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The Bonds of Translation: A Cuban Encounter with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Through numerous translations, adaptations, and performances, mid-nineteenth-century sentimental communities across the world embraced Harriet Beecher Stowe's plea in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to "feel right" in opposing chattel slavery as "a system which confounds and confuses every principle of Christianity and morality" (452–53). Although the British and French governments had already abolished it, slavery was still rampant in the United States, Brazil, and the Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico during the 1850s, while serfdom subsisted in Russia. Moved by the novel's affecting depiction of the horrors of enslavement, a transatlantic public coalesced around the universalist moral values through which Stowe expressed her call for abolition: "See, then, to your sympathies in this matter! Are they in harmony with the sympathies of Christ? or [*sic*] are they swayed and perverted by the sophistries of world policy?" (452). In the Protestant brand of sentimentalism found throughout *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the experience of sympathizing with the enslaved other is circumscribed within a pre-ideological order of feelings. In the pursuit of a "right" feeling determined by the universal spirit of "Christianity," the ideal sympathetic subject is able to transcend the artificial divisions fostered by the political sphere ("world policy"). Even as Stowe explicitly dedicates *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to the people of the United States, her rhetoric invokes a public that transcends the boundaries of her country. The novel's religious sentimentalism strives to touch all (Christian) hearts across the globe, intersecting with the heterogeneous romantic forms of "cosmopolitan interestedness" that, as Ian Baucom analyzes in *Specters of the Atlantic*, began to surface

in the late eighteenth century in opposition to the “sophistries” of modern politics and capitalist production.¹ Specifically, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* forms part of the literary tradition of the sentimental novel, a genre that, as Margaret Cohen puts it, represented “the vanguard of formulating the notion of an affectively charged association among distanced readers.”² Yet, as critics ranging from Hortense S. Spillers to Lauren Berlant have noted, the universalist thrust that intertwines Stowe's abolitionist politics with the “sympathies of Christ”—embodied in the sacrificial spectacle of Uncle Tom's passive death—erases not only the agency of enslaved and black subjects but also the history of chattel slavery itself.³

In the process of helping *Uncle Tom's Cabin* become an international best seller, transnational publics reimagined Stowe's invitation to “feel right.” They rewrote the novel's plot, characters, ideology, and aesthetics in counterpoint to the social worlds in which they consumed, translated, and adapted it.⁴ Among the numerous figures from Latin America who intervened in the open-ended “text-network” of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was Andrés Avelino de Orihuela, who wrote the first full translation of Stowe's novel into Castilian Spanish, only months after its original publication in book form.⁵ Born in 1818 in the Canary Islands, Orihuela lived his formative years in Havana, where he studied law and became active among local liberal circles, which led to his exile. As he traveled through the U.S. South, Spain, France, and back again to Cuba, Orihuela participated actively in debates against Spanish colonialism and slavery, writing pamphlets, novels, and poems that he often confronted the excesses of colonial society. He spent the last years of his life defending the republican cause in Spain, where he presumably died in 1873.⁶ In the preface to his novel *El sol de Jesús del Monte* (Jesús del Monte's sun) (1853), Orihuela labels himself as a “true cosmopolitan whose homeland is the world, whose brother is the friend, whose family is all humanity,” without any mention of Cuba or the Canary Islands.⁷ In his self-representation as a citizen of the world, Orihuela appeared to situate his work beyond contemporary patriotic and nation-building discourses. Having been born in the Canary Islands—which Peninsular Spaniards perceived as a society inferior to the mainland—and then having received his formal education in Cuba, he had to negotiate a complicated process of transatlantic identification and disidentification. In his works cited in this essay, Orihuela never declares his Canarian descent, focusing on his social and political experiences in Cuba. At the same time, his language does not

correspond fully with the patriotic style of the Cuban intellectuals of the time.

Cosmopolitanism does not, however, necessarily preclude regional or local affiliations: in *Dos palabras sobre el folleto "La situación política de Cuba y su remedio"* (Two words on the pamphlet "Cuba's Political Situation and How to Solve It"), which was published a year before *El sol de Jesús del Monte*, Orihuela advocated the annexation of Cuba into the United States.⁸ In translating *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Orihuela reinforced his bond with the United States at the same time that he adapted it for not only the Cuban liberal elite but also Hispanophone readers in Europe and the Americas. First published in Paris in 1852 as *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, Orihuela's translation would see new editions in Colombia, Spain, and Argentina only a year later, contributing to the expansion of the transnational network of Stowe's classic. His translation builds a sense of sentimental community with the antislavery vision of Stowe, but, as I will show here, it also constrains the original's Christian morality and its romantic racialism, producing a distinctively "transamerican" narrative that translated the ideals of secular republicanism and cosmopolitanism into the racially fraught colonial politics of Cuba.⁹ Even as Orihuela's "Cubanization" of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* articulates an ambivalent racial politics linked to his gradual abolitionism, it also produces a critique of how both Stowe and the Cuban elite approached the representation of blackness.

Orihuela explains his fascination with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in his translation's preface, which he presents as a letter addressed to Stowe.

When the book that you have just conceived reached my hands, I devoured its pages; the tears that this reading elicited are the most expressive testimony of the character of the feelings that unite us. . . . My lady, you have known how to speak to the heart, wounding its most delicate fibers. . . . your golden quill holds the exclusive privilege of disseminating, through its novel, the pure and saintly seed that will shortly yield its results, to the solace of the African race and the honor of modern civilization.¹⁰

Here, the rhetoric of moral sentiment takes the form of an affective wound that compels the subject into action—in this case, into translating and circulating the book's antislavery gospel. The wound functions as a sign of

Orihuela's sentimental identification with Stowe: in being moved to tears, the translator develops a close connection with not only the text but also the author, articulating a bond of unity between the United States and Cuba through the sentimentalization of slavery.¹¹ Writing on the limits of "liberal sentimentality" in Stowe, Lauren Berlant has perceptively observed how fictions of protest structured around sentimental bonds produce what she calls a "fantasy scene of national feeling."¹² According to Berlant, such fictions of collective empathy—represented in the text by Orihuela's tears—risk occluding the difference of the suffering other and the "structural inequities" of slavery and racism. Orihuela's prologue is exemplary in this regard: it does not inquire into the enslaved Other's predicament or voice but concentrates on the text's sentimental effect and how it will "yield" the abolition of slavery, honoring "modern civilization" in the process.

As Orihuela's use of the phrase "modern civilization" reveals, this "fantasy scene" is not solely a matter of "national feeling." Not only does it apply to Cuba and other slaveholding countries, but it is a burden that weighs on all of Western modernity. In the preface to *El sol de Jesús del Monte*, Orihuela defines his cosmopolitan self according to a personal experience of "nomadic life," a pursuit of "new impressions" that will take him from "the capital of the civilized world," Paris, to an exoticized "Orient."¹³ This self-narrative replicates the dominant forms of cosmopolitanism one typically associates with the modern bourgeois writer, a Eurocentric ethos of rootlessness "obsessed," as Bruce Robbins puts it, "with embodying a preconceived totality."¹⁴ In the case of Orihuela, cosmopolitan totality or universalism would seem to be determined through his ideal of a "modern civilization" represented by *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Paris, and the United States. At the same time, Orihuela does not erase the particulars of his experiences in Cuba. *El sol de Jesús del Monte* narrates, in part, the struggles of people of African descent in Cuba and even lionizes the *mulato* poet Plácido, who was accused by the colonial authorities of participating in the slave conspiracy of La Escalera in 1843 and was consequently executed.¹⁵ In addition, Orihuela begins his letter to Stowe by mentioning his upbringing in Cuba and declaring that he became an abolitionist because he had witnessed, as a child, the "cry of the slave and the masters' cruelty."¹⁶ In the following sentence, he remarks on his surprise upon learning, in his travels through the U.S. South, that the same barbarous practices "also" exist in "the true bastion of man's liberty," where he was able to observe "in relief the sad scenes that [...] you so faithfully sketch

in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.¹⁷ Beyond the questionable reliability of Orihuela's assertion about his ignorance of chattel slavery practices in the United States, the relationship traced in the text between the South and Cuba stands out. Orihuela traces a parallel between his perceptions of slavery in Cuba and of Southern slavery, distinguishing the latter only through the idealistic reference to U.S. liberty. This parallel is mediated through literature, specifically through the "faithful" representation of slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In commending the novel's realism, Orihuela privileges the sentimental narrative's ability to capture the truth of slavery. Bridging the worlds of slavery in Cuba and the United States through the intersection of realism and sentimentalism, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is thus presented to the reader as a text that can condense a local reality and disseminate it, as a "pure and saintly seed" for foreign, cosmopolitan readers such as Orihuela to cultivate and translate, as they insert themselves and their particular social and political visions within the novel's text-network. Orihuela's translation addressed the formation of a Cuban counterpublic that not only identified with U.S. republicanism but also sought political unification with their northern neighbor.

ORIHUELA AND THE CUBAN COUNTERPUBLIC: "THERE IS NOTHING MORE POETIC IN US THAN THE SLAVES"

For the most part, scholars of Cuban literature and culture have not engaged in depth with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, its possible convergences with the sentimental and abolitionist traditions in Cuba, or its reception among the local elite. When they have done so, their purpose has been to underscore the existence of a distinctly Cuban genealogy of romantic antislavery fiction that precedes Stowe's novel, particularly Félix Tanco y Bosmeniel's *Petrona y Rosalía* (1838), Anselmo Suárez y Romero's *Francisco* (1839), and Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda's *Sab* (1841).¹⁸ Ignoring the specifics of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or reducing it to the status of propaganda, such comparisons affirm the originality and autochthony of the Cuban literary tradition over the value of a nineteenth-century classic that belongs to the U.S. tradition, articulating a binary opposition that ironically plays out the uneven, conflicted history of relations between Cuba and the United States. By demarcating thus the national boundaries of the cultural production of Cuba (and the United States), we face two risks: overlooking the intricate historical links that connect Cuba with the United States, and of reinforcing conse-

quently the nationalist fictions of exceptionalism that still haunt the history of both countries. One cannot stress enough the porosity of their borders during the era of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: the United States had already become the colony's chief trade partner, as its government contemplated annexing the island; meanwhile, many members of the Cuban elite lived or were educated in the United States and professed a profound identification with the country, even when they did not favor political annexation. For example, the Cuban intellectual José Antonio Saco, who never allied himself with the Cuban annexationist movement, wrote in 1837, "if [Cuba] had to throw itself on the arms of a stranger, none would be as honorable and glorious as those of the great North American federation."¹⁹ Through an image that implicitly feminizes Cuba under the embrace of the chivalrous federation, Saco expresses a generalized sentiment among most Cuban elites of the period: an admiration of the republican values of the United States and its growing power in the hemisphere.

During the 1830s, the white Cuban elite was in the midst of producing what critics have identified as the beginnings of a national literature in the colony, under the tutelage of the wealthy man of letters Domingo del Monte. Inspired partly by the poetry and autobiography of the former slave Juan Francisco Manzano, young writers such as Félix Tanco y Bosmeniel combined romantic and realist aesthetics with the explicit aim of capturing the autochthonous character of Cuban society. In particular, they fictionalized the social world of Cuba's enslaved inhabitants who were depicted largely as idealized figures of passive victimhood.²⁰ Through their works, which were circulated clandestinely and published on foreign soil, these intellectuals challenged the colonial authorities and their repressive measures, articulating a heterogeneous counterpublic that extended, in the 1840s and 1850s, to Paris, Madrid, New York, and other cities in the Americas.²¹ This diverse, ever-shifting political network cannot be neatly reduced to a single ideology, except a generalized rejection of the colonial status quo, as defined by the Spanish Constitution of 1837. The new constitution provided the Crown with special powers over its territorial possessions, leaving Cuban-born subjects with little, if any, political agency, while Spanish administrators and merchants continued to take advantage of a burgeoning economy driven by the local sugar boom. The ensuing years in Cuba were increasingly turbulent: censorship was tightened, while slave uprisings erupted, culminating in the mass conspiracy of La Escalera in 1843, which led to the torture and execution of hundreds of enslaved and

free blacks, many of whom were innocent. The colonial crackdown on the conspiracy also resulted in the arrest and exile of Domingo del Monte and many of his followers, who were deemed suspicious because of their liberal and abolitionist tendencies. Historians have clearly established, however, that Domingo del Monte and most of his associates did not participate in the conspiracy. In fact, the majority of them were, as Sibylle Fischer puts it, “moderate abolitionists”: they advocated a gradual process of emancipation and condemned all slave rebellions, which they associated negatively with the potential Africanization of Cuba and its transformation into another “Haiti.”²² After the Haitian Revolution of 1791–1804, Cuba replaced Saint-Domingue as the top sugar producer in the world and, in the first half of the nineteenth century, absorbed thousands of enslaved Africans into its flourishing plantation system. According to the colonial census, enslaved and free people of color outnumbered the white population in this period, which fed into the Cuban and Spanish elite’s anxiety about a black revolution.

Writing in exile one year after the conspiracy, Del Monte expressed his fears about an impending crisis in Cuba to the Spanish ambassador in Paris.

The island of Cuba finds itself today under the imminent risk of loss, not only for Spain but for the white race and the civilized world, if the Spanish government does not take forceful and immediate measures to contain the catastrophe. Those who know Cuba have declared that the only two revolutions that can occur there are: of soldiers or blacks.²³

Like his friend José Antonio Saco, Del Monte articulated an exclusively white discourse of patriotism, excluding peoples of African descent from the definition of a Cuban identity, separate from the Spaniards. For Del Monte and his followers, slavery was a barbaric institution that went against the values of the “civilized world,” but they also perceived enslaved subjects as barbaric. For them, blackness represented an excess that had to be cleansed away from the homeland, through reformist policies such as gradual abolition, white immigration, and the expatriation of people of color to the African continent—echoing the failed plan to resettle all U.S. blacks to Liberia, which was supported by numerous liberal public figures, ranging from Harriet Beecher Stowe to Abraham Lincoln. The mid-nineteenth-century Cuban elite’s moderate abolitionism and their attention to representing slavery through literature was not tantamount to the national myth

of multiracial integration that emerged decades later with the revolutionary nationalist movement. On one hand, this vision of integration blamed Spanish colonialism for slavery and racial disharmony in the island; on the other hand, it “made the revolution a mythic project that armed black and white men together to form the world’s first raceless nation.”²⁴ In contrast to the rhetoric of later revolutionary figures such as José Martí, the “whitening” discourse of Del Monte’s generation served to police the symbolic boundaries between blackness and an emerging sense of national selfhood. In this manner, the members of the Cuban elite sought to distance themselves from the island’s pervasive culture of miscegenation, a practice that was illegal at the time but common among the colony’s inhabitants.

What value did the representation of black subjects have, then, for the Cuban elite? In his letters to Del Monte, Tanco asserted most forcefully the importance of depicting Cuba’s enslaved communities. For instance, in an 1836 letter, he observes, “there is nothing more poetic in us than the *slaves*; *poetry* that is being spilled everywhere, through fields and towns.”²⁵ Through this romantic equivalence with “poetry,” the enslaved subject is turned into a fully aestheticized object, a source of literary inspiration. At the same time, the figure of the slave is disseminated throughout the island, as a product of the white elites’ cultural and economic investment. In a grotesque displacement of signifiers, Tanco’s use of “spill” (*derramar* in the original) echoes not only the flow of the writer’s ink over the page but also the actual loss of the slave’s blood, which embodies the violence of enslavement. In addition, Tanco places the enslaved black other in close proximity to his own community; the black other’s poetry is inherent to the (white) Cuban “us.” In a succeeding letter written a month after the new Spanish constitution was passed, Tanco affirms that the “spirit of Cuba” is composed of only “sugar” and “blacks”: for him, “everything else” in Cuba “is superfluous and mere luxury, liberty as well as despotism.”²⁶ In both letters, Tanco appears to distance himself from his friend Del Monte and other Cuban intellectuals, particularly from their discourse of “whitening.” His penchant for hyperbole and his strident tone heighten the sense of imminent violence behind Del Monte’s fears of “losing” Cuba. In fact, in observing that “liberty” is already “superfluous” or a “mere luxury” in the colony, Tanco appears to suggest that, from such a perspective, Cuba has already been lost.

These distinctions do not entail that Tanco adhered to a more radical or egalitarian vision of abolition and race relations than his peers. The references to “blacks” and “sugar” as signifiers of Cuba’s “spirit” embody the co-

lonial economy's driving force: enslaved labor and the colony's main export commodity. The letter scathingly insinuates that the colony's only transcendental value is its economic production and, hence, that capitalist interest determines all deliberations on the meanings of "liberty" and "despotism" in Cuba. In his novella *Petrona y Rosalía*, Tanco y Bosmeniel centers his gaze on the slave owner's domestic sphere, which he depicts as a horrific world of unbridled greed and depredatory sexual desire. Moral horror is a genealogical theme in the novella: first, the Spanish sugar magnate Don Antonio rapes Petrona, a black domestic slave; later, his *criollo* son Don Fernando violates her *mulata* daughter, Rosalía, without knowing that she is his sister. When Doña Concepción, Antonio's wife, learns that Petrona and Rosalía are pregnant, she banishes them to the plantation, where they perish from extreme working conditions. The only value Petrona and Rosalía have in the social order represented in the novella, which reads as an allegory of Cuban plantation society, is as economic and sexual objects, a point driven hard by the text's last words, pronounced simultaneously by Fernando and Concepción: "Patience, a thousand pesos have been lost!"²⁷

Tanco's negative portrayal of the plantation-owning class's moral abjection and his reduction of the enslaved subject to a figure of passive sacrifice is comparable to Stowe's depictions of the repeated abuse Uncle Tom suffers under his last owner, Simon Legree. Indeed, the incendiary tone of *Petrona y Rosalía* lends it a propaganda-like effect analogous to the discourse of social protest articulated in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. At the same time, *Petrona y Rosalía* adds a narrative theme not explored in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: miscegenation as incest. An essential feature of nineteenth-century Cuban elite culture was its anxious fascination with interracial relations, particularly the *mulata* figure. Through an expansive textual, visual, and performative archive, both the Spanish and white Cuban elite imagined the *mulata* as what Vera Kutzinski calls "a dangerous combination of beauty and malice," an eroticized, sexually threatening force that imperiled the stability of their identities.²⁸ Following Sibylle Fischer, the incest leitmotif in such representations can be interpreted as a "traumatic fantasy about the Creole self" in which the *mulata* stands for an encounter with Cuban sameness: through horror, she is assimilated into the fragile genealogy of Cubanness at the same time that her autonomy goes unrecognized.²⁹

In *Petrona y Rosalía*, the representations of slavery and forced miscegenation combine as a critique of the inherent violence of Cuba's social structures. Yet the "pure" white Cuban self that local intellectuals like Del Monte

envisioned is also implicated in this violence. For Tanco, no subject position within the colonial order can rupture this vicious cycle: Cuba is “lost,” but only as a Spanish colony. In 1843, writing as the conspiracy of La Escalera transpired and as colonial repression intensified, Tanco vilified Cuba as “a horrifying, repugnant island,” declaring to an exiled Del Monte that it was impossible to develop any patriotic sentiment in such a place.³⁰ In the same letter, he pledged to raise his children in the United States, presaging his eventual support of the U.S. annexation of Cuba.³¹ For Cuban writers who progressively looked toward the north as a potential sanctuary, the depiction of the intimate horrors of slavery was synonymous with developing a vision of anticolonial liberation from the moral corruption they saw as inherent to the Spanish colonial order. But this vision did not include colonial reforms or political independence; such liberation was to be developed under the protection of the United States.

As more and more of its members were forced into exile, the Cuban elite's admiration for the United States fueled a small yet significant movement of revolutionary annexationists that took form in the late 1840s and lasted until the eruption of the Civil War. Because of their association with the U.S. military adventurers who invaded Central America and the Caribbean, such as William Walker, these groups were also called *filibusteros* (filibusters). As mentioned before, the economic ties between Cuba and the United States already ran deep during this period: in 1850, the latter displaced Great Britain and Spain as the colony's foremost commercial partner. Looking to consolidate these relations and to eliminate the repressive colonial system under Spain, a group of Cuban plantation owners and intellectuals participated in a transnational network of rebellion with the active backing of U.S. entrepreneurs, at the same time that politicians, including President James K. Polk, sought to incorporate the colony through diplomatic means.³² During the 1840s and 1850s, Cuban revolutionaries stationed in New Orleans, Philadelphia, and New York addressed the U.S. public sphere while they fostered a surge of Cuban patriotism in the exile communities, sharing and debating their often conflicting views through newspapers and pamphlets that circulated in Europe and the Americas.

As David Luis-Brown has noted, a common element in the discourse of Cuban annexationism was the appropriation of the republican and cosmopolitan values that proliferated with the European revolutions of 1848 and the ascent of the French Second Republic.³³ The democratic ideals of frater-

nity, liberty, and equality were resurrected not only in France but throughout the globe. Cuban exile publications celebrated the revolution in France, aligning their political vision with the promise of what an 1848 manifesto, published in the New York newspaper *La Verdad* (The Truth), called “universal fraternity and happiness.” Simply titled “To the inhabitants of Cuba and Puerto Rico” and signed by a “Peninsular cubano” (Cuban Spaniard), the manifesto additionally locates this promise in the future of the United States: “Bellicose France will bring about this blessing in Europe, and is preparing to do so; the Great Republic of the United States will do so earlier, for its sisters in the world of Columbus.”³⁴ Combining the radical rhetoric of 1848 with U.S. liberal republicanism in order to call for an anticolonial revolution against Spain, annexationists also drew from the popular expansionist propaganda of Manifest Destiny, which the journalist John L. O’Sullivan originated in a famous series of writings that advocated the annexation of Texas. Not coincidentally, O’Sullivan was one of the main benefactors behind *La Verdad* and the failed revolt of 1850, a fact that highlights the profound alliances between Cuban annexationists and U.S. imperial interests.

Although it appears that he did not have a leading role in any of the annexationist cells, Orihuela was a clear supporter of the movement. In *Dos palabras*, the 1852 pro-*filibustero* pamphlet where he criticizes José Antonio Saco’s writings against the incorporation of Cuba into the United States, Avelino de Orihuela applauds the work of *La Verdad* and the different secret societies and political groups that spread the gospel of annexation, describing the movement as a “revolution in ideas.” Orihuela connects this revolution directly to the United States, which he acclaims as “the only bastion in the civilized world that preserves liberty, properly understood, in its bosom” (3).³⁵ In this passage, Orihuela idealizes the United States as the sole national bearer of freedom in the Western tradition, a rhetoric that echoes the imperialist discourse of Manifest Destiny. In order to deny the existence of U.S. expansionist interests behind the possible annexation of the Spanish colony, Orihuela goes on to establish a parallel between Cuba and the recent incorporation of Texas into the United States, which he sees as “voluntary”: “The United States have clearly proven that they essentially do not aspire to territorial expansion, and they have demonstrated this with their pacific retreat from their military occupation of most of the Mexican territory.”³⁶ In endorsing the U.S. intervention against Mexico as a benevolent enterprise in the name of the “civilized world,” Orihuela disregards the devastating territorial losses suffered by Mexico—in what is now called the

Southwest of the United States—as a result of the war. In addition, he overlooks the war's repercussions in the escalating national crisis over slavery, particularly the fateful Compromise of 1850, which declared Texas a slave state and, through the Fugitive Slave Act, ordered officials in free states to assist in the return of fugitives to their masters.

Through these omissions, Orihuela reaffirms the annexationist desire of associating Cuba with the authority of what was already becoming a global power and, thus, of fulfilling the wish for “civilizing” the Cuban people. Limiting his analysis to *El sol de Jesús del Monte*, David Luis-Brown interprets Orihuela's politics as an “antiracist” form of “cosmopolitanism,” in opposition to the “U.S.-style racist republicanism” that he associates with the editor of *La Verdad*, Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros, and other leading filibusters who did not support the immediate abolition of slavery.³⁷ However, although Orihuela denounces slavery in *Dos palabras* as a “vile institution,” he endorses a gradualist, pragmatic approach to abolition.

In respect to Cuba, we will say, incidentally, that when the moment of figuring as another star in the North American flag arrives; when its special laws are given, with contemplation of its needs, it will take into consideration the degree of restrictions on slavery according to what is most convenient to its interests [. . .] its well-being and the prosperity of its commerce.³⁸

One way to explain Orihuela's cautious words on the process of abolition is to read them as a rhetorical ploy to gain support for the annexation cause from gradualist and even pro-slavery circles in Cuba and the United States. Nevertheless, they reveal where his priorities lay: in his view, political revolution and the incorporation of Cuba into the United States would necessarily precede the consideration of emancipation. While Orihuela certainly stood out for his virulent attacks against slavery, which are epitomized by his cosmopolitan identification with *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, his abolitionism was no more radical than that of Del Monte or Betancourt Cisneros. As Orihuela's translation of Stowe's novel reveals, he replicated aspects of the dominant discourse against blackness. At the same time, the translation choices in *La cabaña del Tío Tom* offer flashes of a cultural and racial imaginary critical of the Cuban elite's politics of whitening and of Stowe's Protestant brand of romantic racialism.

BETWEEN CUBA AND THE UNITED STATES:
AN ANNEXATIONIST TRANSLATES *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*

Like all translations, *La cabaña del Tío Tom* reimagines the original: its accord with *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is offset by what Lawrence Venuti calls the “domestic remainder” of translation, “an inscription of values, beliefs, and representations linked to historical moments and social positions in the receiving culture.”³⁹ The work of displacement that goes hand in hand with translation—its production of historically situated markers of linguistic and cultural otherness—make it a distinct text, and in this difference “lies the hope that the translation will establish an imagined community that shares an interest in the foreign.”⁴⁰ Both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *La cabaña del Tío Tom* share an interest that transcends a mere investment in “foreign” cultural production. Their cosmopolitanism is of another kind; it is based on the promise of a “universal” community that shares a sentimental investment in the figure of the slave and against the institution of slavery. In the case of *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, it frames this universalist promise from the particularity of Orihuela's secular and Cuban-oriented cosmopolitan worldview. A significant alteration, in this regard, is his elimination of the original's chapter epigraphs, which are sometimes extracted from the Christian scriptures. The role of Protestant Christianity is, of course, fundamental in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: as Jane Tompkins says, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* reads as a “jeremiad” that “does not simply quote the Bible” but “rewrites the Bible as the story of a Negro slave.”⁴¹ In the novel, the reader is reminded continually of the lessons of the gospel, particularly the moral value of self-sacrifice, through the narrator's interventions and the words and actions of numerous characters. Orihuela does not erase this rhetoric in his translation; to do so would have involved effacing the original's discursive and ideological foundation. But, in omitting the novel's epigraphs and other references of religious meaning, such as Uncle Tom singing the famous folk hymn “Amazing Grace,” *La cabaña del Tío Tom* produces a narrative less determined by the values of Christianity. Orihuela also has a pattern of expunging seemingly accessory elements in the novel, including the description of culinary culture: he even omits the mention of a dish of Hispanic origins, the *olla podrida* (meat stew) cooked by Uncle Tom's wife, Aunt Chloe (108). But this type of erasure is secondary, if not inconsequential, when compared to the absence of the epigraphs—which, as paratexts, frame the narrative's Christian discourse—or the singing of “Amazing Grace,”

a key moment in which Uncle Tom affirms his unwavering religious faith in the face of Legree's mounting abuses.

In contrast to Stowe's religious antislavery discourse, Orihuela's appeal to the abolition of slavery in the prologue is not expressed through any form of spiritual rhetoric; the redemption of enslaved people is associated not with the sacred but with the secular—with the progress of “modern civilization.”⁴² In *Sol de Jesús del Monte*, the reader has a glimpse of Orihuela's position on Roman Catholicism, the dominant religion among the white elite in Cuba: the *criollo* man of letters Federico, whose role in the narrative is partly to offer a critique of colonial society, disparages the Catholic Church for its corrupting influence in the colony. Furthermore, in *Dos palabras*, Orihuela makes no allusions to religious culture as a source of his vision of a “revolution of ideas” connecting Cuba with the United States. Like other Cuban intellectuals who sympathized with abolitionist and annexationist causes, Orihuela was most likely a defender of the separation of church and state. It would not be far-fetched to interpret the translation's omission of the epigraphs and other sacred references as an alignment with a secular community of Hispanophone readers. While Stowe articulated her cosmopolitan vision through the language of religious eschatology, which establishes the world's unity through the suffering and redemption of Christ, Orihuela's vision, rooted in the ideals of republicanism, is of secular fraternity, which he associates, as he declares in the prologue to *Sol de Jesús del Monte*, to a sense of “complete independence.”⁴³

As the protagonist of Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom exemplifies the Christian message that drives the narrative. When he first appears, inside his cabin and with his family and friends, the narrator underscores the power of Tom's religious performance.

Having, naturally, an organization in which the *morale* was strongly predominant, together with a greater breadth and cultivation of mind than obtained among his companions, he was looked up to with great respect, as a sort of minister among them; and the simple, hearty, sincere style of his exhortations might have edified even better educated persons. (35)

A Christ-like figure that both imparts and embodies these moral lessons until his death, Uncle Tom lies at the center of the novel's spectacle of sacred fervor. At the same time, he is the most visible racialized figure in this narrative spectacle, which, following the conventions of contemporary

romantic racialism in Europe and the Americas, idealizes black people as naturally Christian beings with moral values superior to U.S. whites. As George Frederickson notes, "For romantic racialists, the Negro was a symbol of something that seemed tragically lacking in white American civilization."⁴⁴ The racialized idealization of Uncle Tom can be evinced in how the narrator defines his morality as a "natural" value, intrinsic to his "organization." Romantic racialism suffuses the description of all characters, white and black: their racialized physiognomy is meant to express a fixed conception of character. For instance, the narrator relates, "Your Kentuckian of the present day is a good illustration of the doctrine of transmitted instincts and peculiarities" (110). In the case of the mixed-race couple Eliza and George Harris, who decide to flee when threatened with the possibility of being separated from their child, this "doctrine" links their independent will to their white genealogy. In other words, their agency as fugitives is connected directly to whiteness. George is described thus: "From one of the proudest families in Kentucky he had inherited a set of fine European features, and a high, indomitable spirit. From his mother he had received only a slight mulatto tinge, amply compensated by its accompanying rich, dark eye" (114–15). In contrast, Uncle Tom's characteristics and actions, particularly the docility associated with his lack of desire to escape from his masters, are defined as a "natural" essence of the black self.

Orihuela does not erase Stowe's romantic racialism from his translation, but he attenuates its power significantly.⁴⁵ In his translation of the narrator's description of Uncle Tom's interiority, the references to nature are actually eliminated: "Gifted with clear reasoning, wholesome intelligence, and having received more education than most of his companions, he enjoyed an extraordinary moral influence. His exhortations were persuasive, and they would have even enlightened persons better educated than the ones that formed part of his apostolate."⁴⁶ In this heavily altered portrayal, Uncle Tom's traits are identified as individual *dotes* (gifts) and are hence disconnected from his "natural" heritage. Contrary to Stowe's original, Orihuela's narrator does not recognize "morality" as Uncle Tom's main attribute; this value—transformed into *influencia moral* (moral influence)—is positioned at the same level as his reasoning, intelligence, and education. The first two of these qualities do not appear in Stowe's original, where the references to Uncle Tom's "breadth and cultivation of mind" suggest only his spiritual education through Bible reading, instead of inherent characteristics. Also, Orihuela omits all references to the "style" of Uncle Tom's discourse, which

contribute to his image in Stowe's original as a "simple" yet "sincere" fervent Christian.⁴⁷ The only adjective Orihuela utilizes to define Uncle Tom's discursive style is "persuasive"—in reference to the latter's "exhortations"—which echoes the preceding use of "moral influence" and defines the value of his speech in accord with its effect on his audience. When read as a whole, the translation's overall result in this passage and others is a fuller, more complex representation of Uncle Tom that complicates Stowe's romantic equivalence between blackness and morality.

In other instances, *La cabaña del Tío Tom* replaces the characters' names used in the original with a racial marker—for example, *cuarterona* (quadroon) substitutes the narrator's mention of Eliza in the original text—reducing their selfhood to Hispanic and Cuban hierarchies of blackness. From a first reading, the introduction into the text of a racial taxonomy specific to Cuba, which ranges from terms like *negro* and *criollito* (a Cuban-born black child) to *cuarterona* and *mulato*, signifies a "Cubanization" of Stowe's novel. These words, it would seem, bring the text closer to the discursive register of race in Cuban society, where the definition of racial categories was and continues to be more heterogeneous and fluid than in the United States. In Cuba, as in other Latin American contexts, the word *mulato* does not have the pejorative connotations the English *mulatto* has in the United States. Also, there are numerous other Spanish terms, with both positive and negative associations, that encapsulate a wide-ranging racial continuum in which the binary opposition of black versus white is not absolute.

Yet, when it comes to the abundant regional, racial, and class-based dialects that Stowe sought to reproduce through her characters' speech, Orihuela chooses not to transform them according to Cuban conventions. In mid-nineteenth-century Cuba, contemporary writers and performers such as José Crespo y Borbón developed a distinctive literary and theatrical tradition that captured the oral and popular cultures of the colony. As Jill Lane indicates, these "popular ethnographies" often simulated voices of African descent, producing a "discursive blackface" analogous to the images of "authentic" black orality in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which borrowed from the black minstrelsy darky figures that were widely popular in the nineteenth-century United States.⁴⁸ For instance, when Aunt Chloe speaks, Stowe textualizes the character's speech, particularly its phonetic elements: "Ah! let me alone for dat. Missis let Sally try to make some cake, t' other day, jes to *larn* her, she said" (27). In *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, Orihuela dissolves these markers of oral difference and employs the same for-

mal speech for all the characters' lines. Evoking the elite Castilian Spanish found in most Hispanic literary texts of the time, Aunt Chloe's words lose the distinctiveness of the original: "El otro día quiso la señora que Sally le hiciera uno, solamente para aprender, como ella decía. [. . .] Vaya déjeme Vd. á mí." (Ah, Let me do it myself. The other day the mistress wanted Sally to make one, just to learn, she said.)⁴⁹ This choice might be attributed to Orihuela's cosmopolitan politics and the importance of building as broad a public as possible for the cause of abolition, through a language that could be easily grasped by readers of Spanish across the hemisphere and in Europe.⁵⁰ In turning to the language of the Hispanic elites as the exclusive medium of expression for all characters, the text indirectly defines it as a global vernacular, subsuming the assorted local languages from Cuba that could have been appropriated and incorporated into the text. In this regard, Orihuela's Eurocentric, liberal approach to cosmopolitanism comes to the fore. However, the lack of a linguistic difference in the representation of blackness could be read as an equivalence that puts into question the racialized hierarchy of value that marks black difference as inferior: the enslaved subject expresses himself in the same language as his masters.

Orihuela's complex negotiation between his cosmopolitanism and the racial imaginaries of Cuba and the United States can also be detected in his translation of the historically charged word *nigger*, which is repeated continually in Stowe's classic. A popular word among the colonial elites that could have captured the intensity of this racial epithet is *negrito*, a condescending diminutive term used to belittle blacks. But in all cases, Orihuela utilizes the word *negro*. In addition, the original's references to "negro" and "black" subjects are replaced with the same word. Orihuela selects a word that does not necessarily have a pejorative connotation: its meaning in Spanish depends on the context and tone of the speaker. For example, when the slave trader Mr. Haley resorts to the expression "negro," its demeaning quality is made apparent by Haley's profession and the racist arguments he develops about black people's inferiority in his conversation with Arthur Shelby. In other passages, however, the word's meaning is restricted to defining racial identity, as in the use of "black." By subsuming the differing values of "nigger," "negro," and "black" under the Spanish word *negro*, *La cabaña del Tío Tom* produces a sense of ambiguity around the valence of racial representation—how it travels and is adapted across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Another moment that captures *La cabaña del Tío Tom*'s ambiguity sur-

rounding racial discourse is Orihuela's translation of the designation "white nigger." In Stowe's original, these words appear in a heated debate between a field-worker and a domestic servant as they wait to be sold to their new masters: "Lor, now, how touchy we is,—we white niggers! Look at us now!" and Sambo gave a ludicrous imitation of Adolph's manner; 'here's de airs and graces. We's been in a good family, I specs'" (336). By mocking Adolph as a "white nigger," Sambo calls attention not only to his mixed-race background but also to how the social construction of race intertwines with social status. Sambo's use of "white" here is an indicator not so much of Adolph's phenotypic traits but of the classed identity he enacts through his social performance, the "airs and graces" he learned and developed while laboring for his rich master Augustine St. Clare. In *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, the use of the pejorative disappears and is replaced by categories of racial hybridity that rupture the link between whiteness and the enslaved subject's social background: *mestizo* and *mulato moderno* (the first denotes a mixed-race identity, either white and black or white and indigenous; the latter signals Adolph's fashionable clothing style).⁵¹ Again, by focusing on Adolph's mixed identity instead of reaffirming the binarism between whiteness and blackness, the translation resignifies *Uncle Tom's Cabin* according to the Cuban racial continuum.

The translation also adds another layer of meaning through the adjective *moderno*. In calling attention to Adolph's sense of fashion, Orihuela reiterates the dandyish characteristics that the narrator of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* attributes to Adolph when he is first mentioned: "Foremost among them was a highly dressed young mulatto man, evidently a very *distingué* personage, attired in the ultra extreme of the mode, and gracefully waving a scented cambric handkerchief in his hand" (170).⁵² As Jason Richards observes, Sambo's words to Adolph serve to highlight the incongruence between Adolph's identity as an enslaved subject and his performance of social distinction. They signal, in other words, how Adolph's "airs and graces" of distinction are made meaningless by the world of slavery.⁵³ As the story line of Uncle Tom and Adolph shows, an unexpected turn of events, like the death of a master, can lead the domestic servant back to the slave warehouse and into an ominously "undistinguished" position. In Orihuela's awkward translation, however, the mocking tone of Sambo's words becomes more ambiguous, lacking any clear derogatory effect. The description of Adolph might be another way of marking his social performance as an act, for to be fashionable or modern is a characteristic linked to the "white" norms

of the time. One might even venture to interpret the text literally, understanding the limitations of expressing humor across cultural boundaries. In Orihuela's reconstruction of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Adolph may very well be a figure of the "modern civilization" he alludes to in the preface, as defined by a Eurocentric worldview of modernity in which the politics of whitening are operative in cultural terms but not as a project of racial cleansing, like in the case of Del Monte and Saco.

Orihuela's mediation of romantic racialism can be further explored through the other "mulatto" character that stands out in Stowe's novel, George Harris. George's story line is quite different from Adolph's: with the assistance of white abolitionists, he and his wife Eliza (also of mixed-race heritage) become fugitives; after enduring several ordeals, they reach Canada and are finally free. As his letter establishes at the end of the narrative, George and Eliza's happy ending is to be consummated through their return to Africa, specifically Liberia, a colony of former enslaved subjects. In this letter, George expresses his desire to be part of a community of "African nationality," with "a tangible, separate existence of its own" (440). Full independence, in George's view, entails full separation not only from the society that had enslaved him and his fellow Afro-descendants but also from any white-dominated society. Part of the significance of George's letter is that in outlining a future for U.S. blacks, it compares the "African race" to "Anglo-Saxon[s]": "I think that the African race has peculiarities, yet to be unfolded in the light of civilization and Christianity, which, if not, the same with those of the Anglo-Saxon, may prove to be, morally, of even a higher type" (442). Through the words of George, the discourse of romantic racialism reaffirms itself, with the difference that, in this context, the morality associated with blackness is not wholly inherent or natural. The future moral value of the black subject is to be shaped by way of a (white) cultural education, based on the virtues of "civilization and Christianity."

Orihuela's translation of George's letter replicates the original's racial binary, but in abridging the text in a substantial manner, it offers a divergent perspective.⁵⁴ Among these erasures are Stowe's references to morality, civilization, and Christianity. Orihuela translates, "I think that the African race perhaps has particular qualities superior to those of the Anglo-Saxons."⁵⁵ At first, the absence of Stowe's words appears to result in a more simplified form of romantic racialism that insinuates a racialized hierarchy of value in accordance with the alleged intrinsic character of the "African" and "Anglo-Saxon" races. At the same time, Orihuela alters the temporal

framework of George's statement, relocating it within the present instead of the future, which suggests that black superiority already exists. In addition, Orihuela's version does not specify the qualities to which George refers, whereas the original inscribes them in the order of Christian morality. Thus, the only impression the reader is left with is of George's affirmation of his race's contemporary preeminence, disconnected from any particular social or religious content.

A similar issue occurs in the translation of the letter's references to Haiti, which George rejects as a potential new homeland. The original reads, "The race that formed the character of the Haytiens was a worn-out, effeminate one; and, of course, the subject race will be centuries in rising to anything" (440). Reproducing again the idea that the black subject's character is constituted through contact with a civilizing white agent, George's dismissal of Haiti represents also a rejection of the Haitians' former masters: the "worn-out, effeminate" race that "formed" their character is, of course, the French. Orihuela's rendering of this passage adds other meanings to George's understanding of the identity of Haitians and their relationship with the French: "This country's inhabitants were educated by an effeminate, worn-out people, and centuries will have to pass so they can return to the state they should occupy."⁵⁶ By replacing the notion of an inherent "character" with education, the translation substitutes the biological determinism of the original with a cultural form of determinism. While the new version still reproduces a racialized discourse by identifying Haitians as passive recipients of French "education," it does not define Haitian identity as a natural or inherent value. Furthermore, the tenor of George's last words is completely altered in the translation. Both give a pessimistic vision of the future of Haiti, but Orihuela's alteration proposes a reading of Haitian history that is altogether absent in the original. Although the content of this past is not outlined overtly, one can surmise that it would precede the era of French colonialism, since the latter is identified negatively in the text. In what could be described as a transhistorical romantic image of the Haitian people, their progress as a free republic signifies the justified "return" to a natural "state" of liberty, before the imposition of slavery. Orihuela's translation thus incorporates Haiti into the path of Western modernity, defined according to the values of liberal cosmopolitanism.

In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the theme of Haiti also appears in the debate between Augustine St. Clare and his brother Alfred about slavery and the global upheavals of the era. Throughout their conversation, Augustine ex-

presses his sympathies for the European revolutions of 1848, Haiti, and the possibility of a slave rebellion in the United States, invoking the idea that “if there is anything that is revealed with the strength of a divine law in our times, it is that the masses are to rise, and the under class become the upper one” (276). As Larry J. Reynolds notes, the political musings of Augustine do not coincide with Stowe’s conservative vision, which was founded on Protestant Christianity.⁵⁷ Yet the revolutionary register of Augustine’s words might have interpellated kindred spirits whose ideology did not coincide altogether with Stowe’s. Like others around the world, it is not unfathomable that Orihuela and his fellow *filibusteros* identified with the ideals of Augustine, who is portrayed as a cosmopolitan free-thinker until Eva’s death leads him to a Christian awakening. Transnational publics joined together through the sentiments of sympathy that *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* produced around the figure of the slave. But they also united around particular (mis)readings of the novel, which led to forms of identification that often did not coincide with and even contradicted Stowe’s Christian moral politics.

In the case of Orihuela and the Cuban counterpublic in which he participated, *La cabaña del Tío Tom* entailed an intervention in the “revolution of ideas” through which the Cuban elite articulated its transamerican affiliation with liberal republicanism, moderate abolitionism, and the “bastion of liberty” they admired so much, the United States. This was a process that involved sentimental investment as much as strategic politics, based on the elite’s differing diagnoses of the present and future social and economic well-being of Cuba. The negotiation of racial relations would continue to be at the center of these diagnoses, which would progressively shift from a politics of “whitening” that negated the black other entirely from their patriotic visions to a project of gradual inclusion and harmony, if not of equality or recognition of black difference. Perhaps inadvertently, Orihuela’s translation of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* seems to point to the latter direction through its rewriting of Stowe’s romantic racialism. But as he confirms in *Dos palabras*, his position on slavery was more complex and calculating than meets the eye. The republicanist “revolution of ideas” that he and other members of the Cuban elite projected unto *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* might have encompassed the black other in a sympathetic embrace, but it ultimately defined “liberty” and “modern civilization”⁵⁸ according to their self-interests. At the same time, flashes of a truly emancipatory critique erupt throughout the texts of Orihuela, evoking a spirit of anticolonial and antiracist revolution that would materialize more forcefully as the century drew to a close.

Notes

1. Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 180.
2. Margaret Cohen, "Sentimental Communities," in *The Literary Channel: The International Invention of the Novel*, ed. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 106.
3. Hortense J. Spillers, "Changing the Letter: The Yokes, the Jokes of Discourse: or, Mrs. Stowe, Mr. Reed," in *Slavery and the Literary Imagination*, ed. Deborah E. McDowell and Arnold Rampersad (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 25–61; Lauren Berlant, "Poor Eliza," *American Literature* 70.3 (1998): 635–68.
4. Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd, "Reading Stowe as a Transatlantic Writer," in *Transatlantic Stowe: Harriet Beecher Stowe and European Culture*, ed. Denise Kohn, Sarah Meer, and Emily B. Todd (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2006), xi–xxxi.
5. Susan Gillman coins the term *text-network* to define the multiple works that arise from diverse cultural, national, and historical traditions around a particular cultural form, such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. See "Whose Protest Novel? *Ramona*, the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the Indian," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century American Literature*, ed. Russ Castronovo (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 381.
6. The biographical information on Orihuela is limited, and few critical works have been published about him. Details about Orihuela's life are extracted from Paloma Jiménez del Campo, *Escritores canarios en Cuba: Literatura de la emigración* [Canarian writers in Cuba: The emigrants' literature] (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Spain: Ediciones del Cabildo de Gran Canaria, 2003); Miguel David Hernández Paz, *Andrés Orihuela Moreno y El sol de Jesús del Monte: La novela histórica antiesclavista de un canario en la Cuba del siglo XIX* [Andrés Orihuela Moreno and Jesús del Monte's sun: The antislavery historical novel of a Canarian in nineteenth-century Cuba] (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Ediciones Idea, 2007); David Luis-Brown, "Slave Rebellion and the Conundrum of Cosmopolitanism: Plácido and La Escalera in a Neglected Cuban Antislavery Novel by Orihuela," *Atlantic Studies* 9.2 (June 2012): 209–43.
7. Andrés Avelino de Orihuela, preface to *El sol de Jesús del Monte: Novela de costumbres cubanas* [Jesús del Monte's sun: A novel of Cuban customs], ed. Miguel David Hernández Paz (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Ediciones Idea, 2007), 7–8.
8. Andrés Avelino de Orihuela, *Dos palabras sobre el folleto "La situación política de Cuba y su remedio," publicado en París, por Don José Antonio Saco, en octubre de 1851* [Two words on the pamphlet "Cuba's Political Situation and How to Solve It," published in Paris by Don José Antonio Saco, in October 1851] (Paris: Blondeau, 1852).
9. In calling this narrative "transamerican," I follow the examples of Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Anna Brickhouse, and José David Saldívar, who have illuminated the cross-cultural flows and networks that have both united and divided the United States and Latin America. See Brickhouse, *Transamerican Literary Relations and the Nineteenth-Century Public Sphere* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Gruesz, *Ambassadors of Culture: The Transamerican Origins of Latino Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Saldívar, *Trans-Americanity: Subaltern Modernities, Global Coloniality, and the Cultures of Greater Mexico* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

10. Orihuela, preface to *La cabaña del Tío Tom: Novela*, trans. Andrés Aveline de Orihuela (Paris: Librería Española y Americana de D. Ign Boix, 1852), 3.
11. Here, I follow June Howard's definition of the sentimental: "When we call an artifact or gesture sentimental, we are pointing to its use of some established convention to evoke emotion; we mark a moment when the discursive processes that construct emotion become visible" ("What Is Sentimentality?," *American Literary History* 11.1 [Spring 1999]: 76).
12. Berlant, "Poor Eliza," 636, 646.
13. Orihuela, preface to *El sol de Jesús del Monte*, 7–8.
14. Bruce Robbins, "Comparative Cosmopolitanisms," in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, ed. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 253.
15. I have kept the Spanish forms of racial and ethnic labels in order to keep their specific meanings in the Cuban context. *Mulato* has the same meaning as *mulatto* in English, but it does not carry an inherent pejorative connotation within the wide-ranging racial continuum of Cuba. In contrast, *criollo* meant born in Cuba or other parts of Spanish America; in the nineteenth century, it often functioned as a racialized category, defined as exclusively white.
16. Orihuela, preface to *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 2.
17. *Ibid.*, 2–3.
18. For example, in his classic history of Cuban literature, Max Henríquez Ureña calls attention to the fact that *Sab* came ten years before *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and, unlike the latter, was not a protest novel or a political pamphlet (*Panorama histórico de la literatura cubana* [Historical panorama of Cuban literature] [New York: Las Americas, 1963], 8). As Carolyn L. Karcher notes, this type of statement obviates the rich tradition of antislavery representations in the United States before the 1840s, including the works of Lydia Marie Child; see Karcher, "Stowe and the Literature of Social Change," in *The Cambridge Companion to Harriet Beecher Stowe*, ed. Cindy Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 204–5.
19. José Antonio Saco, "Paralelo entre Cuba y algunas colonias inglesas" [Parallel between Cuba and some English colonies], in *Obras*, ed. Eduardo Torres-Cuevas (Havana: Imagen Contemporánea, 2001), 3:155.
20. The critical literature on the simultaneous emergence of a national and antislavery literary tradition in Cuba is extensive. Similar to the case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, critics have addressed this tradition from both positive and negative angles. While scholars such as Mercedes Rivas and William Luis have emphasized the tradition's discourse of resistance, others, such as Sibylle Fischer and Jerome Branche, have focused on its racialist politics and moderate abolitionism. See Mercedes Rivas, *Literatura y esclavitud en la novela cubana del siglo XIX* [Literature and slavery in the Cuban novel of the nineteenth century] (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 1990); William Luis, *Literary Bondage: Slavery in Cuban Narrative* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990); Sibylle Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed: Haiti and the Cultures of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Jerome C. Branche, *Colonialism and Race in Luso-Hispanic Literature* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006).
21. Here, I follow Michael Warner's conception of counterpublics as "spaces of circulation in which it is hoped that the poesis of scene making will be transformative, not

replicative merely" (*Publics and Counterpublics* [New York: Zone Books, 2002], 122). As the example of Cuban intellectuals illustrates, this transformative aspect is not necessarily equivalent to a radical politics of emancipation or equality. In his useful study of Caribbean public spheres and literatures, Raphael Dalleo proposes an opposition between a "republic of the lettered" that associated itself with transnational abolitionism and "a literary public sphere of anticolonialism" (*Caribbean Literature and the Public Sphere: From the Plantation to the Postcolonial* [Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011], 35). However, applied to the Cuban context, this opposition ignores that the Cuban elite that supported the abolition of slavery also produced a literary archive that criticized Spanish colonialism directly: newspapers and journals published by Cuban exiles in the United States and Europe typically included patriotic poems that often attacked Spain viciously. Poems like these were compiled in the collection *El laúd del desterrado* [The exile's lute], published in 1858 in New York in the Imprenta "De la Revolución."

22. Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed*, 18, 107–28.

23. Domingo del Monte, "Memoria sobre la Isla de Cuba presentada a Martínez de la Rosa, embajador de España" [Report about the Island of Cuba, presented to Martínez de la Rosa, Spanish ambassador], in *Escritos de Domingo del Monte* [Writings of Domingo del Monte], ed. José Antonio Fernández de Castro (Havana: Cultural, 1929), 1:179.

24. Ada Ferrer, *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 3.

25. Félix Tanco y Bosmeniel to Domingo del Monte, 5 November 1836, in *Centón epistolario de Domingo del Monte* [The letter collection of Domingo del Monte], ed. Manuel Rodríguez Mesa (Havana: Imprenta "El Siglo XX," 1957), 7:80.

26. Tanco to Domingo del Monte, 15 October 1837, in *Centón epistolario*, 90.

27. Félix Tanco y Bosmeniel, *Petrona y Rosalía*, in *Cuentos cubanos del siglo XIX: Antología* [Anthology of nineteenth-century Cuban tales], ed. Salvador Bueno (Havana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1975), 131.

28. Vera M. Kutzinski, *Sugar's Secrets: Race and the Erotics of Cuban Nationalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 31.

29. Fischer, *Modernity Disavowed*, 127.

30. Tanco to Domingo del Monte, 8 November 1843, in *Centón epistolario*, 188, 185–86.

31. *Ibid.*, 186.

32. Efforts to annex Cuba go back to 1823, when John Quincy Adams famously expressed his desire to incorporate the Spanish colony into the United States. During the 1840s and 1850s, most U.S. supporters belonged to the south, where the possibility of incorporating a slaveholding state into the federation was hailed as a way to counteract the mounting power of the "free" states.

33. David Luis-Brown, "An 1848 for the Americas: The Black Atlantic, 'El Negro Mártir,' and Cuban Exile Anticolonialism in New York City," *American Literary History* 21.3 (Fall 2009): 431–63. The classical histories of Cuban annexationism defend the liberal politics of the movement, considering its association with U.S. entrepreneurs and politicians as strategic. See José Ignacio Rodríguez, *Estudio histórico sobre el origen, desenvolvimiento y manifestaciones prácticas de la idea de la anexión de la isla de Cuba a los Estados Unidos de América* [Historical study on the origin, development, and practical manifestations of the idea of the annexation of the island of Cuba to the United States of

America] (Havana: Impr. La Propaganda literaria, 1900); Herminio Portell-Vilá, *Narciso López y su época* [Narciso López and his times] (Havana: Cultural, 1930–57). From a nationalist perspective, later Cuban historiography has situated the political discourse of *filibusterismo* outside the boundaries of the national culture of Cuba. See, for example, Jorge Ibarra, *Ideología mambisa* [Ideologies of revolution] (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1967). In the most recent book-length study of the Cuban annexation movement, Josef Opatrný complicates both of these approaches, offering a more nuanced analysis of its contradictions: see *U.S. Expansionism and Cuban Annexationism in the 1850s* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 1993).

34. *La Verdad*, 2 November 1848, 2.

35. Orihuela, *Dos palabras*, 3.

36. *Ibid.*, 3.

37. Luis-Brown, “Slave Rebellion and the Conundrum of Cosmopolitanism,” 211.

38. Orihuela, *Dos palabras*, 4.

39. Lawrence Venuti, “Translation, Community, Utopia,” in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (New York: Routledge, 2004), 498.

40. *Ibid.*, 498.

41. Jane P. Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790–1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 556, 550.

42. Orihuela, preface to *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 3.

43. Orihuela, preface to *El sol de Jesús del Monte*, 7.

44. George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817–1914* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 108.

45. In translating passages from *La cabaña del Tío Tom* into English, I have tried to be as literal as possible in order to capture the differences between Stowe’s original story and Orihuela’s version. This objective cannot be fully accomplished, of course, since the work of translation invariably produces a distinct text. In notes, I have included Orihuela’s Spanish text.

46. “Dotado de un claro raciocinio, sana inteligencia, y más instruido que la mayor parte de sus compañeros, gozaba de una influencia moral extraordinaria. Sus exhortaciones eran persuasivas y hubieran edificado aun a personas más cultas que las que constituía su apostolado” (Orihuela, *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 29).

47. The description “simple” is also omitted in the translation of a passage in which the narrator of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* refers to Uncle Tom’s conception of the Bible as “so evidently true and divine that the possibility of a question never entered his simple head” (159).

48. Jill Lane, *Blackface Cuba, 1840–1895* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 21, 31.

49. Orihuela, *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 23.

50. Orihuela was not alone among his fellow writers in using a common language for the speech of characters from different social, racial, and regional identities: Félix Tanco did the same in *Petrona y Rosalía*. In a letter that describes his novel to Domingo del Monte, Tanco explains, “My blacks speak Spanish very clear, like it is truly spoken by *criollos*” (Tanco to Domingo del Monte, 20 August 1838, in *Centón epistolario*, 113).

51. *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 228.

52. Orihuela’s version reads, “En primera línea estaba un mulato jóven que parecia un

personage de distincion por su traje esmerado, el fraco cortado á la ultima moda y un pañuelo de batista perfumado en la mano" (*La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 125). In both Stowe's original version and Orihuela's translation, Adolph is compared favorably to a dandy.

53. Jason Richards, "Imitation Nation: Blackface Minstrelsy and the Making of African American Selfhood in Uncle Tom's Cabin," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 39.2 (Spring 2006): 214.

54. In Orihuela's version, the Harrises head directly to Liberia after Canada.

55. "Creo que la raza africana tiene cualidades particulares superiores tal vez a la de los anglo-sajones" (Orihuela, *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 313).

56. "Los habitantes de este país fueron educados por un pueblo afeminado y agotado, y será preciso que pasen siglos para que vuelvan al estado que deben ocupar" (Orihuela, *La cabaña del Tío Tom*, 312).

57. David S. Reynolds, *Mightier than the Sword: "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and the Battle for America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2011), 53.

58. Orihuela, *Dos palabras*, 3.

Uncle Tom's Cabins

*The Transnational History of
America's Most Mutable Book*

Edited by Tracy C. Davis and Stefka Mihaylova

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