also point to why the concept of vocation, with its implication that the self is cultivated through work, can illuminate Cuban films and fiction in which self-fulfillment of a not obviously socialist kind is reinscribed in new mediations with utopian dreams. Against a backdrop of intensified economic hybridity, these new mediations between self and work emerge not only in working subjects who, like the communist student David, are interpellated as the revolution's true believers but also in those whose spheres of labor, such as night-time entertainment or sex work, had been proscribed as marginal. Although revolutionary ideology in Cuba interpellates its subjects as workers, the following examples show how the concept of a vocation posed by Diego's admonition offers a way to square a residual socialist work ideology with the resurgent individualism characterizing Cuba's post-Soviet era.

As we consider the subjective dexterity required to perform the shifting role of worker in economically unstable scenarios, we can think about the work sphere as what Joseph Roach would call a "behavioral vortex," a regularly traversed locale marked by "the gravitational pull of social necessity" (28), or as what Michel de Certeau would call a "practiced place," staked out not through its official mapping but by the recurrent, everyday activity of citizens (117). Both terms designate a contested sphere that may be either physically real or imagined. Such locales may be institutionalized—like the formally organized Cuban work life since the revolution[9]—and their activities ritualized. But they are also spheres of everyday activity's improvisational potential. As Ben Highmore argues, the kind of everydayness that Certeau attributes to "practiced places" manifests "the density of cultural life and its refusal to be contained by the parameters of what passes for *offic* '*nat* life'" (177; my emphasis). It is this refusal to be contained by the institutions that ground it that makes work portrayed in Cuban fiction and film so revealing of the dissonant cultural conversation about the revolution's legacy. Certeau coined the phrase "practiced place" to define "space" and to contrast it with "place," which he ties to the "law of the 'proper'" as an "indication of stability." Certeau's space by contrast "temporalize[s]" place, emphasizing moments when place is "caught in the ambiguity of an actualization" and functions in "a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs" (117). His concept of "practiced place" is useful for thinking about cultural representations of work in post-Soviet Cuba because it juxtaposes the rule of law with the ambiguity and conflict of everyday actualizations, in

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which, as Highmore notes (in his exegesis of Certeau), "imaginings" differ from the "rationale governing the present" (148).

Romances in Pedagogy at Work

The inscription of work in the official definition of Cuban citizenship under the revolution could not be clearer than in the opening sentence of article 1 of the Cuban constitution: "Cuba is a socialist state of workers" ("Cuba es un Estado socialista de trabajadores"; República de Cuba 4). But by the time the first postrevolutionary constitution was adopted, in 1976, the ideological anchor for its work ethic had long been in place. We can recall Che Guevara's messianic call for a new, organic relation to work in "El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba" ("Socialism and Man in Cuba" [1965]) and "Una actitud nueva frente al trabajo" ("A New Attitude toward Work" [1964]). Che argued that the capitalist alienation of people from their labors would be eliminated not simply through altered relations to production but also through the new conception of work. Uncoupled from the market and material incentives, "liberated work" ("trabajo liberado"; "El socialismo" 376), in particular volunteer work, would stimulate a new consciousness in the incipient "new man," fuel a "new joy" ("alegría nueva") and a sense of "play" ("juego") in everyday life ("Una actitud" 333), and forge his class-leveling identification not only with the collective but also with work itself: "People . . . begin to see themselves portrayed in their work and to understand their human magnitude through the object created, the work fulfilled. This no longer entails leaving a part of one's being in the form of the labor power sold . . . but rather signifies an emanation from oneself, a contribution to the common life in which one is reflected" ("El hombre . . . empieza a verse retratado en su obra y a comprender su magnitud humana a través del objeto creado, del trabajo realizado. Esto ya no entraña dejar una parte de su ser en forma de fuerza de trabajo vendida . . . sino que significa una emanación de sí mismo, un aporte a la vida común en que se refleja"; "El socialismo" 376).

Although Che clearly drew on Marxist labor ideology, his emphasis on developing a new consciousness gave the Cuban revolutionary conception of work its singular cast.[10] This distinct, Cuban version of Marxism contained strong nationalist features and also synthesized elements from Antonio Gramsci, from the nineteenth-century Cuban poet-intellectual and independence fighter José Martí (1853–95), and from Latin America's first home-grown Marxist, the Peruvian José Carlos Mariátegui (1894–1930). A key feature in Cuba's new work ethic, according to Che, is the pedagogical mechanism for effecting the change in consciousness. He imagined Cuba as "one gigantic school" ("una gigantesca escuela"; "El socialismo" 372) and cast the volunteer teacher as the revolution's most important cultural worker. Holding a romanticized view of rural Cubans as the incarnation of the revolutionary spirit, he argued that the encounter between urban teacher and rural student would change perceptions of work.[11] The educating would be reciprocal, bridging mental and manual work and class lines. Newly literate rural Cubans would acquire a sense of participatory citizenship, reinforcing their restructured relation to production. The urban teacher on location would also do physical labor (such as sugarcane harvesting) to acquire an enhanced awareness of inequality and a commitment to solidarity with other citizens based on love. As a conduit for its ideology of work, the revolutionary state's reforms incorporated literacy-campaign principles into the island's universal education system, through an academic curriculum requiring experience with manual labor and other practical activities, volunteering, and, for urban children, periodic immersion in rural life.[12]

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As the framework for educating the postrevolutionary citizen, then, the work ethic according to Che underscores the social duty that moves David in *Fresa y chocolate* to study political science but also imagines a vital connection between individuals' self-apprehended identities and their work, embodied in the dissident Diego's choice of the word *vocation*. Given the word's root in the Latin *vocare* ("to call") and its historical ties to the Christian concept of a calling, Diego's admonition has an interpellative force and true-believer fervor comparable with Che's creed-like call for a new relation between the "new man" and his work. The notion of a vocation as something to which one is called also reveals tensions in a state's "hailing" of its citizens through a work ideology to contribute to the social good while realizing their individual "human magnitude." The grammatically impersonal form of Diego's call to David to respect his vocation reinforces these mixed signals. In the context of their intimate conversation, my rendition of "la vocación se respeta" as a second-person command is appropriate. But it can also be translated as "a vocation is to be respected," the kind of maxim with truth claims that one might find on the Cuban *vallas*, the public billboards still used to display revolutionary slogans.

Cultural debates in Cuba about work long predate the Special Period and even the revolution. Cuban scholars trace the revolutionary work ethic to Martí, who executed adroit metaphoric turns to define the man of action as a worker and intellectuals as laborers.[13] In recounting early-twentieth-century modernization, the historian Louis Pérez documents the impact in Cuba of the United States' market-based work ethic and ideas of the "self-made man" (143–46), and he details the projects in skills education, in production, and in marketing through which Protestant missionaries sought to reinforce this ethic throughout Cuba (252). In fact, a critical reaction to the market-based work ethic and, by extension, to the United States' intervention in Cuban economic and cultural affairs was a key feature of Cuba's literary (1920s–30s) and artistic (1920s–40s) avant-gardes, whose cultural activity was often marked by critical representations of work. Those who signed the manifesto of Cuba's avant-garde Grupo Minorista ("Minoritist Group" [1923–27]), for instance, defined themselves as "intellectual workers" who integrated artistic innovation with affirmations of cultural autonomy from the United States ("Declaración"). As I have argued elsewhere, in response to the United States' domination of Cuba's sugarcane industry, multigenre artistic expressions synthesized a focus on sugar with explorations of Afro-Cuban culture as a powerful antidote to the United States' influence and as a marker of Cuban identity.[14] Key literary examples include Agustín Acosta's *La zafra: Poema de combate* ("The Sugar Harvest: A Combat Poem" [1926]), Alejo Carpentier's novel *¡Écue-Yamba-Ó!* ("Lord, Praised Be Thou" [1933]) and ballet script *El milagro de Anaquillé* ("The Miracle of Anaquillé" [1927]), and the early Afro-Cuban work of the renowned poet Nicolás Guillén. Mario Carreño's painting *Cortadores de caña* ("Sugarcane Cutters" [1943]), reproduced on the cover of this issue, is the boldest visual depiction of this critical attention to work in the Cuban vanguards' cultural discourse.[15] Sujatha Fernandes argues that Cuban socialism's work ethic of solidarity and volunteerism was already well rooted in earlier nationalist movements, religious and social organizations, and, she observes, strong United States influences: "the evangelical churches' ethic of hard work and helpfulness to others encouraged perseverance and cooperation" (28). I would add that artistic explorations of the postrevolutionary work ethic are also rooted in the critical inquiries into work that marked Cuba's artistic avant-gardes.

In a comparable critical vein, by representing work as a "practiced place" postrevo-

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lutionary artistic inquiries problematized the revolution's work ethic from the start, in particular the idealized pedagogical symbiosis between a bourgeoisie shedding its old ways and the revolution's urban and rural beneficiaries. Gutiérrez Alea's early masterpiece *Memorias del subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment* [1968]) intimated these complications in a failed romance between the film's protagonist, Sergio—a former business owner and aspiring writer who out of curiosity remains in Cuba when his cohort and family leave—and Elena, a quasi-adolescent of limited education. The film, in which Sergio's perspective often dominates, links his alienation in part to his lack of useful work: he still lives from his property, which is gradually being appropriated by the state. Sergio is not in principle unsympathetic with the revolution's goals of equity and education but despairs about the "underdevelopment" of its beneficiaries, embodied for him in Elena. With such intellectualized backdrops as a Havana bookstore, an art exhibit, and Ernest Hemingway's library-study on the Finca Vigía, the film stages this cross-class encounter as a Pygmalion-like tutorial in cultural literacy in which no Guevarian consciousness shifts unfold. The failed romance between Sergio and Elena as two postrevolutionary players can be read in part as a failure in the reciprocal pedagogy that might produce a new consciousness of work.

Although Sergio designates himself Elena's tutor, he is not really a teacher. But the work of bona fide teachers was one of the first vocations portrayed in early postrevolutionary Cuban literature. While pedagogical initiatives accompanied many twentieth-century revolutions (Russian, Mexican, Nicaraguan), efforts to integrate theory with practice in a consciousness-raising synthesis of manual and intellectual labor singularized Cuba's vast educational reforms. Moreover, the success of Cuba's literacy campaigns is frequently attributed to the on-location tutorial model in which one teacher often worked with a single student or a small group. This model gave the teacher a central role in the revolution's cultural imaginary, and early fictional accounts showcased the problems for those responding to the call. These accounts include *Maestra voluntaria* ("Volunteer Teacher" [1962]), by Daura Olema, a novel that, as Ana Serra demonstrates, represents the failure of urban literacy teachers and their rural students to identify with each other ("*New Man*" 42–49). Other fictionalized accounts register the tensions underlying changes in work practices and ensuing complications between class relations and those of gender or race.[16]

The 1968 film classic *Lucía*, directed by Humberto Solás, offers a key example. *Lucía* portrays three Cuban women named Lucía—one who experiences the colonial independence wars, one who lives in Havana during its modernization in the 1920s and 1930s, and one who works on a farm collective in the 1960s. In the third segment, probably the postrevolutionary text that most faithfully enacts the Guevarian ideal, a young male volunteer arrives at Lucía's rural home. Assigned to teach her to read, he also does requisite farming labor. This film segment casts Lucía's emergent literacy as the catalyst for her rebellion against a jealous husband who forbids her to work. Offsetting the residual class hierarchies implicit in having a young city man with his educator's lantern enlighten the unschooled Lucía about her oppression is the teacher's lack of a name. This is not his story, and he only reinforces what Lucía's community has been proclaiming: she has the right to work and to read. Here the vocational call leans more toward Lucía's informed citizenship than toward the teacher's seemingly unproblematic assumption of his multiple work roles. Improvisational verses of the popular song "Guantanamera" not only background the film's idealized images of happy farmworkers—with the volunteer teacher harmoniously toiling at their side—but also

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admonish the husband's failure to adjust to changing times.[17] The couple's unresolved standoff suggests that new work models are challenging to absorb.

The 1974 film *De cierta manera* (*One Way or Another*) probes these problems more frankly, eschewing the sentimental revolutionary glow of *Lucía*'s third segment. This lauded experimental fusion of fiction and documentary was directed by Sara Gómez, Cuba's first Afro-Cuban woman filmmaker, who died while completing it.[18] The film, set soon after the revolution's triumph, offers a difficult romance, between Mario—an Afro-Cuban bus-factory laborer, raised in a poor Havana neighborhood—and Yolanda, a primary school teacher of middle-class origins. The revolution's reforms directly benefit Mario, but Yolanda's vocation and her conflicts with Mario enact the stresses of living out these reforms. The two live and work in Miraflores, a razed slum under reconstruction by the revolution. Mario and Yolanda are complicated fictional characters, who interact with unrehearsed real-world residents of Miraflores. Critically reframing the ideal that social classes' perceptions of each other can be transformed, one scene shows Yolanda in her classroom berating a young boy for not appreciating all that the revolution has given him. The film's juxtaposition of fiction and documentary, inventive for its time, underscores Yolanda and Mario's strong revolutionary work ethic but situates them at the juncture of all the social, racial, and gender tensions characterizing Cuba in the 1960s and 1970s.

What Work? Which Job?

It is no accident that postrevolutionary artistic representations of work focus frequently on teachers, not simply because of their potential for revolutionary volunteerism and their interpellation as the gap bridgers for class consciousness. Teachers and tutors in these accounts also implicitly stand in for Cuba's "lettered city,"[19] its intelligentsia, who since 1961—the year Fidel Castro delivered the renowned "Words to Intellectuals"—have experienced the shifting fortunes of testing through trial and error what "[w]ithin the Revolution, everything; outside the Revolution, nothing" means when it comes to making art (Castro 276). Che himself called for new intellectuals divested of the "original sin" ("pecado original") of not being "authentically revolutionary" ("auténticamente revolucionarios"; "El socialismo" 380), a goal attainable only by overcoming aestheticism not obviously connected to concerns of ordinary people.[20] With Cuban writers' post-Soviet "reinscription of the aesthetic"—a term coined by James Buckwalter-Arias—the lines of this debate have been redrawn. As the Cuban scholar Desiderio Navarro argues, in the 1970s Cuban intellectuals were disparaged in official discourse and popular culture as "out of touch with social reality, the people, and *hard work*" (199; my emphasis). In contrast, post-Soviet literature and film, often through the optic of an artist-intellectual character, portray a revolutionary work ethic disconnected from everyday practice. Zoé Valdés's novel *La nada cotidiana* (lit. "The Everyday Nothingness" [1995]) offers a scathing critique of this ethic. An irreverent *Künstlerroman*, *La nada cotidiana* unfolds, on one narrative level, in the present-tense, moment-by-moment "nothingness" of the workday of its narrator and protagonist, Yocandra, the editor of a literary magazine. Her on-the-job daydreaming generates a second-level retrospective narration of her life to this point. Parody dominates Yocandra's ribald, scatological framing of the revolutionary work ethic as the literal site of her own birth, an event instigated when Che himself envelops her mother's pregnant belly in the Cuban flag as she goes into labor at the 1959 May Day celebration and her machete-wielding, patriotic father rushes straight from the sugarcane harvest to the hospital "scattering the red soil

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he [shakes] from his body" ("regando tierra colorada que sacudía de su cuerpo"; 22).[21] But Yocandra's reflections are more direct: "I'm on my way to the office: WORK. What work? I've been doing the same thing for two years: pedal from my house to the office, mark the card, sit down at the desk, read a few foreign magazines that keep coming two or three months or years late, and daydream" ("Voy hacia la oficina: EL TRABAJO. ¿Qué trabajo? Hace dos años que hago lo mismo todos los días: pedalear de mi casa a la oficina, marcar la tarjeta, sentarme en el buró, leer algunas revistas extranjeras que continúan llegando con dos y tres meses o años de retraso, y pensar en las musarañas"; 32).

Such enactments of daily idleness are not mere surface critiques of economic precariousness. Rather, idle characters like Yocandra assertively resist notions of productivity as a viable anchor for selfhood and walk away from work that has rendered them superfluous in search of alternative engagements of their time. For example, the historian Escorpión in Antonio José Ponte's masterly, melancholic story "Corazón de skitalietz" ("Heart of a Wanderer" [1998]) goes AWOL from filling out index cards at a state-run cultural institute to wander the ruined city; and Victorio, the protagonist of Abilio Estévez's novel *Los palacios distantes* (*Distant Palaces* [2002]), abandons a state job at an aqueduct to roam Havana and take up street performing with his new friends, a sex worker patronized by tourists and a clown. In Estévez's account, unlike Ponte's, characters still seek their true vocations and, by reenacting Cuba's rich cultural past for fellow citizens in deteriorating neighborhoods, salvage remnants of that ideal. But a more striking reverence toward work also persists in film and fiction that portray contemporary Cuban work life as improvisational identity remappings marked by the agency of choice.

One obvious approach, the one followed by *Fresa y chocolate*, has been to restage pedagogy in surprising new places, enveloping the teacher-student duo in nostalgic desire but recasting it as a residual vocational path to a more reflective selfhood. For example, Gutiérrez Alea's final film, the popular comedy *Guantanamera* (1995), also codirected with Tabío, highlights the transformation of the protagonist, Gina, on a road trip across Cuba. Through this genre-film pilgrimage, Gina disconnects from her ideologue husband, who organizes the ride (a funeral procession for Gina's aunt entangled in bureaucratic dysfunction), and paradoxically liberates herself through a renewed on-the-road liaison with the (instantly reformed) womanizer, Mariano, a truck driver's sidekick smitten by her years back when he was her university student. As the road trip showcases workers who have taken on new roles that Cuba's economy has generated in response to material shortages—tour guides, clandestine roadside food vendors, and managers of *paladares* (the then still illicit family-owned restaurants)—we learn that Gina abandoned teaching political economy because of her heterodox views. "Theory is one thing and practice another" ("Una cosa es la teoría y otra es la práctica") she remarks. By the film's end, Gina resolves to reclaim the pedagogical vocation of her heart's desire by accepting a radio-program position counseling youth. Accompanied (like the third segment of Solás's *Lucía*) by improvisational verses of "Guantanamera" that reflect on the action, the film envelops Gina's metamorphosis in the soap-operatic renewed romance between a teacher and her student that not only critically mimics revolutionary pedagogy at work but also strives to salvage the work ethic through a citizen's reformulation of her calling under new conditions.

Tabío's comedy *Lista de espera* (*Waiting List* [2000]) aims to rescue the revolution's imagined synergy of work fulfillment and social good by projecting it onto a more variegated canvas.[22] The film opens with the arrival at a rural bus terminal of Emilio, a young

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Havana-trained engineer en route home because there are no jobs in the city. Here passengers in transit await buses that never arrive or are too full to accept more passengers. When their efforts to repair a broken-down bus fail and they must spend the night in the terminal, the passengers experience a collective dream. In the dream, they pool material resources and their occupational know-how to create sumptuous communal *ajiacos*, or hodgepodge stews, like "lobster à la terminal" ("langosta a la terminal") and to remodel the terminal into a dynamic community shelter.[23] A close-up shot early in this transformation shows two characters consulting a manual on the psychology of work. Two characters call the others to action with repeated reminders that "it's necessary to work" ("hay que trabajar"). These include an unemployed engineer, Emilio, played by Vladimir Cruz—the same actor who portrayed David in *Fresa y chocolate*—and the supposedly blind Rolando, whose feigned disability stimulates the group's ingrained volunteerism and who is played by Jorge Perugorría, Diego in *Fresa y chocolate*. The film—dedicated posthumously to Gutiérrez Alea—deploys these connections for countless intertextual winks at well-known Cuban films. This compositional strategy of creating a film from bits and pieces of others reinforces the work model of creative recycling—*ajiaco*-style—embodied in the terminal's remodeling. This film self-consciously reiterates such values as solidarity and social sharing through work. But here characters also reconnect with their individual vocations, rendered viable precisely through collective endeavors. Thus the stationmaster becomes the landscape painter he always wanted to be and fills the terminal with his art, a book-loving retired bureaucrat becomes the librarian for an improvised library, a woman redeploys her *curandera* (natural healer) knowledge for curing, and Emilio uses his engineering training to fix whatever needs repairs. As they awaken a bus arrives to deliver them to their destinations. But Emilio opens his eyes when somebody shakes him while repeating not the ubiquitous *compañero* but the alternative, though rhyming, "ingeniero, ingeniero," a call that interpellates Emilio through the vocation he desires. Although most of the characters return to their regular lives, Emilio, the film's final scene implies, will continue hanging out in crowded terminals where there will always be something to fix.

A more elegiac rendition of revolutionary work ideals shapes Mario Conde, the long-lived, malcontent protagonist of Leonardo Padura's widely read detective fiction. Padura's novels recast state-promoted 1970s versions of the genre into exposures of official corruption and showcase besieged revolutionary ideology through Conde's occupational metamorphoses.[24] Padura published seven Conde novels between 1991 and 2007, set between 1989 and the turn of the millennium.[25] Conde's serial vocational struggles unfold through his gradual abandonment of police work (he never much cared for weapons, violence, or the potential for state repression), but the personal calling for problem solving and a desire for just resolutions keep him loosely connected to the force. Over the course of the seven novels, Conde leaves the force to write fiction and recycles himself in the new economy as a bookseller who finds and sells private collections to foreign buyers through intermediaries. After leaving the force, he often reflects on his calling. In *Adiós Hemingway* (2001) and *La neblina de ayer* ("Yesterday's Mist" [2005]), Conde's work life is a hybrid of bookselling for sustenance, freelance and unpaid detective work for his friends on the force, and continued attempts to write fiction. This mixed vocational model unsettles him: "now . . . he was a goddamn private detective in a country with neither detectives nor private people; he felt like a bad metaphor for a strange reality" ("ahora . . . era un cabrón detective privado en un país sin

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detectives ni privados, o sea, una mala metafora de una extraña realidad"; *Adiós Hemingway* [2005] 119–20; *Adiós Hemingway* [2006] 101). But Conde also concludes that engagement in detective work's *averiguadera*—the process of figuring things out—weaves his labors into his identity: "In his years as a policeman, Conde had liked to get involved in cases like this one, in which he immersed himself to the point of losing his breath and almost consciousness; in which he enveloped himself to the extent that they became his own skin" ("En sus años de policía al Conde le gustaba enredarse en casos como éste donde se sumergía hasta perder la respiración y casi la conciencia, en los cuales se arropaba al extremo de convertirlos en su propia piel"). Conde's vocation for the *averiguadera* links his detective work to his writing and his community, as he spins hypothetical tales with his generational cohort of tightly knit friends.[26] But for Conde, a viable identity in post-Soviet Cuba means not only expanding his calling for the *averiguadera* beyond his wage-yielding job but also divesting his daily work of any utopian remnants. Near the end of *La neblina de ayer*, his beloved former chief asks him a question not unlike Diego's question to David about why he was studying political science: "Why in hell did someone like you become a cop?" ("¿Por qué carajo un tipo como tú se hizo policía?"; 286). Conde responds that

> lately, when I see how the world's going, I think that I once dreamed of fixing it a little so it wouldn't be such a fucked-up place, and that I fell for the story that I could do that as a cop. It was a romantic dream, no? Now I know that I was swimming against the tide, but I don't regret having done it though I'd never do it again. . . . If before I was an agnostic, now I'm an unbeliever.
>
> últimamente, cuando veo cómo va el mundo, creo que alguna vez soñé con arreglarlo un poco para que no fuera un lugar tan jodido, y me tragué la historia de que como policía podía hacerlo. Fue un sueño romántico, ¿no? Ahora sé que nadé contra la corriente, pero no me arrepiento de lo hecho aunque nunca volvería a hacerlo. . . . Si antes era un agnóstico, ahora soy un descreído. (286)

And yet Conde's work life as a bookseller provides a more coherent existence than he experienced as a detective: "Selling old books I feel freer, with no power over others and above all more satisfied with myself" ("Vendiendo libros viejos me siento más libre, sin poder sobre los demás y sobre todo más conforme conmigo mismo"; 286).

A Little Night Work

Wandering the neighborhoods of post-Soviet Havana through the optic of the detective Mario Conde proffers glimpses of a city off the tourist itinerary and of resurging practices—petty thievery, vagrancy, sex work, and unsanctioned night-time entertainment—that the revolutionary state aimed to render invisible or that declined with initially improved living standards. As the state sought to banish the international reputation Cuba had gained under Fulgencio Batista as a vortex of the idle rich, sexual tourism, and organized crime, the work of art that triggered its first major showdown with artists and intellectuals, in 1961, was a short, low-budget documentary of Havana nightlife, *P.M.*, directed by Sabá Cabrera Infante and Orlando Jiménez Leal. The film, in experimental "free cinema," presents scenes of Cubans—primarily Afro-Cubans—dancing, drinking, performing, and hanging out. It was promoted by the literary supplement *Lunes de Revolución* ("Monday of Revolution"), a periodical eclectic in aesthetics and ideology, edited by Sabá's brother, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, who later wrote a masterpiece of the Latin American Boom, *Tres tristes tigres* (*Three Trapped Tigers* [1967]), a ribald, verbally sumptuous ode to Havana nightlife on the eve of the revolution. The magazine

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and filmmakers' confrontation with the state film institute, the Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos (ICAIC) led to the banning of *P.M.*, the closure of the magazine, and the consolidation of a party line on art in Fidel Castro's "Words to Intellectuals," with its line in the sand delineating art "within the Revolution." Although ICAIC's problems with *P.M.* were ostensibly in part aesthetic (it diverged from the Italian neorealism then in vogue), the state objected primarily to the film's content, in particular its representation of Afro-Cubans, whom the state sought to recast as revolutionary subjects.

This foundational censorship of certain endeavors' representation makes "night work" a synecdoche for activity the revolution deemed marginal. Bringing such work into the light of day has been a signature feature of post-Soviet Cuban expression, an explosive return of the repressed *P.M.* that renders the embattled documentary bland by comparison. Many novels and some films are populated not only by sex workers, procurers, hustlers of tourists, petty thieves, dealers in contraband, grave robbers, has-been or would-be entertainers, and even mythical crime figures from the past but also by drifters and urban ruins dwellers who work as caretakers of a city portrayed as collapsing.[27] The commercial and editorial dynamics of this phenomenon are complex. Esther Whitfield demonstrates, for example, that the "dirty realism" of the writer Pedro Juan Gutiérrez manifests a cultural "dollarization" and exploits and critiques the voyeuristic international market for a version of Cuba based on sexual excess and a gritty exoticism far from international readers' worlds and from revolutionary goals (97–126). Some representations of forms of work once deemed marginal, however, revisit these activities as worthy of vindication and reveal an impulse to incorporate them into a refashioned work ethic.

For Padura's detective Conde, raised as a true-believer revolutionary, exploring this world embodies his sense of loss. But other works suggest a will to invest such activity with an aura of vocational agency: in Ponte's novel *Contrabando de sombras* ("Contraband of Shadows" [2002]), an eclectic character mix includes grave robbers in Havana's main cemetery whose fencing points to the informal economy; in Estévez's *Los palacios distantes*, the sex worker Salma makes strategic choices to advance her vocation as a performer; the 2008 film *Omerta*, directed by Pavel Giroud, explores the occupational ups and downs of a retiring bodyguard to a renowned 1960s gangster; and *Los dioses rotos* (*Broken Gods*), also from 2008, directed by Ernesto Daranas, demythifies an early-twentieth-century Cuban procurer (Alberto Yarini) through the complex interactions in Havana of contemporary pimps and female sex workers portrayed not simply as victims of violence but also as occupational decision makers resistant to a social worker's rescue. Collectively these characters improvise on a work ethic that once excluded them.

I want to linger briefly on three final examples. Most of the films and prose narratives I have addressed here are the works of artists formed by revolutionary utopian thinking, whose post-Soviet take on work mixes disillusionment, anger, nostalgia, and critique with an impulse to remake lost values. Two of my last examples represent a new generation of street filmmakers whose improvisational occupation integrates official ICAIC film traditions with novel technological approaches and inventive collaborations.[28] *Ella trabaja* (*She Works* [2007]), a documentary short directed by Jesús Hernández Bach (b. 1984), presents interviews with Havana transvestites that underscore the positive impact of access to work on their self-perception and social acceptance. They speak of varying fortunes—corresponding to the levels of prejudice they faced—in securing the education for the work they sought (and, in most cases, obtained), ranging from health care and so-

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cial work to acting, hotel desk work, singing, textile production, and food services. The film frames their personal anecdotes with praise from job supervisors and with definitions from ostensible experts on transvestism. All lobby for equal treatment, though one characterizes transvestism as a "defect." Beyond its call for tolerance typical of twenty-first-century antihomophobia campaigns in Cuba,[29] the short portrays "the will to work" as something that not only fulfills its interviewees as individuals but also restores these original outsiders as revolutionary subjects. After securing a job in her field, one transvestite observes that "we can be useful . . . we can work . . . we can do things for the revolution" ("podemos ser útiles . . . podemos trabajar . . . podemos hacer por la revolución"). *De buzos, leones y tanqueros* (2006),[30] a documentary short directed by Daniel Vera (b. 1980), offers on-location interviews with Havana dumpster divers of all ages. Although prompting its subjects with questions about how long they have been dumpster diving and whether they have regular jobs, this film lets them speak for themselves (no experts intervene) and reveals the patchwork constituting their identity as workers: one is a university student who also does sound work at the ICAIC, two are retirees, some have regular jobs and moonlight in this activity, and others left jobs to work at it full-time. Although some are in more dire straits than others, several pride themselves on their specializations and expertise in the dumpster-diving craft, and one retiree in his eighties insists he does not need to do this but has always loved to work and cannot bear to be idle.

The most eloquent twenty-first-century representation of Cubans at work is the film *Suite Habana* (2003), regarded as the masterpiece of Fernando Pérez (b. 1944), Cuba's most accomplished living director. An inventive hybrid of documentary and fiction, *Suite Habana*, as Serra notes, reinforces revolutionary values of education, resistance, and perseverance ("La Habana" 98). But it also offers a visual ode to work as performed by twelve real-world Havana citizens in the course of twenty-four hours.[31] The film shifts from character to character in segments lacking dialogue, against a background synthesis of music, street sounds, and random phrases, usually spoken by people not identified in the film. Periodic shots of two Havana landmarks track the film's cycle from day to night and back: the Havana harbor lighthouse searchlight and the venerated bronze sculpture of John Lennon on a park bench, an artwork that citizens guard in shifts.[32] The names and ages of characters appear in subtitles, so we gradually come to know them, but more through the visual rendition of their work, including shoe repair, railroad-track restoration, food services, hospital laundry work, plaster repair, street vending, construction work, caretaking, and housework. Subtitles for the film's closing still shots identify characters' occupations and (often vocational) dreams for the future.[33] A striking feature of *Suite Habana* is the visual metonymies in which human bodies are represented by the objects of their labors, a lyric recasting of the Guevarian ties between personal identity and work: intimate close-ups of such tasks as ironing, sorting peanuts or rice, and refitting a shoe sole. Without dialogue, the film depicts work as more private and individual than the revolutionary match of the personal with the social, as the characters' wordless internal reflections pervade their labors. Through the brief concluding subtitles, the film also registers work realignments generated by economic reforms or hardships: a former state-employed carpenter is now a freelancer, whereas a seventy-nine-year-old retired schoolteacher sells peanuts on Havana's streets not for personal fulfillment (she is the only one who "no longer has any dreams" ["ya no tiene sueños"]) but to make ends meet.

In the film's recasting of the revolutionary reverence toward work, its most striking

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feature is the powerful tribute to night work, whereby almost every character engages in some form of creative activity. The film implies that this night work often constitutes a character's true vocation, one that Diego in *Fresa y chocolate* might call on them to respect. The rich nighttime scenarios not only create a distinction between the characters' day jobs and the vocations to which they aspire but also, through the reverence with which it is presented, reactivate night work as a defining activity for Cuban citizens individually and as a group. A married launderer performs night gigs as a female impersonator; a doctor working in food services is a clown after hours; a construction worker's apprentice becomes a ballet dancer; an art teacher turned caretaker by day paints at night; a shoe repairman goes out dancing; and a railroad repairman plays the saxophone with a band. These metamorphoses are enveloped in a powerful aura of *comunitas*, as the camera pans from one performative group scene to another, against the background of a church choir's solemn but celebratory amens. In vitality and affect, these nighttime scenarios of group endeavors evoke through sharp contrast the reruns of mass political rallies that the film's oldest characters (including a retired professor of Marxism) watch—transfixed to near paralysis—on state television. *Suite Habana*, then, ascribes citizen performances of a self-apprehended identity less to the work to which they have been called by the state than to their personal off-hours pastimes, which appear to constitute their true vocations, a move that while recycling a revolutionary reverence for work reinscribes a reflective, individualized alienation from daily work that the revolution sought to banish. At the same time Pérez's ode to Cubans at work embraces and relocates the desired synergy between individual citizenship and the social in a celebration of night work and cultural work, two sites of enduring, unresolved contention between the revolution and its imagined others.

PMLA Authors at Work

The shifting and imaginative artistic improvisations on the official work ethic in post-Soviet Cuba I have sampled here give the lie to the unwittingly cartoonish state billboard (*valla*) spotted in May 2009 on a heavily traversed Havana thoroughfare: one lone ant refusing to work is portrayed as a shameful outcast from the industrious team of ants around her. A Cuban colleague suggested I take a look at this *valla*, which offered, he hinted, a comic example of latter-day socialist kitsch, Cuban style, and a representation, I would add, that could not differ more from the artistic inquiries I have examined here. The kind of challenges to facile ways of thinking about work embodied in Cuban responses to a shattering economic crisis in a socialist state permeate the wide-ranging critical inquiries into the topic that constitute this special issue. Taken together, these reflections by *PMLA* authors make the compelling case that the ways we talk about, theorize, represent, and enact work are in no way clear-cut and possess textured histories and discursive networks well worth untangling so we can see more clearly their power in shaping communities and individuals. Given the ties Williams posits between material labor and the work of culture and considering the role of storytelling and the play of language and imagery in enacting contending cultural imaginaries and emergent forms of agency, the literary-cultural field offers richly heterodox approaches to work. But organizers of the special issue also felt it essential to include interventions from other disciplines as well as reflections on our own complicated work performances as twenty-first-century academics.

Judith Hamera and Donal Harris initiate the critical expedition that follows with fresh incursions into the discursive terrain and underlying ideologies of modernization and modern industry's work modes, showcasing how a singular expressive form—choreogra-

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phy, for Hamera, and literary journalism, for Harris—can become a metonymy for an ideological or organizational orientation toward work. Hamera illuminates the mass-culture icon Michael Jackson's virtuosity as a nostalgic dancer at work, whose body (in particular as a metaphoric "human motor") romanticizes, from the site of late-twentieth-century radical deindustrialization (e.g., the steel town of Gary, Indiana, where Jackson grew up), modernity's imaginings of human bodies through work. Harris turns to James Agee and Walker Evans's 1941 *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a literary-journalistic and photographic account of Dust Bowl–era sharecroppers. Harris plumbs the persistent if unwitting ties in this hybrid text between its refashioned concept of writing as work and the corporate style and editorial practices of rising American media corporations such as Time Inc., evoking the tensions between work "on the clock" and "for oneself" that Agee seeks to elide (unsuccessfully, according to Harris).

Anne-Maria Makhulu and Dorian Bell offer intricate theoretical reflections on analytic categories related to work. Both focus on modes of activity rendered as precarious or superfluous and bring to the fore the complicity of particular theories or conceptions of work, capital, or labor in scenarios of extreme dispossession or exclusion. Makhulu brings the perspective of a cultural anthropologist to bear on work in a postindustrial age by reflecting on posttransition South Africa, an "apparently peripheral outpost of the world system" caught between pre- and postindustrial culture and marked by the appearance of social classes whose seemingly permanent precarious conditions of work challenge existing analytic categories. Her analysis engages such pioneering theories as Slavoj Žižek's writings on the commodity, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's concept of capture, and Fred Moten's phenomenology of "flight and inhabitation" and offers new ways for literary scholars to think about cultural representations of work in "postwork" scenarios. Bell investigates the connections between Hannah Arendt's analyses of anti-Semitism, her concept of the labor of superfluity, and the tensions inherent in her conception of the modern state. Key to understanding these tensions, Bell argues, is Arendt's idiosyncratic and stressed binary of "labor" (activity oriented toward basic subsistence) and "work" ("world-building" endeavors), which he unpacks to suggest that in Arendt's analysis superfluity does not emanate exclusively, as she argued, from such outside sources "infect[ing]" the state as capital and imperialism. Bell's close reading of Arendt's labor-work binary demonstrates that Arendt also inadvertently points to the state's tendency to "infect" itself with superfluity from within.

The social and cultural historian Carolyn Steedman also explores the relations of "labor" to "work" and, along with Rebecca E. Biron, Debra A. Castillo, and Anca Parvulescu turns to actual workers, historically situated and performing specialized activities that reveal the agency inscribed in choosing among options. Steedman considers ways to distinguish between labor and work as analytic categories in eighteenth-century England, in the context of a society sharply divided between the propertied and propertyless and in which the labor of the poor was construed as a natural resource, analogous to the labor of a horse, the measure of property-producing and profit-yielding labor power. Observing that "labor" was the object of abstract political, religious, and social high theory of the time, Steedman argues that we can discern the use of "work" only by investigating its everyday enactment in personal writings, samples of which she examines. Biron moves us to the early-twenty-first-century Mexican drug war, located, she argues, in the era of late hypercapitalism, when transnational profit seeking overrides national and international regulation. She focuses on two life stories of *sicarios*, or hit men—a first-person

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testimonio and a fiction film—to demonstrate their complex enactments of changing concepts of work and work ethics under global capitalism. Biron's analyses of murder as work illuminate competing conceptions of a hit man's work: a dehumanization narrative indicting the amorality of globalization and a conception of *sicarismo* as a profession requiring creativity, discipline, and hard work.

Castillo builds on Saskia Sassen's concept of "survival circuits" for her reflections in the context of twenty-first-century global networks on the informal economy of prostitution in the United States–Mexico border city of Tijuana. Drawing on interviews with sex workers, Castillo counters the rescue narratives and "tragedy porn" that are often inscribed in sex-trafficking accounts by demonstrating these workers' agency and self-aware choices. On the comparable terrain of transnational networks, Parvulescu demonstrates that the complex outsourcing of "women's work" has created a transnational "private sphere" and enacted a new model of housework. Drawing on Ulrich Seidl's 2007 film *Import Export*, Parvulescu deploys these phenomena to revisit earlier feminist debates on housework, to critique the autonomist theory of post-Fordist labor, and to underscore the uneven distribution between the sexes of transnational labor precariousness.

Margaret Ronda and John E. Davidson bring us back to correspondences between forms of expression and conceptions of work, paying close attention to the nuances of artistic genre in that dynamic. By analyzing Paul Laurence Dunbar's georgic poems, Ronda challenges readings that focus on his dialect poetry as the indicator of a racialized expression in his poetics. Ronda illuminates Dunbar's representations of emergent post-Reconstruction conscripted labor in the rural South as neither enslaved nor "free" in the Marxist sense, embodied in liminal characters who are simultaneously laborers and wageless, "nonmodern" workers who are not full-fledged liberal citizens. Davidson addresses a threefold concept of "industry" in film's historical trajectory evident in film genres ranging from feature fiction films and documentary to avant-garde and "primitive" film. Here "industry" refers to a concept of film as a process (the "film industry") that transforms material into a product, as the subject and object of "industrial film," and as a thematic feature-film representation of a work discourse of "middle-classness" that emphasizes steady effort but that in turn hides working-class realities under this bourgeois surface.

David Babcock and Bruce Robbins engage the problematic dynamic between work and privilege that implicitly moves us closer to our own work as teacher-scholars as we consider the societal relations that sustain the performance of our jobs. In an analysis of J. M. Coetzee's *Life & Times of Michael K*, Babcock teases out the contradictions in the concept of professionalism as distinguished from reproducible wage labor through its specialization and through its connotations of self-fulfillment through work. Basing his argument on Coetzee's portrayal of violence structuring the late-apartheid South African state, Babcock demonstrates the intersections between the state's obstruction of avenues for the self-fashioning of the oppressed as citizen-subjects and its creation of barriers to nonviolent encounters between the "professional" and the oppressed. But he also argues that Coetzee maps out new, though limited, zones of character formation. Robbins unpacks the concept of the rentier—someone who "lives *off*" income from property or investments and is "absen[t]" from the contemporary social landscape—to meditate on work's measure of inequality in our time, on the pitfalls and value of a work ethic, on work's contradictory possibilities in human interactions, and on the possible paths to ensuring that rentiers and their enablers are held to moral account for the inequalities that sustain them. He also calls on us as academ-

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ics in the era of Occupy Wall Street to consider the (fragile) ethical borders that may separate us from financial advisers.

Contributors to Theories and Methodologies exemplify distinct ways to approach the subject of work. Gerard Aching reexamines slavery as not only external subjugation to physical labor but also, through the optic of G. W. F. Hegel's master-slave dialectic, an internal struggle for the "freedom of self-mastery" that exemplifies forms of resistance from within slavery. Framing *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of* VENTURE with John Locke's notion of individualism as "self-possession," Jennifer Rae Greeson addresses Venture Smith as the epitome of the eighteenth-century person who moved from slavery to "liberal personhood." Drawing on writings of William Wordsworth and Giovanni Verga, Joseph Luzzi plumbs connections between transformations from traditional labor forms to incipient capitalism that play out in literary genres. Sonali Perera reflects on the potential impact of working-class writing on conceptions of the literary and of world literature. Cristina Della Coletta contrasts the technologies of representation employed by the 1911 World's Fair in Italy with those used in a contemporary digital reconstruction of it to argue that the reconstruction promotes critical analysis among its "active" virtual fairgoers that can bring into view tensions between work and leisure potentially obscured through the original experience. Laura J. Rosenthal also examines a dynamics of invisibility in representations of work in early-eighteenth-century British fiction that, she argues, render profitable work "obscene," displacing it with sex work.

To shine new light our own academic work, contributors to The Changing Profession were invited to reflect on aspects of academic work not explicitly encompassed in our job descriptions as teacher-scholars, many of which fall under the capacious, ever-expanding category of service. These contributions from Margaret Ferguson, Ramón Saldívar, Frieda Ekotto, Roberta Johnson, Severino J. Albuquerque, Jane K. Brown, Marcy Schwartz, and Kathleen Woodward encompass reference-letter writing, journal refereeing, student and peer mentoring, directing summer language institutes, external reviewing, service-learning projects, and directing a humanities institute. Recurrent themes include the tensions between our "work" broadly defined and our jobs, the sometimes invisible but powerful threads connecting our skills as researchers and our inventive potential in service roles, the importance of human networks and collaboration to what we do, and the critical role of self-aware choices as we perform our professional lives. In reading these accounts and considering the competing time pressures service duties can impose on our research and teaching, I was struck by the critical rigor brought to bear on these duties and by the satisfaction and even joy my colleagues expressed when discussing their work. If these testimonies are any indication, it appears that in our line of work we do indeed respect our vocation and the privileges it affords. Finally, because numerous MLA members and *PMLA* readers participated in Occupy Wall Street initiatives, we thought it fitting to conclude with invited reflections from colleagues on their participation in the movement on both coasts and in the Midwest: Stathis Gourgouris, from New York; Walter Benn Michaels, from Chicago; and Celeste Langan, from Berkeley.

Notes

I would like to thank Simon Gikandi and Patricia Yaeger, the present and former editors of *PMLA*, as well as members of the current and recent Editorial Boards, for their essential support, consultations, and suggestions as this issue was being developed.

1. Almost all the films addressed in this essay were produced by ICAIC, the Instituto Cubano de Arte e

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Industria Cinematográficos (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Arts), founded in 1959, the critical edge of whose films has surprised international audiences.

2. Unless otherwise indicated, translations are my own. Although *compañero* can translate as "comrade," it also means "companion" and thus possesses nuances of friendship and solidarity key to Cuba's version of socialism.

3. Quiroga, "Revolution: *Strawberry and Chocolate*," and Bejel address limitations in the film's rectification of these wrongs.

4. Special Period works commonly locate fictional plots in the past to soften critiques of state orthodoxy. Choosing 1979 as the setting for a work that foregrounds the revolution's abuse of homosexuals is apt, given that the notorious Mariel boatlift exodus, which included the renowned gay dissident-writer Reinaldo Arenas, took place the next year.

5. Fidel Castro first used the term in 1990.

6. On disenchantment and melancholy in the 1990s, see Fornet, "La narrativa cubana"; Mateo Palmer; Quiroga, *Cuban Palimpsests* (1–23).

7. Fornet notes a "moral" crisis that "modifies the course of [Cuban] narrative" (*Los nuevos paradigmas* 62).

8. I use the term "self-apprehended identity" as Cohan and Shires, drawing on Michel Foucault and Louis Althusser, employ it to define subjectivity (104).

9. See Ludlam on Cuba's structured work relations.

10. See ch. 1 of Medin on the distinct role of "consciousness" in the Cuban Revolution (5–27).

11. Serra provides an excellent account of the idealized connection between literacy teacher and "fantasy" peasant ("'*New Man*,'" ch. 1 [28–52]).

12. Blum looks at the shifting impact of these measures over the revolution's five decades.

13. In Martí's "Versos sencillos" ("Simple Verses"), the speaker rejects the "pomp of the rhymester" ("pompa del rimador") and the "doctoral hood" ("muceta del doctor") and identifies with the poor laborers of the land (237). He also describes tobacco workers as intellectuals working with their hands and compares thinking to "opening furrows" ("abrir surcos")and "laying foundations" ("levantar simientos"; "Discurso" 249).

14. On representations of work in Cuba's avant-gardes of the 1920s and 1930s, see my "Modernity's Labors."

15. Other Cuban avant-garde painters of this period who portrayed rural or urban work include Eduardo Abela, Jorge Arche, Antonio Gattorno, and, in a strong protest mode, Marcelo Pogolotti.

16. Campuzano details a discursive battle over who would tell the stories of the literacy campaigns and how they would be told that was waged between the generically hybrid texts written by women in the 1960s and more conventional, retrospective accounts by male novelists in the 1970s.

17. *Lucía*'s other two segments are more aesthetically complex.

18. Filming was completed shortly before Gómez's death, and colleagues at ICAIC polished technical elements for a 1978 release.

19. This term derives from the title of Angel Rama's landmark essay *La ciudad letrada* (1984), on the formation of Latin America's intellectuals.

20. Although he said art should address concerns of ordinary people, Che was ambivalent about Soviet-style socialist realism, and Castro indicated artists could pursue their own aesthetic forms as long as the content of their work did not undermine the revolution. With the exception of poster art and a few fictional works, Soviet-style socialist realism never took deep root in Cuba.

21. See my "Gender" on this novel's gendering of work.

22. *Lista de espera* is based on a 1995 story of the same title by Arturo Arango.

23. The *ajiaco*, assembled from whatever ingredients are available, was detailed as a trope for Cuba's multicultural identity by Fernando Ortiz in the 1940 essay "Los factores humanos de la cubanidad" ("The Human Factors of Cubanness"). See Pérez Firmat's exegesis of Ortiz's metaphor (16–33).

24. Others have noted Conde's embodiment of a generation's disillusionment, though not his occupational woes or work ethic. See Serra, *"New Man"* 162–67; Quiroga, *Cuban Palimpsests* 135–36; Fornet, *Los nuevos paradigmas* 76–77.

25. *La cola de la serpiente* ("The Serpent's Tail" [2011]) is a reissue of a Conde novel published in 2001.

26. Ferrari examines the ties between Conde's model of individual friendship and revolutionary solidarity.

27. I explore connections between the ruins trope and work in "All in a Day's Work."

28. See Stock on a new generation's street filmmaking in Cuba.

29. Following a single "antihomophobia" day in 2007, the Jornadas Contra la Homofobia (Antihomophobia Days) have become an annual multiday May event, under the auspices of the Centro Nacional de Educación Sexual (National Center of Sex Education), directed by Mariela Castro, President Raúl Castro's daughter and a gay-rights activist.

30. This title, which translates literally as "Of Divers, Lions, and Tank Wagons," has no idiomatic English equivalent.

31. I briefly examine the role of the ruins trope in this film's portrait of work in "All in a Day's Work."

32. José Villa Soberón sculpted the Lennon image, which has been on display since 2000. The Beatles were banned in Cuba in the 1960s and 1970s.

33. Young describes *Suite Habana*'s international recognition and its Cuban audiences' standing ovations and weeping (36).

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