

Creative Control: Navigating Foreign Presence in Contemporary Dominican and Cuban Narrative

Andrea Easley Morris
Louisiana State University

ABSTRACT: This article participates in debates surrounding the ethics of international travel through analysis of contemporary short fiction by Dominican writer Aurora Arias, and Cubans Alberto Guerra Naranjo and Mylene Fernández Pintado. Through characters who are local and foreign writers and scholars, these works highlight the ethics and politics of mobility existing in transnational encounters, and the ramifications for the creative process of Caribbean cultural workers. I examine what these works communicate about the struggle of Caribbean cultural workers to be recognized and heard by their counterparts based in North America and Europe, as well as a broader readership. Arias and Guerra employ metafictional elements to critique and challenge feelings of illegitimacy, while all three writers use humor to turn the tables on power relations and inspire reflection on the possibility of ethical encounters, and even collaboration, between local and foreign intellectuals.

KEYWORDS: Dominican Republic, Cuba, Aurora Arias, Alberto Guerra Naranjo, Mylene Fernández Pintado, mobility, travel, locals, foreigners, ethics, metafiction, tourism

This article participates in debates surrounding the ethics of international travel through analysis of contemporary short fiction by Dominican writer Aurora Arias, and Cubans Alberto Guerra Naranjo and Mylene Fernández Pintado. By portraying local and foreign writers and scholars these works highlight the ethics and politics of mobility existing in transnational encounters, and the ramifications for the creative process of Caribbean artists and intellectuals. I examine what these works communicate about the struggle of Caribbean cultural workers to be recognized and heard by their counterparts based in North America and Europe, as well as a broader readership. Arias and Guerra Naranjo employ metafictional elements to critique and challenge feelings of illegitimacy, while all three artists use humor to turn the tables on power relations and inspire reflection on the ethics³ of encounters and collaboration between local and foreign intellectuals.

This is part of a larger study on post 1990 cultural texts that provide insight into how economic struggles and limited opportunities for development have increasingly pushed locals out of the Spanish Caribbean and brought foreigners in, and in turn how this affects culture and identity for those who stay. Teresita Martínez Vergne and Franklin W. Knight point out ways in which globalization in the Caribbean mirrors the repercussions of colonialism and imperialism in earlier periods, in particular, persistent relations of dominance: "Globalization, in short, has not so far resulted in a market relationship between the various participants that is more equitable and just. Rather it has accentuated hegemonies and manifestly reinforced global inequality" (7). The Dominican Republic and

Cuba, which are similar in population size and deeply connected by a shared history of Spanish colonization and U.S. imperialism, present a rich context in which to explore concerns regarding global immobilities and inequalities in the late 20th and 21st centuries. I study these cultures comparatively with respect to migration and transnational practices, following Jorge Duany (2011), and the growth and effects of tourism, following Amalia Cabezas (2009). Despite the increasing resemblance in recent decades, demonstrated by both Cabezas and Duany, it is important to recognize the political and economic differences that have affected migrant outflows and inflows of international travelers in each country since the early 1960s.

In the decade following the victory of the Cuban Revolution and the death of Dominican dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1961), both countries saw mostly politically motivated out-migration, as Cuba turned to socialism and political struggle continued in the Dominican Republic between forces on the left and right, leading to civil war (1965) and U.S. occupation (1965-66). The election of Trujillo's protégé Joaquín Balaguer in 1966 put the country on a path toward a neo-liberal economic model that continued to favor U.S. interests, but failed to bring needed jobs and improvement in living conditions. In the 1970s economic hardship began to drive Dominican migration, intensifying in the 1980s when austerity measures, currency devaluation, and inflation led to popular uprisings (Werner 37). The outflow of Dominicans to the U.S. peaked in the 1990s, tapering off but remaining high through the next decade (Duany 59). In contrast to the Dominican Republic, Cuban migration pat-

terns have been heavily influenced by antagonistic Cuba-U.S. relations and shifting national policies on immigration and travel. With the Mariel Boatlift of 1980, Cuban outflows, still tied to ideological inconformity, began to reflect increasing material concerns.² During the 1980s, Cuba suffered the effects of growing debt and falling sugar prices and saw its solidarity with the Soviet bloc weakened by reform (Zeuske 518). The fall of the Soviet Union (1989-1991) resulted in a dramatic drop in Cuban living standards and these dire conditions fueled the illegal raft departures that culminated in the *balsero* crisis of 1994.³ Between 1989 and 2009 over 500,000 Cubans and over 650,000 Dominicans emigrated to the U.S. alone (Duany 157, 57). It is important to recognize differences in the reception of immigrants in the U.S., where until January 2017 preferential policies for Cubans have allowed them an expedited path to legal residency and citizenship.⁴

These countries' diverging political and economic paths are also visible in their approaches to tourism in the 1960s and 70s. The Cuban Revolution brought an end to the international capitalist tourism it had become famous for in the 1950s and took measures to make local tourism more accessible for nationals (Cabezas 46-47) by nationalizing hotels and other spaces, and creating sites for "revolutionary" tourism centered on heritage, history, and natural beauty (Ward 99-101). Under Trujillo's regime, tourism was limited in the Dominican Republic and focused largely on the capital, but the instability following his assassination stifled its development (Ward 155). By 1968, under pressure from international financial agencies, the Balaguer administration began to foster the development of tourism (Gregory 23-24). While Cuba maintained very limited international tourism through the 1970s, the Dominican Republic saw its steady expansion into new markets, which intensified as a way to address the debt crisis of the 1980s (Werner 35).⁵ During the 80s the Cuban government also began looking toward tourism as one way to supplement the economy and pursued joint ventures with European enterprises more experienced in providing tourist services (Ward 138). Despite doubling tourist arrivals between 1980 and 1987, Cuba still lagged behind the Dominican Republic's share of the Caribbean market (Cabezas 48). This gap would begin to close in the 1990s when Cuba entered the crisis designated as the "Special Period in Times of Peace." During this period, the government allowed increased foreign investment in sectors including tourism (Zeuske 519-520), which soon became the driver of economic recovery.

Foreign travel to both countries, including return visits, has increased dramatically since the early 1990s. The number of non-resident international arrivals to the Dominican Republic rose from 1.7 million in 1995 to over 6 million in 2017 (Banco Central de la República Dominicana), making it the most visited country in the Caribbean, while the Cuban Ministry of Tourism reports 4.7 million tourists in 2017, up from 1.8 million in 2004 (Cabezas 50).⁶ Although international travelers to the Caribbean may be classified or imagined as "tourists," it is important to keep in mind that this category encompasses a diverse range of movers, such as returning nation-

als, business travelers, academics, relief workers, etc., whose practices vary widely and may overlap with those typically associated with leisure tourism.⁷

In response to these trends since the 1990s, Cuban and Dominican artists have explored encounters between locals, foreigners, and returning migrants in the national space, as well as the experiences of transnational migrants abroad. Certain writers and filmmakers have put these perspectives into dialogue with one another in their larger bodies of work, suggesting the interconnectedness of migration and tourism mobilities and their transformation of the localities of nation and diaspora.⁸ Some of these include Dominicans Aurora Arias, Rey Andújar, Laura Amelia Guzmán (with husband Israel Cárdenas), and José Enrique Pintor; and Cubans Mylene Fernández Pintado, Alberto Guerra Naranjo, Leonardo Guevara Navarro, and Daniel Díaz Torres. Their works draw attention to the role of mobility as a measure of global inequality and challenge the discourse on the Caribbean as a site of foreign leisure and contemplation. In focusing on the subjectivity of the writer/artist *vis a vis* the foreigner as potential critic, collaborator, or promoter; the works studied here by Guerra Naranjo, Arias, and Fernández Pintado, confront the power imbalance that has real life consequences for the creative process and general well-being of cultural workers. They do so in a very personal way that reflects on the artists' own positionality as "stayees" or "travelees" (Pratt 1992) in an increasingly mobile/global context.

The critical perspective of the Dominican and Cuban works is no doubt connected to the socio-political climate of the authors' generation and the economic shifts mentioned earlier. Cubans Guerra Naranjo and Fernández Pintado, both born in 1963, began publishing in the midst of the shortages of the Special Period. Guerra Naranjo reflects on these issues in an interview with Silvina Freira in 2013:

Al desbancarse el campo socialista, Cuba y los cubanos caímos en una crisis total, justo cuando mi generación literaria salía al ruedo; entonces los trámites que debimos hacer normalmente en guaguas o colectivos, tuvimos que hacerlos en bicicletas. Las comidas que debimos tener en nuestras mesas nunca estuvieron y los sueños coherentes de juventud tuvimos necesidad de forjarlos en condiciones muy difíciles, que son realmente las condiciones en las que mejor se conocen a los seres humanos.

Guerra Naranjo's success in national literary contests during the 1990s did not spare him from the struggle to provide for basic needs and from limited opportunities to travel and promote his work abroad. Travel, both desired and anxiety laden, emerges as a theme throughout his narrative. Fernández Pintado, the daughter of foreign diplomats, also bears witness to the realities of Post-Soviet Cuba in her writing, though her perspective is influenced by periods of living abroad. Like those of Guerra Naranjo, her novels

and short stories portray Cubans in the national space and abroad, many of whom contemplate and engage in travel/ migration/ return and in encounters with foreigners and Cuban returnees. Fernández Pintado captures gendered aspects of im/mobility with particular sensitivity as well as the dynamics of transnational relationships.

The work of Aurora Arias (Dominican Republic 1962) reflects similar concerns as well as the atmosphere of a stagnant socio-political climate. Arias's formative years coincided with the first of Joaquín Balaguer's presidential terms, referred to as the "doce años" (1966-1978). According to Néstor Rodríguez, Arias's narratives challenge what he terms the "Trujillista city," a pervasive, exclusive discourse on Dominican national identity upheld by Balaguer and other officials (26-27, 32). Much of her narrative is situated in Santo Domingo during the 1990s and 2000s, and highlights the interactions between local and global realities through real and virtual encounters.

Human geographer Tim Cresswell, a key scholar representative of the "mobilities turn" in the social sciences, suggests that different types of movement can be fruitfully studied in relation to one another, as a sort of constellation that also takes immobility into account. In my view, these works invite such an approach, and draw attention to what Cresswell has called the "politics of mobility," that is, how mobility is "implicated in the production of power and relations of domination" ("Towards a Politics" 20). Mimi Sheller has productively studied the Caribbean region through the mobility lens in *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies* (2003) and other works. Sheller's observations regarding the circulation of knowledge about the Caribbean are particularly relevant to the works under study: "From the early days of collecting plants, to the first-hand accounts from travellers, to more recent area studies, 'experts' have attempted to collect, classify, and explain 'the Caribbean'. Insofar as Caribbean writers, artists, and intellectuals have fought to define their own societies and cultures, they have had to struggle against this tide of textual precedents" (26-27). Guerra Naranjo, Arias, and Fernández Pintado reveal their own strategies for living and writing this struggle.

My theoretical approach is also indebted the work of sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, who until his death in 2017, explored the predicaments of the postmodern era, providing insight into the issues I find central to these works. In *Postmodern Ethics* (1993) Bauman distinguishes between ethics, codes of behavior relative to power structures, and morality, the set of choices brought on by facing the Other and his or her needs. Following Emmanuel Lévinas' concept of "being for the Other" (in which Other is defined as "not-I"), to act morally is to assume responsibility for another person, to act in the interest of another without concern for reciprocity. At the same time, Bauman recognizes the power dynamic of this relationship, in which "one is responsible for someone weaker than oneself," as well as its ambiguity, which can lead to unintended consequences (*Life in Fragments* 64). These opportunities to exercise morality come through proximity, or face-to-face encounters, which for Bauman

are often missed due to strategies humans have developed for living out the uncertainties of the postmodern era (1993), strategies that he later finds demonstrative of the "human consequences" of globalization (1998).

Bauman's metaphors of the tourist and vagabond encapsulate the postmodern predicament of being constantly on the move and the strategy of detachment that responds to this lack of permanence (*Postmodern Ethics* 240-41). For Bauman, the distance between extremes on the socioeconomic scale and access to power on a global scale have become increasingly visible through our circumstances and experience of movement (1998). In a broad sense, he argues that globalization is geared toward the tourist, who represents those with the financial means to move around comfortably and voluntarily (*Globalization* 92-93). The vagabond, a "side-effect" of globalization, embodies movement that is forced or necessary for survival and may shadow that of "tourists," providing the services they require (*Globalization* 92-93). While Bauman's "mobile" metaphors are used to characterize general tendencies symptomatic of the post-modern era, they take on a particular relevance in the Caribbean context, where contrasting tourist and migrant mobilities have had a far-reaching influence on society and culture. As one might imagine, in contemporary Spanish Caribbean narrative and film foreigners tend to move in accordance with their desires, while locals, like the vagabond figure, may move to meet those desires or be displaced to make room for them. The vagabond/tourist pairing seems to paint a bleak picture of the potential to act morally, however, Michael Hviid Jacobsen and Sophia Marshman remind that Bauman's metaphors endeavor to "recall' us to our humanity, to a sense of responsibility for the Other, for those who need our help, whether or not it is 'rational' to offer it" (32). Similarly, the narratives I discuss here present local strategies for being *seen* and for dealing with the detachment of mobile foreigners. They offer differing degrees of hope for moral acts and for encounters in which Dominican and Cuban locals are not automatically cast as Other.

Alberto Guerra Naranjo: "Finca vigía"

Written in 1998, Alberto Guerra Naranjo's short story *Finca vigía* evokes the presence of foreigners in Cuba through the main character's interaction with the specter of Ernest Hemingway, as well as a tourist couple with whom he reluctantly spends the day. The reader witnesses the Cuban protagonist, an aspiring writer, as he lives and crafts the story in conversation with Hemingway. It later becomes clear that this very story has been chosen as a finalist for the Ernest Hemingway literary prize, which is to be awarded in a ceremony held at the author's Havana home, Finca Vigía, now a museum. Self-referential on a number of levels, the narrative consists of the narrator's description of the story to Hemingway, Hemingway's comments and the dialogue between them, and narration of events from the day, which lead up to the award ceremony.

In "Finca Vigía," Guerra Naranjo rehearses many of the

techniques and themes that would culminate in his first novel, *La soledad del tiempo* (2009). As in the novel, the story's protagonist functions as an alter ego of the author, who actually won the Ernest Hemingway award in 1998 for "Finca Vigía." Elzbieta Sklodowska has explored Guerra Naranjo's use of autofiction and other registers in the novel as a way to inscribe his own racialized experience into the narrative and to critique the literary establishment and the infighting of his own generation ("Palabras mutiladas" 49). Both aspects are referenced in the story when the narrator refers to "Guerra Naranjo," "un negro con ínfulas de gran escritor," who frequently wins literary prizes, and also mentions contemporaries, whom he critiques as narcissistic. This insider joke reflects a certain dynamic within the small world of writers in Cuba who at the time faced stifling isolation and limited access to the global market. By overlapping the Cuban literary world and that of tourists, in "Finca Vigía" Guerra Naranjo draws attention to the ways in which tourist mobility affects the experience of local writers and artists in the context of the Special Period, making them feel out of place or insignificant, not to mention hyperaware of material needs.

The story begins with Hemingway's encouragement and advice, "Esta vez navegarás con más suerte," a sort of blessing repeated throughout the narrative. Seemingly reassuring, this phrase has haunted the protagonist for the five years he has been a finalist for the Hemingway prize: "Eran una especie de cumplido que me desconcertaba. Navegar con más suerte no dependía de él ni de mí, sino de las velas, del estado del tiempo, de la angustia, del azar, de un jurado, de vicios, de clichés" (14). The narrative is structured in a way that allows the reader to consider the author's choices, and like the members of the prize jury, we decide whether the story has merit. At the same time, the story mirrors the way in which the narrator is judged in his daily life, first as a stranger out of place, a loser rather than a writer. In contrast, Hemingway's voice and presence provide the narrator with recognition and belonging. Their ongoing interaction becomes a sort of refuge from the demeaning experience of being crowded by tourists and looked down on by his own compatriots. The creation of Hemingway can be viewed as a way to compensate for the absence of a real person to respond to his needs for mentorship and encouragement.

In this sense, the narrator's dialogue with Hemingway functions as part of the creative process and a strategy for productivity in an inhospitable environment. The protagonist struggles to maintain the conversation with his mentor despite interruptions by unsightly foreigners: "Pero el gordo me impidió responder. Con su Nikon en las manos, y los dientes muy amarillos, intentó enfocar el ángulo del estante, empecinado en la Royal. Faltó poco para que me aplastara contra la pared" (11). The tourist's desire to capture the perfect photo causes him to block the protagonist's connection with Hemingway, physically pushing him out of the way. The narrative voice captures the physicality of his experience of tourists literally occupying his space, crowding him out: "Estaba allí, con hambre, nervioso, frente al maestro, víctima de empujones turísticos y de

la mirada con odio de una hermosa veladora. Quise apartar de mi lado al par de tipos para no perder mi puesto en la ventana, pero ya era tarde, con sus cuerpos sudantes me bloqueaban y Hemingway hizo unas señas para que les cediera el lugar" (13). By imagining Hemingway as a guide and confidant, inaccessible to the tourists, the narrator asserts his belonging in the space of Finca Vigía and legitimizes himself as a writer: "enfocaron con sus cámaras la menor insinuante que les acercara al fantasma de un Hemingway, escurridizo para ellos, pero amistoso y cordial para mí" (13).

Another self-affirming strategy that challenges the power relations between foreigners and locals is the unflattering depiction of Henry and Marta, the tourist couple that has accompanied the protagonist. The narrator refers to them as *el gordo y la gorda*, and provides rather grotesque details about their yellow teeth, sweaty armpit hair, and body odor. He thus positions himself as observer rather than part of the local scenery. The protagonist meets the couple to pick up a package of paper sent to him by a friend, a detail that points to the lack of basic resources needed by writers in Cuba. While these characters are referred to in the narrative as "tourists," I find it significant that Henry is also writer, who rather than express a feeling of solidarity or interest in the narrator's work, demonstrates an exaggerated sense of self-importance:

Por su parte, el gordo, con ínfulas de gran escritor, me invitaba a adentrarme en las pequeñas librerías particulares, comentaba la pobreza de las ediciones cubanas, encontraba autores y textos famosos de su país, se deslumbraba por mis conocimientos literarios, especulaba, comentaba sobre la gran novela que escribiría, pero tampoco compraba. En mis paseos por Obispo jamás fui tan importunado como en esa mañana. A la vista de todos era un jinetero en compañía de dos puntos muy gordos. (22)

Henry's surprise at the narrator's knowledge of literature suggests that he doesn't view him as an equal. This passage also draws attention to an aspect of the moral potential of encounters that is missed by Bauman (and Lévinas), the fact that Others are not neutral figures, but as Sara Ahmed has argued, are encountered in embodied ways (143). For Nicholas Hookway, Ahmed presents a helpful adjustment to Bauman by demonstrating how "some others are more other than others" (362). As a black Cuban walking with tourists, observers encounter the protagonist in racialized and gendered ways rendering him automatically the Other.

In Henry and Marta's encounter with the narrator they seem indifferent to his needs. The couple doesn't even treat him to a drink or a meal, despite inviting him to spend the day sightseeing with them on the Ruta Hemingway. Within discussions of mobility and hospitality, Jennie Germann Molz and Sarah Gibson highlight the significance of who gets to be host or guest and under what conditions, asking "How do these categories authorize some

people's right to travel and to be welcomed, while delegitimizing other claims to mobility and belonging?" (8). While technically the foreigners are guests in Cuba, the conditions of the Special Period make it impossible for most Cubans to play host in spaces geared to tourists. The narrator's ability to be a host in his own city is minimal, and he is inevitably *their* guest in spaces like the hotel, and the Bodeguita del Medio. The tourist couple falls short as both hosts and guests as they pass up opportunities to eat and drink, complain of high prices, and browse through shops without buying anything, all the while interfering with the narrator's sense of belonging.

At Hemingway's request, the narrator recounts the events from earlier in the day despite his reluctance to relive the experience with Henry and Marta: "Tuve deseos de negarme, contar podría ser tan abrumador como la caminata" (19). For Jonathan Dettman, Guerra Naranjo highlights the material conditions of the writer/protagonist and how these affect him on a corporeal level. In comparison to Hemingway and the tourists featured in the story, who can gaze upon Cuban reality from a distance, for Guerra Naranjo's narrator "His work and art share the same space. His day-to-day labor in the heat and crush of Old Havana becomes material for the story, and his labor continues as he guides tourists through the museum..." (44). In the company of the tourists, however, his labor is not perceived as that of a writer, but rather as some type of hustler. While waiting for the couple in the lobby of their hotel, the narrator explains, "Fui observado por el custodio y por algunas carpenteras, como si fuese un pobre diablo. No hay quien sienta más desdén por un pobre Diablo, que un pobre Diablo con uniforme, recordé haber leído" (19-20). When he enters the orbit of the tourist, he is perceived in the manner of Bauman's vagabond figure, even by other Cubans. Bauman characterizes vagabond mobility as tied to that of the tourist: "These are the vagabonds; dark vagrant moons reflecting the shine of bright tourist suns and following placidly the planets' orbit; [...] The vagabonds are the waste of the world which has dedicated itself to tourist services" (*Globalization* 92). Ironically the hotel employees' contempt for the narrator may reflect contempt for their own position within this economy.

The narrator describes a similar type of disdain from the docent in the museum, an attractive Cuban woman who looks away when he tries to let her in on a joke at Marta's expense: "Busqué complicidad en la veladora, quería burlarme a lo cubano de esa gorda, pero la muchacha cambió de vista" (12). The sound of his stomach growling, a result of his uncompensated labor, only increases her repulsion: "Para ella debí ser el tipo más puerco y desgraciado del mundo, lo hizo entender sólo con un gesto" (13). Here Guerra Naranjo seems to critique a lack of solidarity, and the capacity to show disregard in the midst of scarcity and hunger.⁹ In contrast, Hemingway functions as the narrator's ideal interlocutor. His commentary reflects the narrator's own frustration, validating his experience and joining in the mockery of the tourists: "¿Y no le diste un bofetón en mi nombre a ese gordo?" (21). By intertwining the conversation with Hemingway and the narrative of the day

spent with tourists, the text emphasizes the narrator's choice of what to tell whom. For example, he decides not to tell Henry why he hates the ocean, but confides in Hemingway that he lost a brother at sea. In Guerra Naranjo's rendering, Hemingway understands the material conditions of the Special Period and the struggle to be a writer of this generation. He is a sympathetic audience who recognizes his own privilege, as this passage suggests: "—Recuerdo que después de un banquete, aquí mismo, dije: Como ustedes saben, hay muchas Cubas. Pero al igual que en la Galia, se pueden dividir en tres partes: los que pasan hambre, los que subsisten y aquellos que comen demasiado. —Ustedes eran del último grupo, maestro. —Y tú perteneces al primero" (27-28).

Along with the cathartic retelling of the events to a sympathetic listener and the shared humor at the tourists' expense, the most important narrative strategy through which the story stakes out legitimacy as a writer is the use of metafiction to emphasize the narrator's creative control. When Hemingway urges the writer to finish narrating the *paseo* with the tourist couple, he is ready to move on to the present moment, which happens to be the award ceremony for the Hemingway literary prize. The narrator explains this choice to Hemingway:

- Póngase en mi lugar, fue un paseo donde no me invitaron siquiera a un refresco. No merece que siga contando, además, estoy nervioso, dentro de poco dan los premios.
- ¿Quieres decir que vas a dejar el cuento de los gordos a medias?
- Por los gordos me preguntó usted mismo, no fui yo quien quise contar.
- ¿Sabes el riesgo que corres?
- Me imagino, maestro, pero no puedo.
- Haz un esfuerzo, estás con un telegram en tu maldito bolsillo y puedes ganar.
- Mejor lo dejo así. Nosotros hablando y ellos arriba (26).

The dialogue with Hemingway about where to take the narrative evokes the international demand for certain topics in post-Special Period fiction, highlighted by Sklodowska: "varios críticos han apuntado hacia un vínculo entre el éxito internacional de ciertos escritores y su capacidad para "vender" las facetas más oscuras de las luchas y penurias cotidianas" ("Palabras mutiladas" 53). The protagonist, however, goes against Hemingway's advice, instead exerting his agency as a writer through choosing to tell his own story. He thus plots his own breakthrough as a writer, rather than a "pobre diablo" or *jinetero*. Moreover, in allowing Hemingway to take over as narrator in the end, the Cuban writer is able to rest from his labor and, as a protagonist, receive the recognition he is due.

Aurora Arias: "¿Pero cómo se atreve?"

While "Finca vigía" portrays the competing creative visions of local and foreign writers, the remaining two examples explore the experience of local writers/scholars in encounters with foreign academics. In "¿Pero cómo se atreve?," part of the 2007 collection *Emoticons*, Aurora Arias depicts a local writer's experience attending an international conference on Hispanic literatures held in her home country, the Dominican Republic. Like Guerra Naranjo, Arias uses metafiction to reflect on the creative process and the artist's subjectivity. Following Bauman's metaphors, the mobility of foreigners, her own limited mobility, and issues of access to tourist spaces transform the writer into a sort of vagabond figure. These conditions, in which the Caribbean local again occupies the position of Other in encounters with foreigners, produce needs for belonging, access, and legitimacy. In this case, however, some of the foreign visitors respond morally (in Bauman's terms), addressing her needs without expectation of reciprocity, while others do not. The local writer Sra. Marte is only able to access the conference venue, an exclusive beach resort hours from her home in Santo Domingo, due to an offer of transportation by one of the participants, a Dominican who lives abroad. The choice of venue and registration fees based on North American and European norms implicitly devalues the perspectives of locals and risks leaving them out of discussions of their own culture. For writers, this also denies them access to a wider audience and the international market. The generosity of the *dominicano ausente* suggests the potential of diaspora and transnational movement to disrupt these barriers.

The story highlights how movement is blocked and controlled, through checkpoints, guards, and wristbands to ensure only paying guests enjoy the amenities of the resort. The narrative begins with immobilization as Sra. Marte and her companion approach the entrance: "El pequeño auto recién alquilado, conducido por el profesor Rivera, frenó despacio ante la barra de líneas blancas y rojas que impedía el paso hacia el hotel" (127). In this moment of crisis, Sra. Marte is revealed as both a character and writer of the story: "Así elucubraba con su mente febril de autora desconocida..." (127). Metafictional passages are scattered throughout the narrative, drawing attention to the character's ongoing consideration of how to tell the story and the sense that she is part of events as they unfold around her. As in Guerra Naranjo's story, the metafictional element also reflects on the author's position as "unknown" and worthy of recognition.

In this moment of overexposure to the sun and to the scrutiny of the guard, who asks for identification, Arias plays with the idea of Sra. Marte's invisibility, first as a strategy for getting through this type of barrier ("la Sra. Marte pretendía hacerse la invisible, uno de sus viejos trucos en situaciones así") and later in reference to the invisibility of the writer in Dominican society: "Había dejado en casa su cédula de identidad, la que dice 'ocupación: artista', pues para fines oficiales, no existía el oficio de escritor en el país" (127-28). On

another level, since Sra. Marte is not registered for the conference, she is invisible to the conference organizer and to the mostly foreign academics in attendance; her presence becomes illicit and her movement suspect. Like Guerra Naranjo's protagonist, despite being a local she is recognized as a racialized "stranger" by her compatriots, in this case security guards, who describe her over the walkie-talkie as "una mujer color indiecito oscuro o más bien morenito claro" without a resort wristband.

The concept of a global hierarchy of mobility is mirrored through professor Rivera's anecdote about once being detained by Dominican immigration in the airport. With dual citizenship in the Dominican Republic and the U.S., professor Rivera is treated as a potential suspect upon presenting his Dominican passport and then quickly let go after he presents the other. The ease of crossing borders with a U.S. passport mirrors the carefree movement of Rivera and other international academics in attendance at the conference. Sra. Marte, on the other hand, only has access to the "hotel cinco estrellas" due to professor Rivera and the promise of a certain Dra. Murria to share a hotel room. The narrative comments on the privileged mobility of North American academics by describing their "first-world" problems in an ironic tone:

Y la Srta. Marte sabrá enseguida que son ellos y ellas: distinguidos profesores críticos académicos, gente que enseña, estudia, investiga, teoriza, traduce, escribe, en fin, el estrés académico, las responsabilidades docentes, la presión, el tiempo, los exámenes, los viajes, las conferencias, los ensayos... se les conoce por ese aire arrogante o distraído de presente o future Big Name. (130)

Arias hits the nail on the head in terms of poking fun at the self-importance of academics and the realities of which we often complain, especially ironic considering the professors' imminent arrival to a luxury resort. Sra. Marte is painfully aware of the way in which belonging to the space is economically out of reach and visibly signaled by the possession of a wristband: "Sin ese brazaletes nadie era nadie. Sin él nadie podía moverse libremente para ningún lado mientras se encontrara en los contornos del hotel" (130-31). Again, the story points to the invisibility and immobility of the local writer within this context, a tourist space where interaction between foreigners and locals is meant to be limited.

This sense of exclusion worsens when Sra. Marte finds out Dra. Murria has not followed through with the promise of a shared room and waived registration fee. Unable to register for the conference and obtain the badge and bracelet that would "legitimize" her presence, Sra. Marte takes refuge in the ladies' room: "Una vez allí, tomó verdadera conciencia de que era una desconocida que andaba de incognita, y casi, casi, podía considerarse una delincuente. Y a pesar de todo le agradaba el papel. Un papel que sin saber por qué aceptaba gustosa" (138). In a strange way, this "delinquent" outsider

status gives her a sense of satisfaction; her sustained presence at the conference resists the structures meant to exclude her. Determined to participate despite feeling under surveillance by hotel staff and conference organizers, Sra. Marte perseveres and eventually finds allies in participants who feel solidarity with her situation. Still, in between moments of solidarity coexist the egotism and multiple blind spots of the majority of conference goers, whose negative reaction to the conference is motivated by more personal reasons: "Los distinguidos profesores críticos académicos se quejaban de la mala organización de la recién inaugurada conferencia. Problemas de viaje, de alojamiento, de bauchers que hay que entregar mientras más pronto a la Universidad... ¡Pobres distinguidos profesores críticos académicos, parecen tan tensos y reprimidos!, pensó la escritora" (146). Again, the narrator uses a humorous epithet and sarcastic concern to emphasize the academics' blindness to privilege. Their misguided outrage is also captured in the title phrase "¿Pero cómo se atreve?," overused by Dra. Murria in response to trivialities.

Unable to officially join the conference, Arias' protagonist does find a strategy to meet the literary critics on more equal footing. At two points in the story, Sra. Marte proposes leaving the tourist enclave, first with Dr. Rivera and later with a group. The outing with Dr. Rivera provides a refuge from the initial feeling of unbelonging in the hotel, and the uncertainty of where she will stay the night. On the other hand, her offer is a gesture of belonging toward Rivera: "Rivera tal vez estaba harto de la comida tipo resort que se ofrece en los restaurantes de los grandes hoteles, así que le animó a probar 'algo nuestro,' a volver a saborear la sazón de su tierra" (131-32). Through her knowledge as a local, she offers him a chance to connect with his culture of origin. In the tourist enclave Sra. Marte has to be "hosted" by foreigners (and still feels like an unwanted guest), while the excursion empowers by allowing her to be the host and exercise hospitality. This relationship presents hope for more ethical relationships between local writers and academics based in North America and Europe that is rooted in an understanding of the power asymmetries that affect mobility and belonging.

The story ends with another outing in which Sra. Marte takes a group of foreign academics to "descubrir lo que existe afuera" (144). One of her newfound companions gives a triumphant shout as they leave the hotel, having evaded the "dangers" of the conference, "comandados por la trama aún no escrita de la Sra. Marte, quien agregó Coca-Cola a su sobredosis de café y vino, y chispeaba de ganas de escribir la vida y divertirse" (149). While the story never loses sight of the contrasting mobilities of locals and foreigners and the roadblocks, literal and figurative, that constrain movement, the final image of Sra. Marte and her new friends singing as they drive down the highway suggests hope for a community of support among writers and literary critics from different parts of the world. This is reflected by the final metafictional reference that exerts control over the narrative and leaves it open-ended.

Mylene Fernández Pintado: "Arcobaleno"

Returning to the Cuban context, the plot of Mylene Fernández Pintado's "Arcobaleno" unfolds among coworkers at the Cuban Film Institute (ICAIC) the government institution that has overseen national cinema production since the 1960s. In contrast to the tourist-scapes of "Finca Vigía" and "Pero ¿cómo se atreve?" the institutional setting of "Arcobaleno" is the epitome of local territory. The cautiously hopeful outlook for morality found in Arias' story is stronger in Fernández's "Arcobaleno" in terms of the sense of responsibility for the Other and the extent to which characters act in the interest of a stranger without thought of reciprocity. Perhaps more importantly, the story reverses the pattern in which Caribbean locals find themselves in the position of Other/Stranger, which as Bauman points out, is the weaker position (*Life in Fragments* 64). Face to face with the needs of a foreign visitor, the Cuban characters model morality in a way that evokes Jacques Derrida's notion of "unconditional" hospitality, also rooted in the work of Lévinas. Just as Bauman conceived of morality as an opportunity to act on the Other's behalf that cannot be elicited through a set of rules or ethics, Derrida encourages us to think about "a hospitality that is infinite, absolute and completely open—a welcoming of the other and regardless of who that other is, regardless of the potential dangers and risks involved. An ethics of hospitality entails opening one's borders or doors to *anyone*, acting beyond our own self-interest" (Germann Molz and Gibson 4-5).

Before telling the story of Francesco's arrival to the ICAIC, the narrator provides important background on the work environment, individual coworkers, and the typical dynamic existing with foreign visitors to the film archive. Early on, this group of cultural workers is characterized as pushing against the rigidity of institutional protocols and marching to their own drum: "Hemos luchado mucho para no marcar tarjeta a la entrada y salida 'porque nuestro trabajo es creativo, ésta es la Cinemateca de Cuba y no se puede medir como una fábrica,'" (51). They have a relationship of solidarity with one another, preferring to share food rather than eat in the cafeteria where only "exceptional" workers get complimentary meals, and they use the "sala de visionaje" as a therapy room where they help sort out each other's problems. It is significant that the coworkers represent diverse backgrounds; the group is composed of Cubans, but also long-time residents of Cuba from other countries, such as Russia and Great Britain. From the outset, this simple detail challenges the idea of Cuba's isolation and its characterization as exclusively a migrant sending country. In addition, the group is comprised of researchers who specialize in global cinema: "Cada uno se ocupa del celuloide de una parte del planeta; a mí me tocan los del Norte, esos malos que hacen tantas películas, muchas veces malas y tantas otras, invidiables" (51). Like the narrator, who comments on the uneven quality of Hollywood films, the Cuba-based scholars are positioned as critics of other national cinemas, a reminder that the Caribbean is a site of knowledge production and cultural critique of the Global North.

The description of typical interactions with foreign academics suggests that most foreigners do not view the ICAIC researchers as doing important work of their own: "Nos molestan los extranjeros que vienen a pedir libros, fotos, documentos, a solicitar proyecciones y que luego pasan todo el día haciéndose los que trabajan y observándonos. Entonces nos vemos obligados a portarnos bien y fingir que somos una oficina normal cuando ellos son siempre los menos normales" (51-52). The foreigners create more work for the local specialists, as if they were there only as support staff. Like the other two stories, "Arcobaleno" references the effects of the foreigners' gaze, which here imposes an idea of superiority, and the use of humor to diffuse those effects. For example, the narrator pokes fun at the proposal of a persistent Welsh visitor "vestido de Obelix" for a Cuban adaptation of Asterix, who only leaves when fumigators kick him out. In another incident, an Icelandic visitor was unintentionally left in the "sala de visionaje" during fumigation, resulting in the cancellation of "la semana de cine vikingo, la anunciada visita de una imitadora de Bjork y la participación de su país en una muestra europea del Festival de Cine" (53). Through the narrator's tone and her dismissal of these unfortunate mishaps, it becomes clear that foreigners' demands do not take precedence over their work: "Si nos dedicáramos a responder las demandas, no trabajaríamos y se perdería el patrimonio de cine que custodiamos" (53).

Accustomed to this type of encounter with foreigners, the co-workers are confounded by the arrival of Francesco, whose desire for employment at the ICAIC motivates them to consult various dictionaries. Their reactions reflect the impossibility and absurdity of his request in the context of post-Soviet Cuba: "esto es Cuba, ¿donde se cree que está? ¿Sabes cuánto ganamos al mes? 15 dólares, ¡Tú no eres cubano! ¿Eres un extranjero residente? ¡¿Tú estás loco?!" (54). From the start, Francesco stands out by offering to work alongside them, rather than use their time and resources. Considering that he is badly dressed, "aun para ser extranjero," they decide he is not presentable enough to take to the international relations office and instead work together to understand his situation (54). Francesco, it turns out, has been the victim of a con artist and is left with no money, passport or return ticket. A sort of tourist turned vagabond, he comes with no pretensions or titles like the "distinguidos profesores críticos académicos" of Arias's story, or Guerra's tight-fisted tourists who are constantly critical of Cuba. By portraying a foreigner in crisis, Fernández places local Cubans in the role of facing the Other and "being for" him, rather than *being* the Other. The story highlights the generosity of the Cuban characters who make sacrifices and break rules to house, clothe, and feed Francesco, expecting nothing in return. They hide him in their office, share food rations with him, and when the sofa he sleeps on is confiscated as ill-gotten gains, the co-workers *all* want to house Francesco. In contrast to Sra. Marte, who is transformed into an unwelcome guest in her own country, the locals in "Arcobaleno" are able to act as hosts and even extend to Francesco what, following Derrida, could be called an "unconditional" hospitality.

In addition to the preexisting solidarity of the Cuban film experts, the story suggests that Francesco's interest in and understanding of their work facilitates a more balanced power relationship. According to the narrator, after deciding to help him, "Primero le explicamos nuestro contenido de trabajo... nosotros éramos depositarios de montañas de papeles, que enriquecíamos con pequeñas obras de investigación, realizadas según nuestros deseos" (55). In addition to his own project, Francesco helps them with assigned tasks, leaving more time for their own interests. For the narrator, this includes writing her own stories, "esos que luego imprimía y repartía entre los amigos, sin que interesasen jamás a ningún editor medianamente cuerdo" (56). This self-deprecating metafictional wink, as in the other stories, points to the strategy of creative agency to counter the negative effects of foreigners on local spaces. In a sense, Francesco's unlikely collaboration makes the labor of writing the story possible.

When finally the coworkers are called in by superiors to give an account for Francesco's presence, they pool their resources, including wedding rings, a bicycle, and precious savings to pay for a plane ticket, but Francesco refuses: "Dijo que ya habíamos hecho mucho por él. Nos enseñó orgulloso cuánto había avanzado en su libro, ese que había escrito porque nosotros le habíamos dado techo, comida y muchos chistes" (59). After leaving by his own means Francesco sends his book, which has a cover image of the group enveloped by a rainbow, a symbol of his and the story's optimism: "Y nos sorprendimos al vernos todos en una foto de ajeteo de oficina, fungiendo de portada. Sobre nuestras cabezas, un arcobaleno nos envolvía como un aura colectiva" (60). Through the group picture on the cover, visual evidence of an international community of scholars, he recognizes the contributions of the ICAIC researchers and credits the completion of his book to Cuban hospitality.

Overall, the encounters with foreign travelers portrayed in these stories demonstrate, on the one hand, how Caribbean intellectuals and cultural workers can be treated or made to feel like strangers in their own countries. This is attributed not only to the incursion of their foreign counterparts, but also to national cultural institutions and the "othering" of locals that is mirrored by compatriots, especially within tourist spaces. On the other hand, the works also display a certain fluidity or shifting between the roles of host and guest that allow local writers, scholars and artists to re-establish belonging and legitimacy. This assertion of belonging and creative control occurs within the narratives through metafiction as well as through artistic creation itself. To differing degrees, the binaries of tourist/vagabond and guest/host are questioned through plot structures and complex characterization (often ironic and humorous). Guerra Naranjo, Arias, and Fernández Pintado position themselves and local characters as observers, rather than just objects of a foreign gaze, to counter the overexposure of the Caribbean as a place ripe for consumption or in need of assistance.

In conclusion, these short stories demonstrate how both material conditions and increased foreign presence transform daily life

and the creative process, but also inspire innovative narrative strategies for dealing with these tensions. Although for Bauman, the tourist is only moments away from becoming a vagabond, through these metaphors he “insists that there must be some (better) human existence beyond these confined and often contradictory ways of being in the world” (Jacobsen and Marshman 35). With varying degrees of optimism, the works studied here suggest that we are

not locked into tourist or vagabond subjectivities, and they urge us toward recognizing and acting on behalf of each other’s needs. Arias’ “¿Pero cómo se atreve?” and Fernández’s “Arcobaleno,” in particular, present a cautiously hopeful outlook for the creation of an international intellectual/artistic community based on hospitality, shared humanity and the mutual recognition of value, expertise, and knowledge.

NOTES

¹ Here I use the term “ethics” to mean the question of how people should behave when engaging with one another to the end of mutual benefit rather than harm.

² Duany cites the return visits of over 100,000 Cuban exiles in 1979 and the resulting exposure to “economic opportunities abroad” as one reason behind the Mariel boatlift of 1980, in which more than 125,000 Cubans left for the US in a span of seven months (45).

³ While emigration had previously been politicized as opposition to the Castro regime, after 1990 Cubans residing abroad were increasingly viewed as a welcome source of income (Eckstein 127-28).

⁴ Cuban emigration rose in the years between 2013 and 2017 due to various factors, including Cuba’s elimination of the requirement of a travel permit for its citizens in 2013, renewed relations with the U.S. in 2014, and the anticipation of the normalization of immigration policies affecting Cubans in the U.S., which took place in January 2017.

⁵ Neo-liberal economic policies paved the way for the development of manufacturing in free trade zones, in particular the garment industry (Rob-

inson 145-46), and the intensified promotion of tourism (Cabezas 40-41).

⁶ These numbers have been affected by U.S. restrictions on travel to Cuba, for both Cuban and non-Cuban residents and citizens.

⁷ Different types of travel and movement can overlap with tourist experiences. Franklin argues that “...much of contemporary life is organized in a touristic manner: its fluidity, mobility, spectacle and leisure orientation have created a life far more like tourism and travel than the sedentary industrial villages and towns that preceded them. However, it is a lifeworld where the distinction between tourist and non-tourist, host and guest is increasingly difficult to identify. [...] We are all tourists or at least touristic now, for most of the time” (*Tourism*, 80).

⁸ In *Resisting Paradise: Tourism, Diaspora, and Sexuality in Caribbean Culture* Angelique V. Nixon thoughtfully explores the interplay between diaspora and tourism in the Anglophone Caribbean context.

⁹ See Sklodowska’s thorough discussion of hunger in Special Period fiction in *Invento, luego resisto: El Período Especial en Cuba como experiencia y metáfora* (1990-2015).

WORKS CITED

- Ahmed, Sara. *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Arias, Aurora. *Emoticons*. San Juan, Puerto Rico: Terranova Editores, 2007.
- Banco Central de la República Dominicana. <https://www.bancentral.gov.do/a/d/2537-sector-turismo>. 5 June 2018.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Postmodern Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- _____. *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.
- _____. *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. New York: Columbia UP, 1998.
- Cabezas, Amalia L. *Economies of Desire: Sex and Tourism in Cuba and the Dominican Republic*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2009.
- Cresswell, Tim. “Towards a politics of mobility.” *Society and Space*. 28 (2010): 17-31.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Of Hospitality/ Anne Dufourmantelle invites Jacques Derrida to respond*. Trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2000.
- Dettman, Jonathan. “Eclipse and Re-emergence of a Critical Discourse on Hemingway in Cuban Literature and Film.” *The Latin Americanist*. Sept. (2014): 31-50.
- Duany, Jorge. *Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2011.
- Fernández Pintado, Mylene. “Arcobaleno.” *Vivir sin papeles*. Santiago de Cuba: Editorial Oriente, 2010.
- Franklin, Adrian. “The Tourist Syndrome: An Interview with Zygmunt Bauman.” *Tourist Studies*. (3.2): 2003, 205-17.
- _____. *Tourism: An Introduction*. London: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Freira, Silvina. “Entrevista al escritor cubano Alberto Guerra Naranjo: ‘¿Por qué escribo? Creo que es por defensa propia.’” *Página 12*. February 18, 2013. <http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/espectaculos/4-27834-2013-02-18.html>. 2 July 2013.
- Germann Molz, Jennie and Sarah Gibson Eds. *Mobilizing Hospitality: The Ethics of Social Relations in a Mobile World*. Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007.
- Gregory, Steven. *The Devil Behind the Mirror: Globalization and Politics in the Dominican Republic*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2007.
- Guerra Naranjo, Alberto. “Finca Vigía.” *Blasfemia del escriba*. Havana: Editorial Letras Cubanas, 2000.
- Hookway, Nicholas. “Zygmunt Bauman’s Moral Saint: Reclaiming Self in the Sociology of Morality.” *Acta Sociologica*. 60.4 (2017): 358-67.

- Jacobsen, Michael Hviid and Sophia Marshman. "Bauman on Metaphors—A Harbinger of Humanistic Hybrid Sociology." *The Sociology of Zygmunt Bauman: Challenges and Critique*. Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2008.
- Knight, Franklin W. and Teresita Martínez Vergne. *Contemporary Caribbean Cultures and Societies in a Global Context*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2005.
- "Ministro del Turismo: Cuba proyecta cerrar el año con cuatro millones 700 mil turistas." *CubaDebate*. July 12, 2017. <http://www.cubadebate.cu/noticias/2017/07/12/ministro-del-turismo-cuba-proyecta-cerrar-el-ano-con-cuatro-millones-700-mil-turistas/#.WofHqhknY64>. 25 May 2018.
- Nixon, Angeliqve V. *Resisting Paradise: Tourism, Diaspora, and Sexuality in Caribbean Culture*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2015.
- Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Roberson, Susan. Introduction. *Defining Travel: Diverse Visions*. Jackson, MI: UP of Mississippi, 2002.
- Robinson, William. *Latin America and Global Capitalism: A Critical Globalization Perspective*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2008.
- Rodríguez, Néstor E. and Kerstin Oloff. *Divergent Dictions: Contemporary Dominican Literature*. Coconut Creek, FL: Caribbean Studies Press, 2011.
- Sheller, Mimi. *Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Sklodowska, Elzbieta. "Palabras mutiladas/miradas entrecruzadas: El escritor negro y la autoficción en *La soledad del tiempo* de Alberto Guerra Naranjo." *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*. 41.8 (2015): 45-65.
- _____. *Invento, luego resisto: El Período Especial en Cuba como experiencia y metáfora (1990-2015)*. Santiago de Chile: Editorial Cuarto Propio, 2016.
- Ward, Evan R. *Packaged Vacations: Tourism Development in the Spanish Caribbean*. Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2008.
- Werner, Marion. *Global Displacements: The Making of Uneven Development in the Caribbean*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.
- Whitfield, Esther Katheryn. *Cuban Currency: The Dollar and "Special Period" Fiction*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2008.
- Zeuske, Michael. "The Long Cuban Revolution." *The Caribbean: A History of the Region and Its Peoples*. Eds. Stephan Palmié and Francisco A. Scarano. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 2011.