
AVENUES OF TRANSLATION

The City in Iberian and
Latin American Writing

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New York's Micro-Cosmopolitan Media, from José Martí to the Hyperlocal Hub

ESTHER ALLEN

Miríadas cuentan estas columnas de papel, que como alas de la memoria,
ahora revuelvo.

(These columns of paper, opening and closing in my hands like the wings of
memory, speak myriads.)

—José Martí, May 1883

New York City has always been polyglot. The Lenape natives who first peopled the island they called Manahatta (hilly island); the Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano and his crew who, almost five hundred years ago, were the first Europeans to describe it; and the Dutch fur traders who were its first European settlers all spoke and—in the unlikely event they happened to be literate—wrote in languages the city's largest present-day media would characterize as foreign or ethnic. After it became known as New York, in 1664, the city's multilingualism only increased, especially during the great waves of immigration of the mid- to late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some publications founded then—the Swedish biweekly *Nordstjernan*, launched in 1872, and the *Amerikai Népszava*, a Hungarian weekly that first appeared in 1891—still serve local readers.¹

Never in its history, though, has New York City been more polyglot than it is today. Census Bureau figures indicate that in 2014, 49 percent of the city's population of 8.5 million spoke a language other than English at home. The population-facts page on the city government's website (nyc.gov) boasts that residents speak more than two hundred languages.² When a near-majority of city

inhabitants are in a position to get their news, information, and culture—local and global—in languages other than English, it may be time to interrogate the term *ethnic media*, as well as the notion of marginality that attaches to it.

Relations between languages and linguistic communities are rapidly evolving, both in global cities and in academic fields. The media sphere of *any* contemporary global city (or of any place that has internet access) is a complex, polyglot entity that cannot be subsumed within the long-hallowed binary of translation studies: foreignization and domestication. These opposing approaches to literary translation, formulated by the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher in 1813, have their parallel in what was long the immigrant's stark choice: between retention of the old language and culture of the home country or abandonment of both for assimilation to the new. In an era of rapid travel, instantaneous digital communication, and vastly polyglot urban areas, such binary oppositions have long since diversified into a broad range of readily available options that include multilingual education, multiple national affiliations, multilingual media serving local communities in a variety of languages, and constant, immediate access to local digital, television, and radio media in every language and almost every place across the globe. When ways of being present exist that are not captured by the physically defined either/or of home and away,³ it is no longer useful to view translation as a summoning forth of a remote and absent other. Translation is, rather, a continual, vital part of everyday life.

Accordingly, the academic discipline of translation studies has also been undergoing a process of reframing, shifting its focus toward the study of what Michael Cronin has dubbed the microcosmopolitan: "What microcosmopolitan transnationalism is arguing for is not that place or identity be dissolved into a rootless geography of free-floating diasporic fragments, but rather that we take transnational phenomena like translation . . . to reinvest place with the full complexity of micro-cosmopolitan connectedness."⁴ This new focus is variously exemplified in works such as Cronin's own *Translation and Identity* (2006) and *Translation in the Digital Age* (2013) and Sherry Simon's *Cities in Translation* (2011). In *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything* (2012), David Bellos, for his part, urges translation studies to look beyond not only the conventional focus on relations between monolithically separate national languages but also the literary texts that have long been its central subject matter. Bellos addresses the translation of legal, political, commercial, and diplomatic texts and devotes an entire chapter to journalism, detailing the complex networks of translation and rewriting that are an essential, unacknowledged component of the global coverage provided by news agencies such as Reuters, the Associated Press, and Agence France-Press.⁵ During a 2005 panel at the PEN World Voices festival in New York, the late, great Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski proudly announced, "I am a translator." But U.S. news

consumers don't see journalists that way or acknowledge a relationship between journalism and translation—largely because the news industry doesn't want them to. Bellos notes that the language operations performed in news-agency work are of particular interest because they are predicated not only on the total invisibility of translation but also on anonymity and impersonality.⁶

At the same time, a growing number of translators and translation-studies scholars have begun protesting the prevailing tendency of the Anglophone book-publishing industry to translate—when it translates at all—primarily fiction and poetry to the neglect of the vast category known by the problematic and uniquely Anglophone catch-all of nonfiction,⁷ which covers journalism and literary *reportage*, as well as biography, history, memoir, scholarly and philosophical work, cookbooks, self-help, how-to, and other, still-more-uncategorizable areas, such as the work of the 2015 Nobel Prize winner Svetlana Alexievich.⁸ The book editor and programming curator Sal Robinson has noted that *most* published books, in general, fall into the nonfiction category, which further problematizes the dearth of nonfiction in translation into English. “I find it disturbing,” she writes, “that American publishers and readers seem to favor fiction as the way to see the rest of the world.”⁹

The relationship between periodical media and the book-publishing industry is tight: newspapers and magazines often function as seedbeds for books, particularly nonfiction books, so Robinson's point is just as pertinent with respect to the nonfiction industry of journalism and to the role of translation in local media spheres. It's true, of course, that the kind of multilingual local media that constitute this paper's main object of study do not exclusively publish nonfiction: a good reminder of that is another Nobel Prize winner, Isaac Bashevis Singer, who first published much of his fiction in Yiddish in New York's *Jewish Daily Forward*. But most local media are fact-based and rarely translated. The bias against the translation of nonfiction not only makes much important non-English writing—be it in book, magazine, newspaper, or digital form—unavailable to Anglophones (except insofar as the work of local reporters is anonymously subsumed into the information translated and packaged by global media conglomerates) but also risks giving Anglophone readers the erroneous impression that the English language has some sort of monopoly on fact.

A fledgling digital phenomenon known as the hyperlocal media hub sits at the confluence between the increasing interest in translation as a local, urban phenomenon and the push for more translation of nonfiction. The origins and practices of New York City's hyperlocal media hub can provide a glimpse of what all translation, local or transnational, of nonfiction, fiction, and poetry may come to look like or, in some cases, may already look like, when the one-way paradigm of foreign versus domestic is discarded in favor of a paradigm of connectedness, in which translation and the original text are in constant dialogue:

mutually aware, mutually impacted, and serving as extensions of each other. The focus on New York here is not only because it's where the first hyperlocal media hub originated but also for the context offered by a key media figure from the city's history, José Martí, whose story may offer new insight into the possibilities of the digital present and future.

JOSÉ MARTÍ AND NEW YORK'S NINETEENTH-CENTURY MULTILINGUALISM

Both of the tendencies just limned—the neglect or marginalization of ethnic communities and their media and the neglect of journalism in particular, and much nonfiction in general, as a discourse that does not merit translation or is translated only as anonymously authored, commercially packaged information—are at play in the reception in English of the work of Martí, a leader of the Cuban independence movement who lived in New York from 1880 to 1895, where he worked, among other things, as a journalist and newspaper publisher. One of the most significant figures in the history of New York City itself, and of its non-Anglophone media, Martí remains unknown to most New Yorkers not of Hispanic descent. His life and work are not taught in the city's schools (though they are widely studied in, for example, Miami), nor is his office on Front Street or the various places across the city where he lived marked with historic plaques, though such plaques are in place in virtually every other city he passed through during his peripatetic life, including Havana, Madrid, Zaragoza, Mexico City, Guatemala, and Tampa, Florida.

The quest for freedom of speech was decisive for Martí. Born to Spanish parents in Cuba in 1853, he was jailed at the age of sixteen for his criticism of Spanish colonial rule. After nine months of hard labor, he was deported in 1871 to Spain and then moved to Mexico in 1875, with a two-week stopover in New York along the way, his first visit to the city. Once established in Mexico City, he began publishing extensively as a journalist. When his objections to military dictatorship began to stir trouble with Mexican President Porfirio Díaz, he accepted a teaching position in Guatemala, arriving there in 1877. After a little over a year, the Guatemalan authorities' displeasure with his strongly expressed views—as well as the surrender of the Cuban insurgency that brought Cuba's first, ten-year-long war of independence against Spain to an end—sent him back to the island in August of 1878. By September of the following year, his participation in revolutionary activities had led to his second deportation from Cuba to Spain.

From Spain, he made his way back to New York, where he arrived in 1880. Within a year, he'd left for Venezuela, where he lasted barely six months before President Guzmán Blanco had him thrown out. At that point, he resolved to make New York his home base and did so until his tragic death in 1895, in Cuba,

in a skirmish with Spanish forces during the early weeks of Cuba's third revolution of independence, the necessary war he had worked toward all his life, which culminated three years later in the events known to historians in the United States as the Spanish-American War.

New York was a global center of the cigar industry during the late nineteenth century and thus had stronger ties to Havana, source of the finest tobacco, than to almost any other city. New York was already home to the wealthiest and most powerful community of Cubans outside the island by the time Martí first visited in 1875. As such, it offered many advantages to the principal organizer of the Cuban independence movement. Nevertheless, he repeatedly sought to establish himself in Latin America and only abandoned that goal after being thrown out of Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba, and Venezuela within the span of five years. These thwarted attempts can perhaps best be understood from a linguistic perspective. In Mexico City and Caracas, Martí was read and celebrated by mainstream local society, politicians, and leading cultural figures, as well as by Cuban communities on the island and in exile, and by international audiences across Latin America. To write in Spanish in New York, on the other hand, was to express himself in a marginal language, read locally only by members of the city's tiny Hispanic community—only 5,294 people in a total population of 1.2 million¹⁰—while remaining isolated from, unread by, and largely unknown to the major local power structures, social, cultural, and political.

Finally, it was freedom of speech itself that led him to settle in the city. And true to form, Martí exercised that right, retaining a clear and critical eye and an independent perspective throughout the thousands of pages of coverage of the United States he would produce over the next fifteen years, coverage that applauds some aspects of the U.S. system and criticizes others—up to and including freedom of speech itself. In a searing 1887 *crónica* on the execution of the Haymarket anarchists in Chicago, Martí objected to a fetishization of free speech that accorded legal protection even to the publication of specifications for bomb making:

Pero todo era verba, juntas por los rincones, ejercicios de armas en uno que otro sótano, circulación de tres periódicos rivales entre dos mil lectores desesperados, y propaganda de los modos novísimos de matar—¡de que son más culpables los que por vanagloria de libertad la permitían que los que por violenta generosidad la ejercitaban!"

(It was all words, backstreet meetings, drilling with weapons in some cellar, three rival newspapers circulating among two thousand desperate readers and propagandizing the latest methods of killing—and those who permitted that, boastful

of their liberty, are more at fault than those who, out of violent generosity, exercised their right!)

Among the Chicago anarchists' newspapers were the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* and the *Farheit*, both published in German. Martí was acutely aware that the Anglophone press constituted only one dimension of a far more complex media sphere, and his reporting depicted many other communities and their media, whether or not he spoke their languages. While he sometimes sourced these pieces from Anglophone media coverage, in other cases, such as his story about the 1888 funeral of Chinese general Li-In-Du in New York City's Chinatown, he relied on the lingua franca of English to communicate with local Chinese sources who clarified aspects of the funeral and their meaning to him.¹² In an earlier article, published only a year after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 prohibited the immigration of all Chinese laborers, Martí mentions the importance for New York's Chinatown of the Chinese newspaper produced by Fom Ling-Cho, a dedicated and highly lettered fellow who earned much of his living as a typesetter for the Anglophone papers:

y leen cada sábado, detrás de las cortinas rojas que ponen como de muestra a sus lavanderías, el periódico chino que en papel amarillo saca a la luz de las prensas el diestro Fom Ling-Cho, mozo de letras, que suele tener mesa y paga buena en los diarios cristianos.¹³

(and every Saturday, behind the red curtains they put up as a kind of signal in their laundries, [the Chinese community] reads the Chinese newspapers, brought out from the presses on yellow paper by the dexterous Fom Ling-Cho, a lettered fellow who has a place at the table in the Christian dailies, and good pay.)

Martí was among the earliest local writers to understand New York City as a microcosm of the globe and report on it accordingly. He covered African American communities along Manhattan's Sixth Avenue and in Brooklyn, Irish families taking a holiday on Coney Island, Russian and Jewish communities on the Lower East Side, and giant celebrations—the opening of the Brooklyn Bridge, the inauguration of the Statue of Liberty—attended by the city's whole gorgeous mosaic (to adopt the term used by New York Mayor David Dinkins a century later, as the city began to officially foreground its own multiculturalism).

Martí had a gift for languages and readily conversed in French, Italian, and English. During his first year in New York, he formed a strong connection with Charles Anderson Dana, publisher of the New York daily *Sun*, and soon began contributing both to the *Sun* and to Dana's cultural magazine, the *Hour*. Writing in

English did not come easily; most of his initial articles for Dana were penned in French, then translated. Some months into the job, Martí did experiment with writing a three-part series titled *Impressions of America (By a Very Fresh Spaniard)* in English.¹⁴ From the first, he understood the need to reach out to the Anglophone U.S. public, address its prejudices, and try to shape its views. Like many a Cuban political figure since, Martí was well aware that U.S. public opinion could have a determinative impact on Cuba's national aspirations. But he also recognized the risk that the writing he was doing for Dana posed to his own political aims. In his work for the *Hour* and the *Sun*, he was forced to portray himself as a European, a Spaniard—precisely the identity he sought to eschew—and to write almost entirely about European painting and literature. In all, twenty-three articles appeared in English under his byline in the *Hour*, and thirteen more in the *Sun*, but after October of 1881, he wrote nothing more for either publication, though his friendship with Dana lasted until the end of his life.¹⁵ A writer's choice of language constitutes a statement about the audience he or she is writing for. Martí did not want to become an assimilated *yanqui*; his priority was not to make a name for himself with Anglophone readers but to promote the cause of Latin American unity and lead Cuba to independence from Spain. Writing extensively in any language but Spanish could only undermine that goal.

During 1880, that first year in New York, Martí also began making himself available to the Anglophone media as a source on Cuban affairs and would continue to do so until his death. In the final weeks of his life, while encamped with the Cuban insurgency in the rugged *manigua* of Cuba's Oriente province, he gave long interviews to Manuel Fuentes of the *New York World* and Eugene Bryson of the *New York Herald*. But after the initial experiment with Dana's *Sun* and *Hour*, he would publish his own writing in New York's Anglophone media only on occasions of urgency.

One such occasion came up in 1889. Responding to rumors that the U.S. government was again contemplating an annexation of Cuba, the *Philadelphia Manufacturer* and the *New York Evening Post* published editorials that opposed annexation and derided the entire population of Cuba as unfit for the exercise of democracy: "To the faults of the men of the parent race [the native Cubans] add effeminacy and a distaste for exertion which amounts really to disease. They are helpless, idle, of defective morals, and unfitted by nature and experience for discharging the obligations of citizenship in a great and free republic."¹⁶ While sharing their opposition to a U.S. annexation of Cuba, Martí was appalled by the editorialists' rhetoric. In a powerful letter, he refuted it by drawing attention to the connectedness of local Cuban communities in Philadelphia and New York: "[In the United States] Cubans are found everywhere, working as farmers, surveyors, engineers, mechanics, teachers, journalists. In Philadelphia, the

Manufacturer has a daily opportunity to see a hundred Cubans, some of them of heroic history and powerful build, who live by their work in easy comfort. In New York, the Cubans are directors of prominent banks, substantial merchants, popular brokers, clerks of recognized ability, physicians with a large practice, engineers of world-wide repute, electricians, journalists, tradesmen, cigarmakers.¹⁷ After the letter appeared in the *Post*, Martí had it published under the title "Vindicación de Cuba," with an accompanying translation of the offensive editorials, as a supplement to *El Avisador Hispano-Americano*, a paper based on Vesey Street in Manhattan.¹⁸ His argument against a depiction of Cubans as the degenerate inhabitants of a distant sphere relied on the local in several ways: he not only gestured toward the achievements of the local Cubans but included their community in the dialogue by publishing the entire exchange in a local Spanish paper. Standard models of translation adopt a one-way paradigm within which a translation moves from the source into the target language, from the foreign into the domestic. Martí's tactic establishes the two-way connectedness required for coexistence within an urban microcosmopolitan sphere.

During his New York years, Martí earned part of his living as a foreign correspondent. His coverage of the United States appeared in major newspapers across Latin America: *La Nación* in Buenos Aires, *El Partido Liberal* in Mexico City, *La Opinión Nacional* in Caracas, and several others. But he also published locally, and founded or ran a number of local papers, in the tradition of New York's history of Spanish-language media, which goes back at least to 1825, when exiled Cuban patriot priest Félix Varela published *El Habanero* in Manhattan. Enrique Lopez Mesa has established a list of eighty Spanish-language publications that were founded or edited by Cubans in New York prior to 1898.¹⁹ Among them are *El Economista Americano* (1886–1888), directed by Martí; *La América* (1882–1893), which Martí edited in 1883–1884; and the magazine for children, *La Edad de Oro*, which he founded, edited, and wrote almost all of in 1889. Most significant of all was *Patria*, the voice of the Cuban Revolutionary Party, launched in 1892 and published out of Martí's office at 120 Front Street in Lower Manhattan.

Martí's 1895 death was covered on the front pages of Anglophone publications across the United States in articles that assumed their readers knew who he was: the leader of Cuba's revolution of independence from Spain. But though he reached the height of his fame during the years after *Patria*'s first publication, *Patria* itself remained as marginal to Anglophone New York as any of the city's other ethnic media. However freely it circulated, it wasn't considered an element of the city's own history, to be saved and passed on. To what is now the chagrin of local librarians, no copy of *Patria* was preserved in any New York City archive. To see a complete volume of its pages, the researcher must visit the

Centro de Estudios Martianos in Havana, where, during most of the years of its publication, to be found in possession of *Patria* was to risk severe reprisal from the Spanish colonial authorities.

Likewise, the first translation of Martí's New York journalism into English, aside from those he himself created or supervised during his lifetime, only appeared in 1954, half a century after his death.²⁰ By then, six separate editions of his voluminous complete works had already been compiled and published in Spanish.²¹

The case of Martí is of particular interest because it conjoins the issue of linguistic alterity with that of the cultural status of journalism. Though in the wake of groundbreaking work by Susana Rotker (1992), Julio Ramos (2003), and others, Martí's journalism is now widely acknowledged as one of the most essential components of his vast and varied *obra*, the *crónicas*—and, indeed, the entire genre of the *crónica* in general—were for many decades after his death largely ignored by scholars. However fervently Martí's writings on the United States were hailed by contemporaries such as Argentinian president Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, who said Martí's only rival for thunderous prose was Victor Hugo himself,²² during much of the century that followed his death, scholarly focus remained on the high-status genres he practiced: the poetry, the essays, the political manifestos (in particular, the obsessively cited 1891 "Nuestra América"), and even his sole novel, *Lucía Jérez*, written in less than a week and dismissed by Martí himself as trivial. Relatively little attention was given to the journalism, except insofar as the *crónicas* could be mined for pithy, decontextualized epigrams.²³ We must be grateful that, in accordance with his expressly stated wishes, Martí's journalistic work has always been included in the various editions of his *Obras completas* and, indeed, constitutes the bulk of those editions.

Most editions of the *Obras* also include another genre generally accorded even less status than journalism: translation. Martí occasionally earned extra income working as a translator for the publishing house of D. Appleton & Company; between 1883 and 1886, he translated three scholarly nonfiction works and a novel for the company's Latin American export business. Out of passionate conviction and without pay of any kind, he also translated Victor Hugo's agonized 1874 memoir, *Mes fils*, and *Ramona*, Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel about the plight of California's Hispanic and indigenous peoples.

The Spanish-language *Ramona* that Martí published and distributed in Mexico at his own expense was a classic one-way translation, which warned Mexicans of the danger of U.S. invasion and annexation by making astute tactical use of a highly emotional narrative composed by a *norteamericana*. The Hispanic and indigenous *californios* Jackson's novel portrays were never her intended readers; instead, her novel was meant to rouse Anglophones emotionally about their plight, much as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had roused emotions

against slavery. Those same *californios* and their Mexican compatriots were the intended readers of Martí's translation, but in its turn, it had no impact on Anglophone readers except an ironic one, insofar as it made Anglos who learned of it view Martí as an ambassador of their culture. (The brief entry on Martí in the 1903 *Encyclopedia Americana* lists the following accomplishments: his political activity and death, the founding of *Patria*, his poetry, and the fact that he translated *Ramona*.) A long while later, however, some dialogue and connectedness began to be established between Martí's translation, Jackson's *Ramona*, and the communities the novel portrays. A 2005 Modern Library edition of *Ramona* includes both an English translation of the preface Martí wrote for his translation of the novel into Spanish and a newly commissioned introduction by New Mexico playwright Denise Chávez.

All editions of the *Obras* place the categories of journalism and translation under different headings—and rightly so. Nevertheless, it's clear that the two categories overlap and that translation played a large role in Martí's journalism. Whenever a journalist covers events that transpire largely or entirely in a different language, there is, as Bellos notes, an often-unacknowledged relationship between journalism and translation. In Martí's case, that connection is particularly intricate. While he witnessed a number of the events he covered for himself, he had little budget or time for extensive travel to report on faraway news such as an earthquake in Charleston, South Carolina, or the lynching of a group of Italians in New Orleans. Thus he was often called upon to write about things he knew of only from whatever coverage was available in the Anglophone press. As he moved that information into Spanish, he imprinted it with his sensibility and wove in contextual information to make it intelligible to its new audience.²⁴

In a recent essay, Spanish journalist Pablo Sanguinetti provides a good example of how this process works, as well as how it tends to create what he calls a double invisibility for the person who performs it. He gives a paragraph from a German news item on the resignation of an official whose job title is *Der Präsident des Verfassungsschutzes* and offers three translations: Google's, a translator's, and a journalist's. Google's mechanical translation service gives the title as "El presidente de la protección constitucional," while the professional translator gives it as "El Presidente de la Oficina de Protección de la Constitución." The journalist-translator, however, provides readers with what they need in order to understand the information, translating the title as "El jefe del espionaje alemán" (The man in charge of German espionage).²⁵ Martí performed similar adjustments for his readers and also imbued the material he reworked with his own literary style and political perspective and objectives, in a process that involved linguistic erudition, investigative smarts, political discipline and foresight, and literary skill. In nineteenth-century Latin America, this work did not leave him in anonymity but instead contributed to his fame.

Hispanic journalists in the United States today are so well aware of José Martí that the award given out annually by the National Association of Hispanic Publications is called the José Martí. The same cannot be said for their Anglophone counterparts. In the spring of 2016, President Barack Obama visited Havana and placed a wreath at the base of the giant monument to Martí that stands at the heart of the city. In its coverage, the Anglophone U.S. media—assuming readers would not know who Martí was—generally described him as Cuba's national hero, sometimes adding that he was a poet. The fact that he was a journalist was less frequently mentioned; the fact that as a journalist he reported extensively on New York City and the United States was hardly mentioned at all.²⁶ The non-connectedness of New York's nineteenth-century microcosmopolitan media impacted twenty-first-century reporting.

THE HYPERLOCAL MEDIA HUB

The Independent Press Association (IPA) was launched in San Francisco in 1996 to help small, nonprofit, and independent magazines survive in a world increasingly dominated by deep-pocketed, corporate-controlled media.²⁷ The publications it assisted through grants and enhanced distribution were mainly or entirely Anglophone—*Harper's*, *Mother Jones*, the New York arts interview magazine *Bomb*, the Oakland quarterly of feminist responses to pop culture *Bitch*, and so forth. In 2000, sociologist and journalist Abby Scher founded a linked Independent Press Association in New York City, with many of the same goals.

In response to the September 11, 2001, attacks, however, the New York IPA began to view its concern with small, local, and independent media from a new angle: linguistic diversity. In November of 2001, the IPA launched a website, *Voices That Must Be Heard*, which—like Martí's 1889 letter to the editor of the *Evening Post*—gave voice and drew attention to local communities as a counterattack against hatred. The site's earliest posts, now part of the September 11 Digital Archive, were translations from the publications of New York City's Muslim communities.²⁸ As Scher later described it, the initiative sought to make the grief of these communities available to Anglophone readers at a moment when Muslims were the objects of growing fear and suspicion. In the face of a terrorist attack and an agonized response to it that was all too often marked by racism and religious intolerance, *Voices That Must Be Heard* offered the possibility of dialogue and connectedness. By March of 2002, the site had become a chorus of ethnic news from the Irish, Chinese, Polish, Caribbean, and Spanish-language presses.²⁹ Thus was the first hyperlocal media hub born.

The IPA's initial focus on small, independent community media emerged from the economic philosophy known as localism—most familiar for its impact

on food consumption habits—which Scher defines as a largely middle-class movement, often of small business owners, which challenges the inevitability of globalization by promoting small, local enterprises, municipal ownership, and sustainable local economies.³⁰ The media localism that the IPA espoused, in combination with its new emphasis on multilingualism, led to various efforts to support these linguistically diverse media businesses economically. A complete catalog of New York's community and ethnic media titled *Many Voices, One City* was developed and published, and in 2002, the IPA established the All Communities Advertising Service to enable mainstream advertisers such as telephone companies and large department stores to place ads in many ethnic publications with one phone call.³¹

Economic localism should not be confused with the global translation industry's practice of localization, which, in many cases, is its exact opposite. Localization takes the products of global corporations and adapts them linguistically and culturally to enhance their appeal and salability within national markets. The quickest glance at McDonald's websites for France, Chile, Japan, and India reveals localization at work in the different languages and currencies employed, as well as the different color schemes, graphic design elements, marketing campaigns (pegged to local celebrities and holidays), and menu items designed to suit local tastes and religious beliefs.³² While its practices vary when what's for sale is a media product rather than a sandwich, localization is also a key component in the way global news media conglomerates reach their many audiences.

When it established a digital space where New York City's multilingual communities could interact with each other and with the Anglophone mainstream, the IPA discovered that it had to alter its initial stance on economic localism, for in fact, many non-English media outlets in New York are the properties of global enterprises. The *Sing Tao Daily*, for example—one of six dailies Chinese readers in New York can choose among—is one of the largest Cantonese newspapers in the world. Founded in Hong Kong in 1938, it has published a New York edition since 1965 and offers local editions in several other U.S. cities as well. Another example is *El Diario / La Prensa*, New York's largest and oldest Spanish-language newspaper. Founded in 1913 as a local, independent business, it was, after a long series of mergers and acquisitions, purchased in 2012 by the Argentinian corporation S. A. La Nación—by coincidence, the media conglomerate that emerged from and still publishes the very newspaper where Martí published many of his *crónicas* from New York in the 1880s. However local much of their content and history may be, these papers have more to do with localization than with localism: they are manifestations of alternate, non-Anglophone forms of globalization. In the end, however, the new website that aimed at establishing links between New York's communities across language barriers clearly could not exclude them.

More recently, the city's paper of record, the *New York Times*, has begun publishing editions in Spanish and Chinese. *Voices* does not include these among the local ethnic media it draws upon. The logic is simple: both new editions of the *Times* are aimed at global audiences. Unlike the global Chinese newspapers that are localized for New York City, the *Times's* Chinese and Spanish editions include only limited coverage of local Spanish- and Chinese-speaking communities in New York City itself.

The All Communities Advertising Service did not last beyond 2003, and by 2010, both the San Francisco and New York branches of the Independent Press Association had shut down. But the media hub once known as *Voices That Must Be Heard* still exists today, its name changed, in 2011, to *Voices of New York* (voicesofny.org) when ownership of the site was assumed by the Center for Community and Ethnic Media (CCEM) at the City University of New York's (CUNY) Graduate School of Journalism, now known as the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. (By another curious coincidence, this new ownership means *Voices* is housed at an address on West Fortieth Street that was for many decades the headquarters of the *New York Herald*, a paper Martí read and cited assiduously and whose correspondent he met with in Cuba in the weeks before his death.) The site's mission is to curate the best journalistic work being produced by scores of community and ethnic publications and, where necessary, translate that work into English. In addition, *Voices* continues to publish a catalog of New York's community and ethnic media and even carries forward the IPA's mission to enhance advertising revenues for these media, though now by urging city government to devote more of its advertising budget to them. The CCEM also continues to give out the Ippies, a set of awards first established by the IPA that are the only journalism awards in New York City to honor reporting in English and in languages other than English by the ethnic and community press. That sector has only expanded since the initial *Many Voices, One City* catalog came out in 2000, listing 198 ethnic and community media outlets. A new edition published in 2013 included 270 outlets. As of July 2016, the digital catalog of the New York media on the CCEM website includes a total of 276 media businesses, working in forty languages, from Albanian to Yiddish.³³

Voices of New York has become an extraordinary space for open-ended and inclusive community dialogue via translation—that is, for microcosmopolitan connectedness. For example, *Voices* has covered many local ripples of the story of the comfort women—Korean women forced into sexual slavery by Japanese forces during World War II. The first such article, “Korean ‘Comfort Women’ Demand Apology,” posted December 21, 2011, was a translation (credited to Heesook Choi) of a piece by Dongchan Shin about a public forum in Queens featuring Holocaust survivors and two former comfort women, all now living in the New York area. The English version on *Voices* links to the original piece in

the *Korea Daily*.³⁴ Though the *Korea Daily* did not, in that instance, link back to *Voices*, many of the non-English papers *Voices* links to do provide their readers, in turn, with links to the site's English translations (which would, for example, have enabled *Korea Daily* readers to share the comfort-women article with friends and neighbors who do not speak Korean). Karen Pennar, *Voices*'s current editor, notes that the journalists who write the original articles generally promote *Voices*'s translations, even when their papers don't link back to *Voices*.

The story heated up when the nearby town of Palisades Park, New Jersey, erected a small monument to the comfort women. A group of visiting Japanese legislators then tried to persuade the town's mayor to take it down. The *Voices* piece about that situation, which gives both writing and translation credit to Chloe B. Park, was sourced from the Palisades Park local paper, *The Record*, as well as from three local Korean papers, the *Korea Daily*, *New York Ilbo*, and *Korea Times*, and links to all of them (along with an additional link to contextual material in the *New York Times*). The invisible translation work of the global wire services as described by Bellos is, on *Voices of New York*, made visible. Writers and translators are named, and links are provided to all sources in multiple languages.

This multilingualism carries over—sometimes heatedly—into the comments sections. A May 21, 2012, piece headlined “‘Comfort Women’ Monument Controversy Comes to Queens,” sourced from the Anglophone *Queens Chronicle* and *Queens Tribune*, generated twelve comments over the following eighteen months. Most are in English, but two are entirely in Japanese, while another defends the comfort women by alluding to a Korean-language report whose title appears in both Korean and Chinese. The *Voices* coverage of the comfort women story is a local, contemporary layer in a palimpsest of longstanding international controversy. As such, it is of potential interest and concern to a wide array of intersectional communities, in this case, Koreans, the Japanese, World War II survivors, feminists, historians, and residents of Queens and Palisades Park, New Jersey, to name but a few. These communities are both local and global. Several of the aforementioned comments speak of the general public in America or people in the United States in a way that suggests their authors are not U.S.-based. *Voices of New York* user stats indicate that its content is viewed in more than two hundred countries.

The degree of connectedness that *Voices* can provide should not be overstated. Representing the city's entire range of linguistic communities is an impossible task. Both Pennar and her predecessor as *Voices*'s editor, Maite Junco, are multilingual, but New York has media in forty languages, far more than the most hyperpolyglot among us could manage. *Voices* offers coverage of media in thirteen of those languages: English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Chinese, Nepali, Arabic, Hindi, Urdu, and Bangla. Pennar's staff includes only three journalist-translators under contract—two in Spanish

and the other in Chinese—who regularly pitch stories to her for translation. Otherwise, *Voices* depends on a loose network of contacts, including past and present students and interns at the Newmark Graduate School of Journalism, and their multilingual acquaintances. Coverage of languages beyond Spanish and Chinese is inevitably scattershot. A Nepalese journalist newly enrolled at the school had brought new vibrancy to the site's coverage of the city's Nepalese community, but "I wish we could do a better job with the West African and the Arab communities," Pennar confessed when I interviewed her in August of 2016. And even where good contacts with journalist-translators in established media exist, Pennar has sometimes encountered reluctance to translate news items that may reflect badly on a community, however extensively the item may have been covered in the community's own media.

Time is also an issue. *Voices of New York* is in the news business in the era of instantaneous information; all too often, a story may feel hopelessly outdated by the time it has been reported on and published in one language, then pitched, translated, and published in English on *Voices*. Slowing things down even further is the fact that translation is a complex process, and the translated articles often require a good deal of additional investigation, clarification, and polish. The question of how to maintain quality without knowledge of the original language is always a major concern for Pennar, as it would be for the editor of any publication. (It's the same concern that leads the *New York Times* to reject all foreign-language comments on the stories in its English edition and to accept no comments whatsoever on its Spanish and Chinese editions.) Yet such concerns inevitably limit the extent to which *Voices* can be multidirectionally connected.

In February of 2016, the site published an original piece by Zaira Cortes, a reporter for *El Diario*, about Francisco Guachiac Ambrocio, an immigrant from Guatemala who speaks K'iche', no English, and very little Spanish. After he was arrested in Brooklyn in 2015, his family was unable to locate him for months. In the course of reporting the story, for which she later won the Carlos Véllez Journalism Prize, Cortes found Guachiac Ambrocio in the Rikers Island jail and reunited him with his family. Cortes's piece originally appeared on *Voices* in English and was translated into Spanish when it won the Véllez prize. She hoped it could appear on *Voices* in Guachiac's own language, K'iché, as well, but it proved difficult for Pennar to find a reliable K'iche' translator on short notice. Still, the story did eventually connect with another local community that also fears for those of its members who speak minority languages that the city bureaucracy has difficulty interpreting: Rong Xiaoqing translated Cortes's article into Chinese for publication on *Voices*.

Voices doesn't just practice translation but also covers it as a major city issue, reporting on such matters as the outcry over a flawed translation of a Flushing

park sign into Korean³⁵ and the language services the public school system offers parents. In spring 2016, a new section of the site called “Translating NYC” was launched, offering firsthand accounts of what it’s like to volunteer as an interpreter, in-depth investigation of city government spending on translation services, and other coverage.

On the whiteboard at the back of the *Voices* office, Pennar has written a list of words to “AVOID”: *first, last, biggest/largest, only, best, everywhere, and everyone*. And she’s right: such claims are eye-catching but perilous and difficult to substantiate. Even so, I’m going to go out on a limb and say that although there are several bilingual Spanish-English local news hubs in operation across the country, *Voices* is the only multilingual hyperlocal media hub still active in the United States today.³⁶

INVISIBLE DUALITIES

In launching her exploration of linguistically dual cities such as Montreal (French-English) and Barcelona (Catalan-Spanish), the critic and theorist Sherry Simon digresses for a moment to reject the idea that New York might be one. New York is exuberantly multilingual, she asserts, but no one would contest the fact that English is the dominant language, the single gateway to social promotion. Drawing on Doris Sommer’s 2004 *Bilingual Aesthetics*, Simon maintains that New York is riven by a home-host, insider-outsider divide that is far simpler than the situation of the dual cities she describes, where there is more than one strong “home” language.³⁷

By 2010, however, the small local community that José Martí once knew had grown to 2.4 million and constituted 28.6 percent of New York’s total population. In its Latino category, the CCEM’s guide to local media includes forty-four outlets in 2017, an increase of almost 30 percent since the 2013 survey, which listed thirty-one. New York is now—according to the population facts on the nyc.gov site—the largest Hispanic city in the United States. Furthermore, as Simon notes, a city can be dual—linguistically, racially, and religiously—in many overlapping and intersectional ways. New York, as we’ve seen, has not only English-Spanish and English-Chinese linguistic dualities but also Chinese-Spanish. *Voices* seeks to reflect and connect as many of these intersections as it can, thereby rendering all of them visible to local Anglophones. *Voices* thereby invites the city it serves to acquire a different sense of itself, a new awareness of its own linguistic being.

In 2016, the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism took a large step in underscoring New York’s English-Spanish duality by launching a subject concentration in Spanish-language journalism, headed by noted Argentinian journalist

Graciela Mochkofsky—the first such program in the nation. (New York City has, since 2007, offered an MFA in creative writing in Spanish.) The program proposes that journalists following in Martí's footsteps can flourish in Spanish in New York without pressure to write in English, and that is proving to be the case. And the program itself, a history of Martí's life and work and that of the generations of Spanish journalists who preceded him in New York, constitutes compelling evidence—any further evidence were required—that New York is a dual city, where two strong home languages have deep, historical roots.

Each of the dual cities Simon analyzes in *Cities in Translation* has its own distinctive way of being dual. In Montreal, a translator has to negotiate between the city's French and English cultural spheres, pushing them toward a heightened awareness of each other and of the practicalities of translation. In Barcelona, by contrast, there's been a marked tendency toward translation; a tradition has emerged of writers who work first in Catalan and then translate themselves into Spanish. In New York, the extreme degree to which the city is polyglot—two hundred languages!—seems to many New Yorkers, as it does to Simon, to confirm the natural and inevitable hegemony of English, a language that—or so the Anglophones tell themselves—all the emigrants and immigrant strivers must adopt if they want to get ahead. A significant part of the city's current population is empowered with spheres that are bilingual or non-English monolingual. A particularly distinctive feature of New York is that although the city's immigrant community—rooted, demographically powerful, and wielding increasing cultural power—experiences the English-Spanish duality as one of the textures of daily life, it remains, like Martí himself, persistently, weirdly invisible to the city's Anglophone sphere. This invisibility is highly visible to the immigrant community and was the central premise of a 2017 one-man show by the Colombian American actor and comedian John Leguizamo, made apparent in its title: *Latin History for Morons*.

Simon identifies two opposing tendencies that translation serves in microcosmopolitan urban communities, both equally important, but not necessarily mutually exclusive. The first, distancing, uses translation to separate a community off and bolster its distinctive identity. Distancing leads each community to require its own publications, which translate events in the city into English, through its own cultural perspective. The other tendency, furthering translation to bring communities closer to one another and create unity and connectedness between them. *Voices of New York* is a small-scale project, still fragile and tentative. It might wither away in the coming years, or it might thrive, flourish, become an increasingly central feature of the City mediascape, and give rise to other hyperlocal media hubs in

across an increasingly multilingual nation. How much of a difference would that make?

The literate Anglophone *norteamericanos* of Martí's time were eager to know what their country looked like when viewed through foreign eyes. Martí himself, as part of his coverage, read and commented on works about the United States published here (in English) by the Englishman James Bryce, the Frenchman Max O'Rell, and, of course, that earlier Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville.³⁸ But his Anglophone contemporaries, obsessed with how Europe saw them, remained almost wholly unaware of Martí's own insightful description of and commentary on their country.

When, as often happens, a literary writer gains great prominence in his or her country but isn't translated into our language until much later, we may regret the missed connections, the influences that could have shaped our own literature if the reception had occurred earlier. In the case of Martí, however, the *desencuentro*, to use Julio Ramos's term, has larger consequences. Let's imagine a late nineteenth-century New York where, by some peculiar twist of history, cultural leaders and ordinary citizens alike had been intensely curious to see their city from the perspective not of visiting European dignitaries but of *its own minority communities* and had therefore established some print version of *Voices of New York*, bringing journalism from those communities, including Martí's, into English and making it available to a wide readership. How different might Martí's story, and Cuba's, have been?

His vast body of *crónicas*—rather than just a letter to the editor or two—would have been a visible refutation of the accusations of ignorance, laziness, and unfitness for democracy that the city's Cuban and Latin American communities were continually subjected to. More crucially, the United States would have had an opportunity, in a determinative era, to *see itself* (and not only Cuban affairs) in the complex and insightful portrayal of a brilliant Cuban who, like many of his Anglophone contemporaries, saw the United States as a sometimes inspiring history lesson, a laboratory of democracy, and a beacon for the twin causes of abolition and political independence—and, at the same time, as a nation beset with racism, violence, corruption, and greed, which represented the single greatest threat, after the Spanish empire itself, to the cause of Cuban independence.

Given the geopolitical interests in play, it may seem naïve to suggest that an urban linguistic infrastructure such as *Voices*, granting readers access to the full spectrum of local media, might have changed the course of late nineteenth-century U.S. and Cuban history. But what might the development and reinforcement of such an infrastructure change in twenty-first-century history?

NOTES

1. See <http://www.nordstjernan.com> and <http://nepszava.us> for digital versions of the two publications, which both continue to appear in print as well.
2. See "New York City Population: Population Facts," NYC.gov, <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/data-maps/nyc-population/population-facts.page>. The city's website responds to the multilingualism of which it boasts, and users may consult it in 102 languages, from Afrikaans to Zulu, with options such as Esperanto and Latin. However, most of the languages are simply Google Translate versions of the English.
3. Michael Cronin, "Digital Dublin," in *Speaking Memory: How Translation Shapes City Life*, ed. Sherry Simon (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 105.
4. Michael Cronin, *Translation and Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 24.
5. Another important study of translation and the media industry is Esperança Bielsa and Susan Bassnett's *Translation in Global News* (Routledge, 2008).
6. David Bellos, *Is That a Fish in Your Ear? Translation and the Meaning of Everything* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011), 243.
7. For more on the problem of the term *nonfiction*, see, for example, Richard Lea, "Fiction v. Nonfiction: English Literature's Made-Up Divide," *Guardian*, March 24, 2016.
8. Precisely because nonfiction is such a baggy, difficult-to-track category, ranging from literary works to technical manuals, *Three Percent*, the University of Rochester-based database of translated books, does not include it. For the sake of our sanity, we've limited our data gathering to original translations of fiction and poetry published or distributed here in the United States. See <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepencent/index.php?s=database>.
9. "The Nonfiction Gap," *Three Percent*, September 19, 2011, <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepencent/index.php?id=3613>. One of the works Robinson singled out as particularly deserving of translation was a nonfiction book by Peter Fröberg Idling about a group of Swedish observers who visited Cambodia in 1978 during the worst of Pol Pot's massacres and noticed nothing. That book, excerpted on the website <http://wordswithoutborders.org> in 2009, never found a publisher in English. In 2014, however, Fröberg's first novel, also about Cambodia, was published in English as *Song for an Approaching Storm* (London: Pushkin Press, 2014).
10. Based on US census figures cited by Gabriel Haslip-Viera, "The Evolution of the Latino Community," in *Hispanic New York: A Sourcebook*, ed. Claudio Remeseira (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 34, 35–56.
11. José Martí, "Un drama terrible," *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), January 1, 1888, in José Martí, *Obras completas* (La Habana: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1975), 11:338–339; José Martí, "Translation, Class War in Chicago: A Terrible Drama," in *José Martí: Selected Writings*, trans. Esther Allen (New York: Penguin Classics, 2002), 201.
12. José Martí, "Un funeral chino," *La Nación*, October 29, 1888, in Martí, *Obras completas*, 12:75–83.
13. José Martí, "Cartas de Martí," *La Nación*, June 20, 1883, in Martí, *Obras completas*, 9:412.
14. Published in three installments in the *Hour*, between July 10 and October 23, 1880. See Martí, *Obras completas*, 19:101–126.
15. Volume 7 of the *Edición Crítica* of the *Obras completas* (La Habana: Centro de estudios martianos, 2003), gathers together all the material written for Dana in 1880–1881.
16. José Martí, "A Protectionist View of Cuban Annexation," *New York Evening Post*, March 21, 1889, in Martí, *Selected Writings*, 262.
17. Letter to the editor, *New York Evening Post*, March 25, 1889, in Martí, *Selected Writings*, 265.

18. José Martí, "Vindicación de Cuba," in Martí, *Obras completas* 1:229–241.
19. Enrique Lopez Mesa, *La comunidad cubana de New York: Siglo XIX* (La Habana: Centro de estudios martianos, 2002), 104–107.
20. José Martí, *The America of José Martí*, trans. Juan de Onís, ed. and with a preface by Federico de Onís (New York: Noonday Press, 1953).
21. By my count, there are now eleven editions of the *Obras completas*, including the *Edición crítica* compiled by the Centro de Estudios Martianos, which, at twenty four volumes, remains incomplete.
22. "En español, nada hay que se parezca a la salida de bramidos de Martí, y después de Víctor Hugo, nada presenta la Francia de esta resonancia de metal," Sarmiento wrote in a letter to Paul Groussac published in *La Nación* on January 4, 1887, cited by Julio Ramos, *Descuentros de la modernidad en América Latina* (Santiago, Chile: Ediciones Callejón, 2003), 143.
23. It should be noted that far from inhabiting a sphere of pure aestheticism, Martí's poetry intersects with both his journalism and his political activity. It rails against the horrors of slavery ("El rayo surca, sangriento"), describes the rush and angst of New York City life ("Amor de ciudad grande"), and even interprets a major news story out of Little Rock, Arkansas, where a Swiss father threw his three children down a well and then threw himself after them ("El padre suizo").
24. See Anne Fountain, *José Martí and U.S. Writers* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), for a detailed description of Martí's use of Anglophone press sources in several of the *crónicas*.
25. Pablo Sanguinetti, "La doble invisibilidad del periodista-traductor," in *Hijos de Babel* (Madrid: Fórcola Ediciones, 2013), 141–142.
26. See, for example, David Brooks, "José Martí, the National Poet," *New York Times*, April 22, 2016.
27. Dan Fost, "S.F. Nonprofit Helps Small Magazines Stay Alive," *SFGate*, December 12, 2002, <https://www.sfgate.com/business/article/S-F-nonprofit-helps-small-magazines-stay-alive-2711854.php>.
28. See <http://911digitalarchive.org/collections/show/10>.
29. Bernard L. Stein, "A New 'Voices' for a New Decade," *Voices of New York*, September 7, 2011, <https://voicesofny.org/2011/09/411/>.
30. Abby Scher, "Reading, PA," *Dissent*, Winter 2015, <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/reading-pa-solidarity-economy>.
31. Aaron Donovan, "Connecting Large Advertisers and Ethnic Newspapers," *New York Times*, May 22, 2002.
32. See <http://www.mcdonalds.fr>, <http://www.mcdonalds.cl>, <http://www.mcdonalds.co.jp>, <http://www.mcdonaldsindia.net>, and so on.
33. *Many Voices, One City: The Guide to the Community and Ethnic Media of Metropolitan New York* (New York: Center for Community and Ethnic Media, City University of New York Graduate School of Journalism, 2013).
34. Dongchan Shin, "Korean 'Comfort Women' Demand Apology," trans. Heesook Choi, *Voices of New York*, December 21, 2011, <http://voicesofny.org/2011/12/korean-comfort-women-meet-with-holocaust-survivors/>. Originally published in the *Korea Daily*.
35. Jinwoo Cho, "All in the Tone: A Korean Translation in Queens Strikes Wrong Note," *Korea Times*, trans. Hyemi Lee for *Voices of New York*, June 7, 2012.
36. New America Media, a multimedia ethnic news agency and coalition of ethnic media founded by the Pacific News Service in 1996, once maintained a network of ethnic media hubs for hyperlocal news. However, many of the sites it listed had gone dormant when I checked

on them in 2016, while others were rarely updated blogs or bi
nic media companies that offered no news content. Then, in
Media itself shut down.

37. Sherry Simon, *Cities in Translation* (New York: Routled

38. See, for example, the review of O'Rell's *Jonathan et son c*
City paper *El Partido Liberal* in March of 1889, in Martí, *Obr*