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**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

**MANIFESTATIONS OF
HUMANISM IN CUBAN HISTORY,
POLITICS,
AND CULTURE**

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(MMUS, BMUS HONS, BMUS, HDE)

**THESIS PRESENTED FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**

SEPTEMBER 2006

ABSTRACT

The thesis explores what it deems are some of the most perceptible humanistic features in Cuban history, politics, and culture, less specified, or highlighted, or generally not presented in a cohesive body of knowledge in the western scholarly world. In the context of its subject, the thesis embraces rational-critical thinking and supports the custom of non-violent dispute. Insofar as the Cuban Constitution incorporates a range of goals structured on socialist principles, the thesis sets out to scrutinise manifestations in Cuban thinking emblematic of the Marxist-humanist and/or anti-Stalinist philosophical traditions of revolutionary praxis. The thesis' main body investigates, illustrates, and analyses the presence of such features, focussing predominantly on the period 1959 to the late 1960s. Where the thesis does delve into timeframes beyond this era, it endeavours to show the continuity of relevant facets previously identified. Preceding the main examination, the thesis looks into what is widely perceived as the main roots of the country's humanist tradition, the moral ideas and standpoints of José Martí, the country's national hero. A further objective of this thesis lies in the belief that aspects of Cuba's national cultural policy in large measure addresses historical issues post-Apartheid South Africa confronts today.

C. KRONENBERG
SEPTEMBER 2006

***the thesis is
dedicated
to the wellbeing
and
happiness
of
my children
Samantha, Elana, and Kayla***

University of Cape Town

PUBLICATION RECORD

1. Peer Review Journals

‘Illustrations of *cultural-universalism* in Cuba: with special reference to the contributions of Leo Brouwer and Haydée Santamaria’, *UNISA Latin American Report*, Vol. 21 (2), 2005, University of South Africa, pp. 56-75.

‘The value of culture in revolutionary Cuba: with some prospects for post-Apartheid South Africa’, *UNISA Latin American Report*, Vol. 20 (2), 2005, University of South Africa, pp. 24-45.

Under consideration

‘An Introduction to Cuban Artist, Leo Brouwer’, *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*.

Future Projects

‘An analysis of Leo Brouwer’s compositional techniques, styles, and procedures’ *South African Journal of Musicology*. (commissioned, currently being finalised for possible publication in 2007)

‘*Elogio de la danza*: a scrutiny of a universal work by an obscure artist’. [possible publication: *Musical Analysis*]

‘The ideas and visions of José Martí, Latin America’s principal 19th-century writer and poet’. [possible publication: *Antipodes*]

‘Jose Marti’s social critique of the arts: Munkácsy and ‘the invincible power of the idea’’. [possible publication: *New Contrasts*]

‘The concept *cultural-universalism* and its manifestations in Cuba’s political, social, & cultural spheres’. [possible publication: *Anthropology Southern Africa*]

2. Specialist Magazines

‘Intellectuals and the new South Africa’, *The Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No. 2, October/November 2004.

‘Meeting Cuban artist, Leo Brouwer’, *Guitar Review*, Vol. 129, Summer, 2004, pp. 5-8.

‘The value of rational-critical thinking Part III: The truth will set US free – perspectives on the Fisher controversy’, *Humanities Retooled*, November 2004.

‘The value of rational-critical thinking Part II: a response to ‘reply to Cuba libre’, *Humanities Retooled*, April 2004.

‘Let us play for our children: a reappraisal for the guitar tutor’, *Guitarra Magazine*, Issue 15, March 2004.

‘The value of rational-critical thinking Part I: a few lessons from Habermas for the new South Africa’, *Humanities Retooled*, March 2004.

3. Unpublished Interviews

Interview with Maylé Benítez Ortega, Deputy Director for Promotion and Development, Cuban National School of Ballet, Havana, Cuba, March 2005.

Interview with Norma Galvez Períut, Vice-Director, *Instituto Superior de Arte*, Havana, Cuba, March 2005.

‘Culture is the Soul of the Nation’: Interview with Itumeleng Mosala – Director General of the SA Department of Arts and Culture. May, 2004.

4. Newspaper Articles & Letters

Articles

‘Political point-scoring loses the plot’, *Insight, Cape Times*, 03 March 2006

‘Ngoro is a product of the government’s failure to address the national question’, *Insight, Cape Times*, 11 August 2005.

Letters

‘SA still dominated by race paradigm’, *Cape Points, Cape Argus*, 27 Oct 2004.

‘Utter hooley and sheer bunkum’, *Cape Points, Cape Argus*, Sept? 2004.

‘A more meaningful notion of culture’, *Cape Points, Cape Argus*, 29 April 2004.

‘Racial labels divide’, *Cape Points, Cape Argus*, 20 April 2004.

‘Social and classroom conditions of poorer learners make OBE unsuitable’, *Weekend Argus*, 7 February 2004

‘Perspectives on the September 11th Atrocity’, *Cape Points, Cape Argus*, October 2001.

5. ACADEMIC PAPERS

Research Paper delivered at the 2nd SA-Poland Symposium: ‘The Cuban Model and Culture in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Arguments and Lessons’, University of Cape Town, September 2004.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The financial assistance of the South African National Research Foundation, the University of Cape Town Postgraduate Funding Office, and the South African Department of Arts and Culture (Pretoria), is hereby gratefully acknowledged. The kind concern and expert advice of Ms Nomahlubi Bolosha (DAC) and Ms Paula Foley (PGFO) are especially noted, without this, the project would not have been concluded. In particular I extend my warm appreciation to Itumeleng Mosala, Director General of the South African Department of Arts and Culture, through whose recommendation I could visit and conduct research in Cuba. This experience marked my first and sole chance to come into direct contact with the 'subject' of my investigation.

I thank the officials at the Africa Desk of the Cuban Ministry of Culture, especially Ms Karina Palacios Sánchez and Ms Alina Jova for their kind assistance and time to engage in discussions. Since my visit they have kept in regular contact, willingly offering further advice and information on areas unclear to me. Cuba's Minister of Culture Abel Prieto Jimenez showed special interest in my past and ongoing research, something that has been most encouraging. During my Cuban visit I conducted formal interviews with Professor Norma Galvez Períut, Vice-Director of the *Instituto Superior de Arte*, and Dr Maylé Benitez Ortega Deputy Director for Promotion and Development at the Cuban National School of Ballet. The special time set aside by these intellectuals, has been most valuable which, likewise, is deserving of acknowledgement and praise.

I extend thanks to Distinguished-Professor Ph-J Salazar for his role in securing sponsorship from the NRF for this project. Emeritus Professor Gitay encouraged me to explore the theories of the Frankfurt School, something that played a significant role in my perception of cultural developments currently underway in

South Africa. The tremendous help and special interest in this project of Paul Hendricks, doctoral candidate at the Education Faculty of UCT, deserves special mention. Paul's wide scholarship, together with his generous nature, introduced me to many previously unknown volumes considered central to my research. I thank especially also my supervisor Professor John Higgins - senior lecturer at the Department of English Language and Literature (UCT) for meticulously inspecting my draft chapters and offering useful advice on some key issues I encountered during the writing of the document. Further, Professor James May, retired director of the South African College of Music (UCT), arguably Africa's leading musical analyst and my masters' supervisor, offered practical guidance on the musical works of Cuban composer Leo Brouwer. I thank Professor May most kindly for his time and consideration and sharing his expert knowledge with me.

The shortage at my host institution of specialist scholars of Latin America, for obvious reasons did not aid my progress. The University of South Africa Centre for Latin American Studies (Pretoria) is currently the only one of its kind on the African continent. Flowing from my personal experiences and academic labours, it is recommended that possibilities be explored that could enhance the examination, and hence, exposure, of a continent of well over 400 million subjects whose historical development, rich cultural traditions, as well as, current political trends, call for dedicated study. Special thanks are extended to the management of the Institute for Latin American Studies of the University of London for allowing me access to some rare and much-needed research materials.

Particular thanks are due to academics and scholars who, in one way or another, offered explicit and indirect assistance with my specific area of research. They are Professor Peter Rose of the University of Ohio (Miami), Professor Frederic Aldama of the University of Colorado, Jorge Martonel of *In defense of Marxism*, and Zelia Roelofse-Campbell, director of the UNISA Centre for Latin American Studies. The advice of Zelia Roelofse-Campbell was particularly significant as it inspired two academic articles on Cuba culture, marking also the first publication on this topic in South African scholarly journals.

An unfortunate shoulder injury during a crucial stage of writing impacted negatively on the thesis' completion. In this respect I extend my sincere appreciation to Tezlin Du Plooy, Zakira Howard, and my brother Anthony, for their assistance with the typing of various texts. Extraordinary gratitude goes to Mario Fernández, teacher of English Language and Literature, who assisted in proofreading the document, often at irregular hours and over weekends. Mario's keen editorial eye has been most effective and deserves special recognition.

In conclusion, I particularly wish to extend my sincere appreciation to my family members, my mother Ellen, sisters, Joy and Wendy, and brother Anthony, all of whom offered me infinite encouragement and aid in so many different ways over the past few years. My special devotion and thankfulness go to my partner and companion Roshan; without her existence I would not have come this far. I acknowledge with great humility, the concern, support, patience, understanding, and above all, love, of my children, Samantha, Elana, and Kayla, in whose interest primarily, this project was undertaken.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 HYPOTHESIS, GOALS AND PURPOSE OF THE THESIS

The thesis explores what it deems are some of the most perceptible humanistic features in Cuban history, politics, and culture, less specified, or highlighted, or generally not presented in a cohesive body of knowledge in the western scholarly world. In the context of its subject, the thesis embraces rational-critical thinking and supports the custom of non-violent dispute. One of the thesis' overriding goals is to draw attention to specific aspects of Cuban politics and culture, in particular, which it is argued, are part of the country's humanistic tradition. Insofar as the Cuban Constitution incorporates a range of goals structured on socialist principles, the thesis sets out to scrutinise manifestations in Cuban thinking emblematic of the Marxist-humanist and/or anti-Stalinist philosophical traditions of revolutionary praxis. The thesis' main body investigates, illustrates, and analyses the presence of such features, focussing predominantly on the period 1959 to the late 1960s. Where the thesis does delve into timeframes beyond this era, it endeavours to show the continuity of relevant facets previously identified. Preceding the main examination, the thesis looks into what is widely perceived as the main roots of the country's humanist tradition, the moral ideas and standpoints of José Martí, the country's national hero. A further objective of this thesis lies in the belief that aspects of Cuba's national cultural policy in large measure addresses historical issues post-Apartheid South Africa confronts in current times. In addition to those already listed, the selection of Cuba for scholarly examination is determined by the following factors:

- Cuba serves as one of the few remaining countries in the world whose constitutional structure, by and large, is based upon socialist values. This

in itself makes the country appealing for scholarly examination in a variety of fields

- In the midst of great poverty and decades of enforced isolation, Cuba's comparatively high degree of success in confronting illiteracy, illness and disease, racism, as well as, cultural partition, increasingly raises the need for scholarly investigation into these domains
- Though various and diverse studies have been made of Cuban politics and culture, a need exists in the English-speaking world for more widespread, organized academic coverage inclusive of the country's diverse thinking currents
- The arts and culture – particularly music in its popular, national, and art forms – occupy unique locations within broader Cuban society. As such, an investigation into these fields will similarly deepen readers' perceptions of the secluded island nation as a whole
- In 2000 a masters' study was concluded of the life and works of Leo Brouwer (1939-) – Cuba's most accomplished composer-conductor, arguably also the most significant living composer for the classical guitar (see Kronenberg 2000). This study, among others, constitutes preliminary research to further scholarly exploration into Cuban cultural themes. Whilst conducting the prior study, it was determined outwardly that Brouwer's arts philosophies and technical principles, as well as those of the broader Cuban arts establishment, appear to adhere to an overriding cultural-philosophical mode, an approach, moreover, that emerges to bear directly on broader societal matters. Accordingly the thesis endeavours to examine in detail Cuba's underlying cultural thinking; hence it can be considered as a logical outflow from previous academic study of Cuban musical matters
- Global social issues - poverty, homelessness, redundancy, illness and disease, illiteracy, etc., - circuitously challenge capitalism's capabilities of bringing enduring relief to the world's suffering peoples. The seemingly powerlessness of protesting masses together with prevailing wretchedness

amongst the majority of the world's citizens, all rationally arouse interest in more meaningful and productive power structures

- Indications are that despite severe economic hardship, Cuba attained success in areas where private enterprise seemed to falter
- Continuing from Martí, Cuban political thinking has been concerned with matters like national sovereignty, independence, continental unity, universal solidarity, etc., as direct reactions to US imperialism. Scrutiny of Cuban politics, consequently, demands looking into these perspectives, especially in the light of heightened global militarism and capitalism-imperialism
- In the context of ten years of freedom and democratic rule, post-Apartheid South Africa continues to be plagued by litigious cultural trends, ranging from overtly racist practices, to deep-rooted racist beliefs. Coupled to this, national cultural partition appears to have remained embedded after the dawn of democracy in the country. Potentially relevant and beneficial to post-Apartheid South Africa are Cuban analyses of their country's national situation
- Structured approaches within Cuban culture appear to promote (1) a genuine non-racial, socially-cohesive national identity and consciousness, as well as (2) cultural synthesis (transculturation) on both the national and international level
- As a nation in the making, it is argued that South Africa can learn much from Cuba's experiences and successes in associated fields of national transformation. Among the factors that sustain this argument is the fact that both countries' historical developments are characterized by colonial domination noted for its racially oppressive and culturally divisive practices

Whereas certain critical studies have undertaken to portray the country mainly or sometimes purely, in unfavourable terms (see Moore 1988; Geldenhuys 2004), the thesis on the other hand, carves out for scrutiny, Cuba's significant humanistic features. In sum, the thesis does not undertake to counter specific negative claims per se, but to present a scholarly perspective that is (1)

supplementary to those which do not delve into this study's chosen areas, and (2) *complementary* to those concerned with similar domains.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTION

Whereas the thesis sets out to discuss manifestations of humanistic thought in Cuban history, politics, and culture, the passages below revisit some applicable or related theoretical positions that constitute the thesis's evaluative framework.¹

In terms of humanism's historical development, Plumwood (1993) indicates that, because of their uncritical stance towards slave practice (Plumwood 1993, 105), neither Aristotle nor Plato perceived humans as a 'unified group' in possession of a universal 'human nature.' With the development of humanism came the idea that all humanity 'possesses a common nature or potential', similar to the Platonic conception of 'the best' (*ibid.*, 105). The ill-conceived assessment of some human beings as supposedly 'inferior' persisted over time, leading to colonialism based on a 'master consciousness' (106). In her discussion of some of the outcomes of the British colonial system, Lim (1993) calls up Césaire, whom she says, provides 'no space for compromise' (Lim 1993, 243) in his condemnation of this development:

Between colonizer and colonized there is room only for forced labor, intimidation, pressure, taxation, theft, rape, compulsory crops, contempt, mistrust, degraded masses (Césaire cited in Geok-lin Lim 1993, 243).

Furthermore, colonised societies became

drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary possibilities wiped out (*ibid.*).

It is deemed appropriate also to reconsider some established standpoints that seek to (1) oppose the historic onslaught on humanism by structuralism, and, as a consequence, (2) sustain and defend the humanist tradition. In this manner, attention will also be drawn to what can be considered as the underlying essence of the modern humanist tradition.

Firstly, Said's (1978) dissertation on Orientalism advances the standpoint that scholarship should not disregard the alliance between culture, politics, the state, and forms of domination. For Said such an approach translates into a humanistic study, one that is capable of dependably perceiving the relations at play in politics and culture. Such an approach furthermore can articulate the *nature* of that relationship as well as its historical context (Said 1978). Since humanism in its modern form is concerned with the well-being and freedom of human subjects, what then are the processes that (1) pose a threat to human contentment, and (2) can bring about some semblance of human symmetry? The capitalist mode of production, Negt (1988) reminds us, is but the 'martyrdom of the producers', a 'means of enslavement' and 'impoverishing the worker'. For Negt this translates into an amalgamation of working processes that lead to 'an organised oppression of individual spiritedness and freedom' (Negt 1988, 232).

Hence, for Althusser (1971) special emphasis should be placed on scientific knowledge towards combating all the 'mystifications of ideological knowledge' and mere '*moral denunciation* of myths and lies' that seek to preserve the status quo (Althusser 1971, 11, emphasis added). But for him, equally, a concern with 'humanist ideology' is tantamount to the 'spread of bourgeois ideology', which also symbolizes an 'assault on Marxism' (*ibid.*, 12). For Althusser Marx's *Capital*, in effect, represents the work by which Marx has to be *judged* (*ibid.*, 71), and not his earlier works, which, as the thesis will show, underpins an influential division of Cuban Marxism. In his historic analysis of Althusser's treatise Benton (1984) asks 'How can Althusser, a self-professed Marxist philosopher, ally with structuralism to the extent of complementing its already effective assault on Marxist positions?' (Benton 1984, 15). For Benton the answer lies in the fact that it were those very positions that Althusser sought to deny as being Marxist in the first place. As he argues, 'Marxism has been conquered from within by alien ideologies; hence Marxism is not humanism since Marxism was established in Marx's rejection of the philosophical humanism of his early years. While socialist humanism does express an appropriate censure of Stalinism, such a strategy requires a political basis, which, in turn, calls for a scientific analysis of what Stalinism is and was, which is 'precisely what the humanists philosophy does not have to offer' (*ibid.*).

As will be perceived, directions taken by the Cuban revolution were in some measure influenced by the historic legacy of Martí (see Part II) whose anti-colonial struggle, in essence, was based upon a deep-rooted moral philosophy (see Shnookal and Muñiz 1999). Schacht (1988) argues that Marx himself espoused an ethical or moral philosophy, portrayed in his suggestion of the way in which existing moralities are to be conceived and understood. For Schacht Marxian thought must possess a ‘genuinely normative character’ if it is to enthuse revolutionary praxis. Thus Marx would proclaim: ‘the philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it’; ‘the proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win’; ‘all the rest of my life will be, as have been all my efforts of the past, dedicated to the triumph of the social ideas which – you may be assured! – lead to the world domination by the proletariat’ (Marx cited in Schacht 1988, 569). Schacht concludes that to ‘regard and treat other human beings as but so much exploitable material . . . and nothing more, would seem to be one of the cardinal sins of Marxian morality, if there is any such thing’ (*ibid.*, 578). Insofar as Marx did not espouse an *explicit* moral theory, and insofar as he opposed ‘morality’, he did so in the context of the morality and ethics of his time (Brenkert 1983). Brenkert asserts that the latter represented to him ‘a kind of dream-like acquiescence in the face of increasing degradation suffered by larger and larger numbers of people in modern society’ (*ibid.*).

In his condemnation of structuralism’s assault on Marxist-humanism and, as a consequence, artistic expression, and literature in particular, Eagleton (1983) writes that structuralism ‘scandalized the literacy establishment with its neglect of the *individual*, its clinical approach to the mysteries of literature, and its clear incompatibility with common sense’ (Eagleton 1983, 108, emphasis added). For Eagleton, structuralism may have ‘contained the seeds of a social and historical theory of meaning’, but they were unable to ‘sprout’ (*ibid.*, 109). Accordingly structuralism ‘bracketed off the real object’, which for Eagleton also means, ‘it bracketed off the human subject’. This is how Eagleton sums up the question:

Structuralism is ‘anti-humanist’, which means not that its devotees rob children of their sweets but that they reject the myth that meaning begins and ends in the individual’s ‘experience’. For the humanist

tradition, meaning is something that I create, or that we create together; but how could we create meaning unless the rules which govern it were already there? However far back we push, however much we hunt for the origin of meaning, we will always find a structure already in place (Eagleton 1983, 113).

For Fromm (1961) the very goal of Marx is to liberate the human being from the weight of economic requirements, so that he/she can be '*fully human*'. Fromm sees Marx as being primarily concerned with the emancipation of the being as 'an individual', 'the overcoming of alienation', and the reinstatement of 'human capacity' (Fromm 1961, 5). Fundamentally, for Marx the ideal is to obtain 'the abolition of private property and of human self-alienation, and thus the real appropriation of human nature'. It means therefore 'the return of the human as a social being'; a 'complete and conscious return *which assimilates all the wealth of previous development* (*ibid.*, 33-34, emphasis added). Fromm views Marx's concept of socialism as the 'emancipation from alienation', i.e., the return of the human to him/herself. Hence alienation implies that humans do not experience themselves as the 'active agents in shaping their world'. In contrast, socialism represents

The abolition of human self-alienation, the return of the human being as a real being. It is the definitive resolution of the antagonism between human beings and nature, between the human and human (*ibid.*, 68).

Fromm reaffirms that, for Marx, socialism is a 'social order' that permits the abolition of '*separateness and antagonism* between subject and object, ushering in a world in which human beings are no longer *strangers among strangers*, but in *their world where they belong*' (*ibid.*, 69, emphasis added). Amongst other concerns, this thesis endeavours to answer the following questions: (1) How was the concept of 'alienation' perceived by the revolutionary leadership and how did it attempt to address it? (2) Does the concept of '*cultural wealth assimilation*' constitute a factor in the developmental processes of Cuban culture? And if so, in which manner? Furthermore, Eagleton stresses the significance of the *aesthetic* representing on the one hand, a 'liberatory concern

with *concrete particularity*', and on the other hand, a 'specious form of *universalism*' (Eagleton 1990, 9, emphasis added). In this instance too, does this conception manifest itself in Cuban arts and culture? and if so, in which manner does it occur?

If the above viewpoints, especially those of Fromm, offer some perspective on the goals and nature of the future society, what type of revolutionary praxis or principles are involved in building this condition? The classical anti-Stalinist Marxist position proposes the basic idea that, 'the working class is, or should be, *the chief actor in social revolution* (Deutscher 1964, 26, emphasis added). Trotsky considers 'proletarian dictatorship' – but in the democratic sense – to be the '*necessary political condition* of the world's transition from capitalism to socialism' (*ibid.*). For Trotsky a proletarian democracy '*assures genuine freedom of expression and association, enabling the workers to exercise effective control over the government*'. His detestation of any form of party domination over the workers was realised and embodied in the person of Stalin (*ibid.*, 28). In the context of the Cuban revolution, to what degree were these principles applied or ignored?

As will be shown, like South Africa, Cuba has been plagued for centuries by the scourge of racism, brought about by slave practices and colonialist rule. The historic standpoint on this issue as promoted by a sector of South African socialists, is deemed appropriate and relevant to the needs of this study:

For the past fifty years or more we have been taught and have learnt, as South Africans, that there is but one human race, and the only classification we have accepted is *homo sapiens*. In the face of the body of scientific knowledge that disproves the idea that there are different human races, the present régime, government departments, school textbooks, university documents, newspapers – all use the term 'race' with impunity (*The Bulletin* 2003 Vol.12, No.2, 2).

In the framework of decades of Apartheid rule, these theorists define the concept of nation as follows:

[The nation constitutes] All those who were born in South Africa and who have no country but South Africa as their motherland. They may have been born with a black skin or a brown one. They may be male or female; they may be young, middle-aged or of an advanced age; they may be short or tall, . . . so long as they are born of a mother and belong to the human species; they all have an equal title to be citizens . . . members of the nation, with the same rights, privileges and duties (*ibid.*, 2-3.)

The above position is based on the premise that the adoption of the principle of non-racialism and of the definition of the concept 'nation', represent 'revolutionary steps in the struggle against racism, oppression and exploitation' (*ibid.*, 3).

In light of Cuba's racial question (see Sarduy and Stubbs 1993; Brock and Cunningham 1991), how did Martí and more so, the revolution, attempt to deal with it? How are the concepts of 'race' and 'nation' perceived in Cuba?

An important consideration of this thesis is that of the conception, 'cultural diversity'. While in some circles this idea may denote a progressive trend, it is argued that in the context of *enforced human partition*, 'cultural diversity' could in effect quite easily perpetuate identity/cultural patterns crafted by oppressive rule. In this regard, Salim Vally² spells out the situation as follows:

The fashionable multi-cultural approach is not necessarily any less covertly racist. Schools taking this approach recognise and celebrate diversity, teach harmony and tolerance, in the hope that the 'problem' will go away (Vally n/d; n/p).

Vally goes on to argue that 'cultural differences' are seen to be 'natural', when in reality this encourages 'prejudice, stereotypes and caricatures'. Again in the context of Apartheid rule, Vally proposes that 'all of us have brought along influences to South African culture . . . these cultural practices, influences – all our tributaries – which impact on our diet, sport, dance, religion, for example, all could flow into one river, our common South African identity'. He, like other

rational-critical scholars, argues furthermore that schools should cultivate a sense of ‘one [,] integrated, dynamic identity, and help build a sense of nationhood without denying our cultures but seeing them as part of a whole (*ibid.*).

Cuba presents a model case of two ‘opposing’, hugely dissimilar cultural traditions – the African and the Spanish – operating and existing on one national terrain. Accordingly, how did the revolution perceive of these ‘cultural differences’, and, more so, how did it act in reaction to this reality? For Fanon (1967) the answer to this complex question means but the following:

The struggle for freedom does not give back to the national culture its former values and shapes; this struggle which aims at a fundamentally different set of relations between men cannot leave intact either the form or the content of the people’s culture. After the conflict there is not only the disappearance of colonialism but also the disappearance of the colonized man (Fanon 1967, 197-98).

¹ It must be stated from the outset that one of the thesis’ structural weaknesses lies in its insufficient discussion or conception of humanism’s development and traditions. For several months, if not years, I struggled with finding an adequate concept or term that could best encompass all of the ‘progressive’/‘constructive’/‘positive’ features which it is deemed, are attributes of the Cuban revolution. While it is argued and strongly believed that the term ‘humanism’ best describes these features, the thesis does not delve into the ‘humanist tradition’ as such, but rather employs various theoretical positions which it is believed, are supportive – consciously and unconsciously – of humanistic practice. Furthermore, besides the theories discussed here, throughout the thesis the positions and ideas of a variety of established thinkers are employed towards strengthening the arguments of the thesis. Broad consideration has given to, on the one hand, theoretical positions concerning colonialism, racism, alienation, bureaucratism, capitalism-imperialism, etc., (as means of human oppression and exploitation), and on the other, positions concerning national sovereignty, continental unity, non-racism, the social role of the arts and culture, democracy, a socialist economy, internationalism, universal solidarity, universal culture, cultural internationalism, etc., (as means towards human emancipation).

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University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

2.1 SCOPE OF THE THESIS

The thesis concentrates on Cuban political-cultural thinking from the initial years of the Cuban revolution (1959), spanning up to the late 1960s. It was particularly during this timeframe that a more coherent, cohesive, and consistent cultural-philosophical trend appeared to emerge, setting the stage for future developments. As a result, contemporary Cuban political theory and practice are in large measure reflections and outcomes of the country's early political thinking (see Kronenberg 2005a). For example, 1961 witnessed the public announcement of what has remained Cuba's official cultural policy up to today - Fidel Castro's oration to several hundred writers, artists, and intellectuals, making this particular juncture historically significant. In the initial years, it will be noted also, Cuba was particularly occupied with the creation of a new Cuban identity and consciousness, inspiring much anticipation not only in the country, but in many other countries across the world. The mid-1960s sees Guevara penning *Socialism and man in Cuba*, incorporating also a critique of socialist culture at the time. Besides exploring historically-significant facets illustrated in José Martí's thought, at times the focal points of the thesis leap beyond the noted period, for example, in its discussion of contemporary events demanding special attention. The established time frame, however, launches a point of reference or basis, for such departures.

INTENDED READERSHIP

The thesis can effortlessly be scrutinized by a variety of readers, ranging from political, cultural, and arts scholars, to policy planners and policy analysts. The style of writing and technical terms employed, are readily accessible across a

range of scholarly disciplines. Scrutiny of the cultural dimension of revolutionary Cuba makes the thesis potentially relevant to a critical South African readership engaged in analytical studies of the country's national transformation since democratic rule.

2.2 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

PART II

Whereas Part I elaborates on the goals, purpose, and methodology of the thesis, Part II explores a selection of Martí's key speeches, writings, and poetry.¹ It selects for special scrutiny some of his dominant and recurring ideas that would find their way into and become entrenched in modern Cuban cultural politics (see Parts III & IV). From the varied and diverse subjects occupying Martí's consciousness, Part II selects for discussion Martí's ideas and standpoints pertaining to

- Cuban sovereignty and Latin American unity,
- The nature and effects on the working class of North-American capitalism,
- The social role and 'responsibility' of (a) education and the arts, and subsequently those of (b) teachers, writers, and artists, and
- Concepts of race, racism, and racial discrimination.

Of special interest, also, is the relation of Martí's thinking with Marxism, something that has developed into the twin ideologies of the Cuban revolution (see Cuban Constitution 2004). Notwithstanding that Martí did not champion the Marxist cause per se (see Shnookal and Muñiz 1999; Ibarra 1986; Kirk 1986; Betto 1986), instances are examined where his thought in effect intersects with, as well as, deviates from the Marxist tradition (see Ibarra 1986).

In sum, Part II endeavours to distinguish aspects of Martí's thought that came to constitute a significant influence and presence in modern Cuban tradition. Overall this Part sculpts the framework that underpins the broader thesis, that humanism - as framed in this instance by Martí's moral thinking - is a significant dimension of Cuban society.

PART III

In Part III attention turns to 20th-century revolutionary Cuba, focusing on some of the early, though leading, ideological outlooks that profoundly impacted on the development and character of the nation's social, political, and cultural domains. This part contends that above and beyond the presence of doctrinaire tendencies in the Cuban régime, at this time there existed also a concentrated current against totalitarianism and the dehumanization of human beings, characteristic features of Stalinist Russia, the most dominant deformed socialist model at the time.

Part III argues, in essence, that, during the 1960s, influential elements within Cuba's revolutionary leadership endeavoured to popularise and institute guidelines for the realization of citizens' humanity and emancipation from the social forces that had previously imprisoned them. These measures, to a large degree, sought to differentiate the Cuban revolution from Russian pseudo-Marxism, countering the dangers of bureaucratisation and extreme centralisation embedded in the Kremlin at the time. It is deemed that this endeavour constitutes a leaning towards, or even, adoption of, Marxist-humanist principles, which, furthermore, impacted positively and deeply on the subsequent development and character of Cuban culture and the arts.

One of the central goals of the revolution during the early 1960s was the construction of a 'new society', home to a 'new Cuban personality' imbued with human and moral values and a broad consciousness. As one of its many consequences, following the triumph of the revolution and continuing in recent times - without its military component - (Mesa-Lago 1974, 4; Suchlicki 1972, 4) Cubans have forged compelling relations of internationalism and solidarity with oppressed and poor nations (Wright 1991, 30-36; see Deutschmann 2003; Guevara 2003; Castro 2001c; González 2004; Cuban Minister of Foreign Relations Cape Town Speech 2006; South African Ambassador to Cuba Cape Town Speech 2006). It is reasoned also that this orientation not only entails consideration of the material, social, and political conditions of these nations (see Wright 1991, 34-36), but that it also enhances the Cuban people's consciousness of diverse human cultures and civilisations. Hence, one of the

principal aims of Part III is to examine aspects of the ideological framework of early revolutionary Cuba that subsequently also contributed towards the growth of Cubans' internationalist/humanistic world outlook.

Given the reality that post-1959 Cuban revolutionary doctrine – which culminated in the 1976 Constitution – incorporates the twin ideologies of José Martí and Marxism (see Cuban Constitution 2004; Wright 1991; Dominguez 1979), it can logically be reasoned that the above orientations rest both on Martí's ideas pertaining to, for example, Latin American unity and solidarity (see Part II), and Marx's broad internationalist outlook.

GUEVARA'S RELEVANCY AND SUITABILITY FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE THESIS

Part III carves out for detailed scrutiny the pivotal ideas and visions of Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, one of the two most dominant actors in the initial stages of the Cuban revolution. Such an enquiry is deemed appropriate and relevant given his stature as an ardent disciple of Martí, on the one hand (see Deutschmann 2003), and, on the other, one of the principal Marxist theorists of the Cuban revolution (see Ramm 1978; Deutschmann 2003). Of the leading Cuban revolutionaries at the time, it is Guevara, predominantly, who undertakes to rationalise the need for a Cuban personality and society operating within a new framework structured on human and moral standards (see Deutschmann 2003). Additionally, his thought and deeds reliably encapsulate the objectives, character, and procedures of Cuban internationalism and universal solidarity (see Deutschmann 2003; Part III). The passages below elaborate on and further substantiate the selection of Guevara for the purposes of the thesis:

- Following his participation in the rebel army's victory against the military forces of the Batista dictatorship on January 1, 1959, Guevara became, after Fidel Castro, the key leader of the new revolutionary government
- Guevara's prominent role in the Cuban revolution, government, and various international forums, generated numerous speeches, essays, interviews, and letters. Collectively, they offer an extensive and instructive primary literary

source on the goals, tasks, and character of the Cuban revolution as a whole (see Deutschmann 2003)

- Some of Guevara's writings and speeches also endeavour to censure doctrinal tendencies towards bureaucratism and lack of citizen participation in the revolutionary process. In this respect, he opposed measures that sought to strengthen the growth of capitalism in Cuban society (see Zeitlin 1970; EG 1965/2003u).
- Since the close of the 1950s until his death in 1967, Guevara was the most prominent official Cuban representative around the world, heading numerous missions and speaking at the United Nations and in many other international forums (Deutschmann 2003 introductory pages). In line with this, during the 1960s he undertook to 'export' the revolution to various Latin American countries (Mesa-Lago 1974, 4) suffering under the yoke of brutal dictatorship, supported, and often directly instituted, by North American imperialism (see Wright 1991, 201-202).
- Of the prominent Cuban revolutionary leaders at the time, it was Guevara who publicly recorded his uncertainties about aspects relating to Cuban culture, penning what has become one of his most celebrated works, *Socialism and man in Cuba* (1965). This work offers both his vision for a future socialist society and critique of aspects central to the cultural dimension of socialist societies (see EG1965/2003u).

In sum, it is argued that a study of Guevara's thought will provide direct insight into some of the prevailing qualities of Cuban Marxism.

Apart from the collapse of his military escapades in Latin America and elsewhere - something analysts attribute to his disregard for some key Marxist-Leninist theories (see Ramm 1978) - today Guevara is widely considered as perhaps the twentieth century's most eminent revolutionary figure. This is based most often on his altruistic devotion to overcoming the hardships suffered by Cubans and countless others across the Latin American continent and beyond. Adding to his prestige as a selfless, heroic, internationalist is the fact that his

revolutionary endeavours terminated with his capture, torture, murder, and disfigurement at the hands of his enemies (see Deutschmann 2003).

According to Deutschmann (2003) and others, in recent years scholars have undertaken to ‘demystify’ and ‘demythologise’ his legacy (Deutschmann 2003, 1; Rose 2001, 3). Since his death Guevara’s world image has become gradually more deformed and at times, somewhat simplistic. The quixotic portrayal known to millions is that of the distinctive guerrilla fighter – valiant to some, to others a voyager or even radical militant. This is echoed in the fact that for two decades or more after his death his writings were largely inaccessible in the English language (Deutschmann 2003, 1). A number of Guevara’s speeches was published in the 1960s, but most were long out of print. Several new biographies and many reviews on his life and death appeared during the period commemorating the 30th anniversary of his death (see for example Anderson 1997; Taibo II 1997). Few attempts, however, have been made to publish the thoughts of Guevara himself, in his own words (Deutschmann 2003, 1).

In the field of scholarship, Rose (2001)^{viii} is of the view that scholars of rhetoric have neglected revolutionary Cuba, notwithstanding the fact that revolutionary Cuban oratory, particularly, portrays ‘issues of major world import’ (Rose 2001, 3). Rose writes,

despite lengthy tomes . . . devoted to insisting on Guevara’s irrelevance . . . his speeches continue to be widely read. Though I cannot document it, I am tempted to suggest that they are more widely read today than the *speeches* of any other public figure in this [twentieth] century (Rose 2001, 3).

Viewed in the broader context of Rose and Deutschmann’s conclusions, Part III thus also attempts to (1) penetrate the ‘romantic myth’ that has come to obscure Guevara’s critical thought, and in so doing (2) contribute towards filling the void that exists in the scholarly domain. More importantly, though, Part III argues that Guevara’s main concerns – the institution of social change based on justice and universal solidarity – inspired the progression of humanistic *values*,

beliefs, and *attitudes* in Cuban society (Wright 1991, 30-36; see Deutschmann 2003; Zeitlin 1970; Guevara 1960/2003g, 1961/2003i, 1964/2003r, 1965/2003u, 1967/2003w; González 2004; etc.). His collective human undertakings consequently had a fundamental impact on the cultural attributes, moral fibre, and, above all, *consciousness* of the Cuban people. It is contended, furthermore, that an examination of revolutionary Cuba, both in its political and cultural dimensions, makes scrutiny of Guevara's thought and deeds both urgent and necessary.^{vii}

GOALS OF PART III

Part III examines a selection of Guevara's significant writings and speeches (see below), illustrating especially his ideas, standpoints, and procedures, emblematic of the Marxist-humanist tradition. Chapter 8 traces Guevara's ideological development and subsequent political leanings, while Chapter 9 illustrates Guevara's ideological standpoints within the context of the Cuban revolution. Overall Part III endeavours to illustrate that, in early revolutionary Cuba, elements of the humanist tradition are manifested in a synthesis of concrete commitments on the part of Guevara, to

- Marxist-humanism. In this respect Chapters 8 and 9 explore Guevara's arguments that sought to contest, on the one hand, *human alienation* and particularly *the Stalinist model of socialism*, and, on the other, his arguments that sought to advance and strengthen (a) the building of a new Cuban personality imbued with human principles and (b) *citizen participation* and *democracy* as integral components of the revolutionary project
- Continue and develop Martí's ideas and principles pertaining to non-racialism and human equality (Chapter 10).
- Internationalism and universal solidarity: In this instance Chapter 11 looks into Guevara's role internationally, and particularly his argumentation on, and analyses of, the role and impact of capitalism-imperialism in Cuba, the Latin American continent, and arguably all Third World countries. The chapter surveys also the need, as he perceived it, to establish internationalism and universal solidarity as counter-measures to global capitalism-imperialism

PART IV

Whereas Part III examines, among other topics, the question of race and racism in Cuba, and the revolutionary government's proclamation and institution of measures for the creation of a non-racial society (see Part III, Chapter 10), what was the revolution's response to the country's national cultural question? I.e., how did Cuban intellectuals and artists view and react in response to the existence of historically-diverse national cultural traditions - the African and Spanish? How were José Martí's ideas and visions pertaining to cultural creativity (see Part II) interpreted and brought into the country's national cultural programme? Given its high level of controversy in socialist societies, how was the concept of *freedom of expression* perceived by the revolutionary leadership and cultural workers? On the whole, to what extent is the Marxist-humanist vision of the arts and culture in socialist society - a culture that embraces humanity's accumulation of knowledge and the entire wealth of its previous development – a factor in the Cuban revolution?

GOALS OF PART IV

Against this backdrop Part IV endeavours to present a synopsis of revolutionary Cuban culture by way of examining its significant goals, principles, policies, and strategies of the 1960s era.² Integrated in the discussions are (1) some of the processes employed towards implementation of policy goals and (2) some key outcomes. Insofar as Castro became and has remained today the main spokesperson of the Cuban revolution,³ some of his primary cultural standpoints are looked into.

This Part of the thesis argues that, influential cultural trends,

- In their endeavour to counteract human alienation, oppression, and segregation (by prohibiting racial discrimination and promoting national unity, equality, and social cohesion, for example; see Part III, Chapters 8-11), also sought to address the historical legacy of *cultural partition* and *cultural subjugation*. It is advanced that prominent elements within the revolution aspired to achieve this objective, by endorsing and promoting amongst other measures, the theoretical concept of '*transculturation*'

brought to prominence by Fernando Ortiz, Cuba's leading anthropologist at the time

- Culminated in the creation of various and diverse national and international cultural endeavours and organisations, with the *Casa de las Américas* for example - founded in 1959 by Haydée Santamaría-Hart and situated in Cuba's capital Havana - conceivably epitomizing Latin America's most celebrated cultural institution devoted to the establishment of international cultural relations and activity (see Maclean 2003). It is proposed here that the *Casa de las Américas* symbolises a creative expression of internationalism and universal solidarity, concepts innate to Martí's liberation programme (see Part II, Chapter 5) and Marxist-humanist thinking (see Part III, Chapters 9-10)
- Consciously sought to adhere to and implement a fusion of Martí and Marxist cultural doctrines pertaining to artistic creation. In this instance focus is placed on the strategy of *developing skilled knowledge and the import and employment of cultural successes from beyond the country's borders and different epochs*. The artistry of Leo Brouwer, Cuba's most accomplished living composer-conductor, receives attention as an embodiment of this approach
- In large measure portrays a deviation from restrictive Stalinist arts policies; that the Cuban régime through its spokesperson and leader Castro, Guevara, as well as other Cuban cultural workers, sought to adopt a cultural path independent of that followed and/or proscribed by the Kremlin. It is, however, *not* maintained that the revolution's cultural standpoints (of the 1960s period) collectively and/or consistently sought to oppose doctrinaire measures in the creative fields. As will be illustrated, whereas certain governmental functionaries sought to advance the goals of the revolution at the expense of free expression, opposing, yet progressive trends and argumentation go to some length to encourage open debate and free creativity, including on international level.

2.3 RESEARCH TOOLS EMPLOYED

The tools employed by the thesis include the research, collection, inspection, and analyses of relevant literature; researching the environment; personal observations, communications, and interviews; and the testing of hypotheses through publication. The world-wide-web was employed in a prudent manner towards accessing relevant and authentic data. The passages below elaborate on the use of these methods.

Literary sources

The predominant apparatus utilized for the purposes of data collection was inspection of an assortment of established literary documents. A broad collection of published materials was accumulated from among others, The University of Cape Town, The Cuban Embassy (Pretoria), The Institute for Latin American Studies (University of London), Goldsmiths University, The British Library, and, not the least, art institutions and bookstores located in Havana, Cuba. South Africa's prevailing socio-cultural conditions to a large extent inspired the exploration into Cuban cultural themes. Information from the South African print media, such as general articles and reports, expert commentary, and letters from the public, were collected, reviewed and analysed. Attention was afforded general topics on race and racism, racial labelling, and racial categorization, cultural rights and privileges, as well as associated matters like enduring economic discrimination and economic exploitation. In addition, established South African volumes on politics, economics, and the national question were explored for historical-contextual purposes.

Cuba

The inspection of literature dealing specifically with Cuban matters was confined to published material appearing originally in the English language, as well as volumes translated into English. Special care was taken, wherever possible, to ensure translated material originates from affirmed and trustworthy sources. For example, the Cuban Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, provided an assortment of published brochures containing Cuban governmental commentary, published by the Printing Office of the Cuban Council of State in Havana. The useful anthology *Afrocuba* (eds. Sarduy and Stubbs 1993) includes a wide

selection of significant Cuban cultural-historical records. The anthology is edited by two well-known Cuban cultural practitioners (operating both inside and outside of Cuba) and published in association with the Centre for Cuban Studies in New York. (As in the case of Guevara and Martí's writings – see below – for historical context the citation of these sources in the thesis includes both the original and Sarduy and Stubbs' year of publication). Other examples of affirmed sources include the following documents which were obtained directly in Havana, Cuba. It will be noted that some of these have been published by, or in association, with *Editóra Política*, one of Cuba's principal publishing companies:

- Fidel Castro's *War, racism and economic injustice* (Ed. Keeble 2002, Ocean/Editora Política), which offers a selection of interviews and speeches the Cuban leader gave in Venezuela, Panama, Cuba, the USA, and South Africa. This collection was utilised in conjunction with other materials, towards offering some proof of the continuity of standpoints taken in earlier years.
- *Constitution of the Republic of Cuba* (National Assembly of People's Power, Cuba 2004, *Editóra Política*). The national document elaborates on subjects like the political, social, and economic principles of the Cuban state; citizenship; family; equality; fundamental rights, duties, and guarantees; and, perhaps more importantly, the role of education and culture in broader Cuban society.
- *Haydée Santamaria* (Ed. Betsy Maclean 2003) constitutes a rare epigrammatic anthology of letters, interviews, and writings both on and by the subject of the book. Included are writings of celebrated cultural workers and note-worthy intellectuals from both Cuba and the broader Latin American continent. This compilation is considered of special importance as it denotes perhaps the rarest source in the English language on the contribution of a globally-obscure Cuban woman activist to the development of Latin American culture. The anthology is published likewise by Ocean Press and in association with the *Casa de las Américas* – Latin America's focal cultural institution and the locale where Santamaria spent her professional life.

- *José Martí: Reader* (Shnookal and Muniz 1999) is arguably the most authoritative translation of an extensive collection of speeches, writings, letters, and verse of Cuba's national hero (2005a). The collection is published by Ocean Press, an international publisher working in collaboration with Cuban publishing houses, with additional copyright vested in Cuba's historic *Centro de Estudios Martianos* located in Havana. The following list which includes the method of citation, contains a selection of Martí's speeches, writings, and poetry, chosen from the compilation for the purposes of the thesis:

'The Spanish republic and the Cuban revolution'	(JM 1873/1999a)
'The memorial meeting in honor of Karl Marx'	(JM 1883/1999b)
'Wandering teachers'	(JM 1884/1999c)
'The Munkácsy Christ'	(JM 1887/1999d)
'The funeral of the Haymarket martyrs: A terrible drama'	(JM 1888/1999e)
'Mother America'	(JM 1889/1999f)
'Our America'	(JM 1891/1999g)
'Simple Verses'	(JM 1891/1999h)
'With all, for the good of all'	(JM 1891/1999i)
'Our ideas'	(JM 1892/1999j)
'My race'	(JM 1893/1999k)
'Simón Bolívar'	(JM 1893/1999l)
'The truth about the United States'	(JM 1894/1999m)
'To the New York Herald'	(JM 1895/1999n)
'Free Verse'	(JM 1913/1999o)

The main literary source utilised in Part III is the compendium of Guevara's writings, speeches, interviews, and letters - *Che Guevara reader: writings on politics and revolution* (2003). Obtained directly in Havana and spanning more than 400 pages, the collection is compiled and edited by David Deutschmann, a global specialist on Cuban politics and history. Assistance with its preparation was given by the *Centro de Estudios Che Guevara* (Havana), particularly the Centre's director, Guevara's daughter, Aleida March, and its research

coordinator, Maria del Carmen Ariet García. As an expanded edition of a book first published in 1997 on the 30th anniversary of Guevara's death, it is published jointly by the *Centro de Estudios Che Guevara* and Ocean Press (Melbourne). It is relevant to note that the current edition is not, as the editor points out, 'a biography nor a book of reminiscences by others – it is Che Guevara in his own words' (Deutschmann 2003, 1). Besides Guevara's own contributions, the anthology contains an instructive introduction and chronology of Guevara's life and Cuban history. Brief texts on historical context and/or origin often precede Guevara's own works. In addition, detailed endnotes are provided for each of the four sections of the book. A handy glossary is followed at the end by a complete bibliography that lists all of Guevara's articles, books, speeches, interviews, and letters. Below follows a list of works (including their respective citations) from the compilation that has been consulted for the purposes of the thesis.

'What we have learnt and what we have taught'	(EG 1958/2003a)
'Social ideals of the rebel army'	(EG 1959/2003b)
'The essence of guerrilla struggle'	(EG 1960/2003c)
'Political sovereignty'	(EG 1960/200d)
'Speech to medical students and health workers'	(EG 1960/2003e)
'Notes for the study of the ideology of the Cuban revolution'	(EG 1960/2003f)
'Speech to the Latin American youth congress'	(EG 1960/2003g)
'Cuba: historical exception or vanguard in the anticolonial struggle'	(EG 1961/2003h)
'The OAS conference at Punta del Este'	(EG 1961/2003i)
'A new culture of work'	(EG 1962/2003j)
'The cadre: backbone of the revolution'	(EG 1962/2003k)
'To be a young communist'	(EG 1962/2003l)
'The Cuban revolution's influence in Latin America'	(EG 1962/2003m)
'Guerrilla warfare: a method'	(EG 1963/2003n)
'A party of the working class'	(EG 1963/2003o)
'Against bureaucratism'	(EG 1963/2003p)
'On the budgetary finance system'	(EG 1964/2003q)
'The philosophy of plunder must cease'	(EG 1964/2003r)
'At the United Nations'	(EG 1964/2003s)

‘To Haydée Santamaria’	(EG 1964/2003t)
‘Socialism and man in Cuba’	(EG 1965/2003u)
‘At the Afro-Asian conference in Algeria’	(EG 1965/2003v)
‘Create two, three, many Vietnams’	(EG 1967/2003w)
‘Tactics and strategy of the Latin American revolution’	(EG 1968/2003x)

Internet

Gaining access to ideas, perceptions, and arguments of Cuban intellectuals, artists, and writers, was aided by the online magazine *The Militant* (www.themilitant.com), a publication of Pathfinder Press located in New York. In view of its historical ties with UNEAC (Cuban Union of Writers and Artists) *The Militant* has become possibly the only English-language source outside of Cuba consistently offering coverage of this sector of the Cuban cultural establishment. The Internet also provided access to established socialist and/or Marxist organisations’ analyses of a range of Cuban matters. Established printed material was used as basis from which data from internet sources could be judged in terms of reliability and consistency.

Researching the environment

South Africa

Scrutiny of local radio and television news broadcasts and talk shows provided broad insight into (1) the current state of the nation and (2) citizens’ viewpoints on contemporary cultural trends. The overriding conclusion that emerged from this study is that many divergent and opposing perceptions currently exist of (1) factors that constitute the nation, (2) concepts of race and racism, and (3) the meaning and implication of building a non-racial society.

Cuba

During March of 2005, on invitation from the South African Department of Arts and Culture, the rare opportunity was enjoyed to undertake a first exploratory visit to Havana, Cuba. Not only has this unique experience been an exciting and culturally-enriching one, but moreover, many prior perspectives could be substantiated.

During this brief visit, spanning just over one week, I could

- Call on Cuba's flagship school of the performing arts, the *Instituto Superior de Artes* located in Playa, Havana, and conduct in-depth discussions with its rector and vice-rector (see Kronenberg 2005a)
- Observe and experience a musical performance by some of the Institute's celebrated performing scholars
- Observe first-hand and discuss with Cuban officials the construction of the Plastic Arts Faculty – a structural representation of Cuba's underlying culture policy – the merging of African traditions with those of Spanish origin
- Attend and video record the spectacular Inaugural Gala of the 12th International Meeting of Academies for the Teaching of Ballet at the Sala Garcia Lorca Gran Teatro in Havana
- Visit and inspect Cuba's acclaimed National Ballet School in Havana
- Conduct interviews with the Ballet School's International Relations Officers
- Meet the Cuban Cultural Minister and other members of the Ministry of Culture
- Visit and inspect the Cuban National Museum of Fine Arts
- Attend and participate in instructive talks given by Cuban artists at the House of Culture located in Vedado, Havana
- Observe at the same location community arts production and exhibition, a traditional dance class for children, and inspect some inventive hand-made artefacts
- Perceive, by way of city tours, some measure of the nation's lush cultural legacy
- Draw much general information from in-depth discussions with Karina Palacios and Alina Jova, officials at Africa Desk of the Cuban Ministry of Culture

Interviews

The following interviews have been found to be valuable to objectives of the study:

- Interview with Leo Brouwer, Cuban composer and advisor to the Cuban Ministry of Culture, conducted in Nürtingen, Germany during, August 1998 as part of research towards a Masters degree; parts of which were published in *Guitar Review* (see Kronenberg 2004a)
- Interview with Ms Maylee Benitez Ortega, International Relations Officer at the Cuban National School of Ballet
- Interview with Itumeleng Mosala, Director General of the South African Department of Arts and Culture, during May 2004

Personal communications

Among many others, the following are considered as being the more important:

- Jorge Martinez, specialist on Latin American politics, unionist, speaker on the international labour movement, writer for *In defense of Marxism*; acquaintance of Celia Hart (Cuban party member, daughter of Haydée Santamaria and Armando Hart)
- Peter Rose, scholar of Marxism and Rhetoric, expert on Che Guevara's speeches, provided a number of relevant, useful articles on Cuban culture, film & literature
- Zelia Roelofse-Campbell, director of the UNISA (University of South Africa) Centre for Latin American Studies and editor of *UNISA Latin American Report*, the only research institution of its kind in Africa and the only publication on Latin America in South Africa
- Centre for Studies on Che Guevara, Havana
- Ministry of Culture, Havana
- Ministry of Culture, Pretoria

Testing of hypotheses

Texts from key finding of this research were structured and compiled for the purposes of publication with the hope also of eliciting some academic response. Following below is a list of topics selected for publication and the name of the applicable publication.⁴

Various letters/commentary on cultural issues (*Cape Argus*, *Cape Times*)

Selection of findings on Cuban culture	(<i>Latin American Report</i>)
Analyses/discussion of Cuban musical works	(<i>Guitar Review</i>) (<i>Guitarra Magazine</i>)
Political Analyses of	
Cuban Marxism –	(<i>Humanities Retooled</i>)
The New South Africa –	(<i>Humanities Retooled</i>) (<i>The Bulletin</i>)

Academic Paper

A paper was prepared and delivered to the South Africa-Poland Symposium during September 2004, a scholarly event that was hosted by the University of Cape Town, Cape Town, South Africa: ‘The Cuban Model and Culture in post-Apartheid South Africa: Arguments and Lessons’.

¹ Unless otherwise noted all background information on specific writings or speeches - like date and place of original publication, location of speech delivery, and composition of audience - are obtained from Shnookal and Muniz 1999.

² According to my readings, scholars of Cuban culture and arts, especially those from the Western, English-speaking world, customarily concentrate on Cuban artists and their individual works and to a lesser extent, generally, the policies and principles that underpin and inform such works. This was also my experience during my field research in Cuba during March 2005. Cuban intellectuals often were at pains to explain their cultural policies and principles, often to an uninformed audience who, routinely, were more interested in the scope and character of Cuban art works and the island’s culture by and large. Thus an additional objective here, is to provide broad insight into revolutionary Cuban cultural thinking (which, it is trusted, will inspire better perception of Cuban art works and culture) and not to focus primarily on individual artists and their works. Exceptions are made in the case of Haydée Santamaría and Leo Brouwer – two hugely representative arts figures who nonetheless are still relatively obscure outside of their national boundaries.

³ As this part of the thesis was being finalised, an official declaration was released from the Cuban state administration wherein Castro delegates his powers to key governmental agents on account of ill health. According to many undocumented sources, this is the first time since the triumph of the revolution in January 1959, that Castro has formally done so.

⁴ Extracts from articles published in *Unisa Latin American Report* (Kronenberg 2004c and 2005b) have been edited and amalgamated, and are employed in Part IV of the thesis.

PART II

THE IDEAS AND VISIONS OF JOSÉ MARTÍ: Roots of the humanist dimension of Cuban society

CHAPTER 3

CUBAN SOVEREIGNTY & LATIN AMERICAN UNITY

3.1 RATIONALE FOR CUBAN SOVEREIGNTY

Besides pursuing Cuba's autonomy through military means, Martí sought to shift Spanish republican rule through rational and moral reasoning. During his expulsion to Spain, with the proclamation of the first Spanish republic in February 1873, Martí wrote 'The Spanish Republic and the Cuban Revolution' (JM 1873/1999a), published in Madrid as a pamphlet and addressed to Don Estanislao Figueras, head of the new Spanish government.

The passages below explore his ideas as espoused in the pamphlet and elsewhere on Cuba's right to freedom and sovereignty. As will be observed, Martí portrays an increasing level of intolerance of foreign rule, and in arguably all of his writings, Martí adopts a concentrated moral stance, which he expresses in a highly ornate, eloquent style of prose. Of note too is the manner in which Martí's advocacy of human and moral values continuously interweaves his more overtly political discourse. Significant then is the *purpose* behind Martí's moral posturing, which appears to *shield*, *advance*, and *defend* his rational-critical reasoning, as is revealed also in his plea to the Spanish monarchy below:

I neither prejudice acts of the Spanish Republic nor think that the Republic should be timid or cowardly. But I do warn it that actions are always prone to injustice. I remind it that injustice is a death knell to the respect of others; I warn it that being unjust means being wicked (JM 1873/1999a, 33).

Martí's petition in essence advances that the desires of one nation amount to the desires of all other nations. He argues that while the Spanish Republic has been 'raised on the shoulder of universal suffrage', Cuba wants to raise itself 'that same way'. Martí thus rationalizes his homeland's entitlement to independence, situating it alongside the right by which the Republic was proclaimed. 'How then can the Republic deny Cuba its right to be free?' he asks. Raising this argument to a higher level, Martí poses the question that arguably the whole of the Spanish colonial establishment could or would not answer: if the right to freedom is sacrosanct to the Republic, 'how can the Republic deny itself?' (*ibid.*, 35). For Martí then, a denial of people's right to sovereignty means also a denial of one's own rights. Equally, the right to fight for one's own freedom denotes also the entitlement of others to fight for their own.

In the pamphlet Martí draws attention to the suffering and death suffered by Cubans and colonists alike as a result of Spanish domination. For him, those who have died cannot be 'ignored' or 'forgotten' as they symbolize the futility of Spain's occupying power. He anguishes that the voices of the dead are not silenced, 'The Republic knows that it is separated from the island by a broad space filled with the dead. The Republic hears, as I do, their terrifying voices'. Invoking the righteous dimension to strengthen his challenge, he writes 'Spain knows that to subjugate, subdue and do violence' to the will of Cubans inevitably means that 'her own sons must die' (*ibid.*, 37). Martí underscores both the futility of death under these circumstances and the fate of those who bring about unnecessary bloodshed:

Will it consent to have them die for what, if it were not the death of legality, would be the self-destruction of its honor? How ghastly if it consents! Wretched are those who dare to spill the blood of others who seek the same freedom they themselves have sought. Wretched are those who thus abjure their right to happiness, honor and the esteem of humanity (*ibid.*).

The values and customs of Spain's colonists, for Martí are subordinate to the 'just life' ordinary Cubans wish upon themselves. Accordingly the imposition of Spanish rule entails the burden of adopting the colonists' way of life, something he finds 'disgraceful', 'shameful', 'dishonorable'. He charges that the colonist and colonized have 'no shared aspirations or identical goals, nor do they have cherished memories to unite them'. Cubans think only with 'bitterness' of the misery Spain has brought it. Since a real and sovereign Cuban identity, an authentic Cuban community is wanting, Spain seeks to evoke 'an illusion', 'a deceitful lie' when it advocates the 'integrity' of a colonized Cuba. Martí believes people can be united only through relations of 'fraternity and love' (*ibid.*, 37), citing the two countries' multitude of opposing needs, characters, and geographical circumstances, as well as past cruelties and 'lack of love', as sufficient reason for them not to be joined (*ibid.*).

Cuba's fight for independence cannot be fruitless for Martí since this is part of what he calls, 'the historic law of necessity'. Just as 'Spain gained its independence from the French, Italy from Austria, Mexico from Napoleon rule, the United States from England, so too Cuba wants to be free' he argues (*ibid.*, 41). As is also customary in his writings, he sounds a warning:

let the Spanish Republic not be dishonored, let it not murder its brothers or have its sons shed the blood of its other sons. Let it not oppose Cuba's independence. Otherwise, the Republic of Spain will be a Republic of injustice and ignominy, and the government of freedom will, in this case, be liberticidal (*ibid.*, 41-42).

The above passages aptly demonstrate what many consider the 'continuity' and 'pertinence' of Martí's thought today. In the context of heightened global US militarism for example, Martí's ideas could effortlessly resonate in the minds of those experiencing today the excesses of foreign occupation (see Chomsky and Clark 2005). This is plainly revealed in his plea to the Spanish despot:

For four years – without respite, without any sign of ceding in their effort – the *insurgents* have been requesting their independence from oppression, their honorable freedom, and requesting it *dying*, just as the Spanish *republicans* have for their freedom so many times. How can any honorable *republican* dare to deny a people a right which he has claimed for himself? (JM 1873/1999a, 34, emphasis added).

3.2 A UNITED LATIN AMERICA AND CUBAN SOVEREIGNTY: THE ‘FRUITFUL CONTRADICTION’

3.2.1 Introduction

From the 1820s and continuing into Martí’s era, the South American continent witnessed extreme rivalries among successive generals controlling territories freed from Spanish colonial rule. As a result, civil wars exploded which destroyed the unity envisaged by historical anti-colonial protagonists like Simón Bolívar (1783-1830) in particular.¹ Bolívar precedes Martí in the sense that during his epoch, when he spearheaded and won various wars of independence on the Latin American continent, he witnessed on the one hand, the merger of the old British colonies in North America, and on the other, the disintegration of the Spanish empire on Latin American continent. This led him to forewarn that the United States would eventually seek control of its neighbouring continent. For this reason, he aspired to the union of the former Spanish colonies in a single nation (Kowalewski 2005). The transition of capitalism to the imperialist stage in subsequent years – a reaffirmation of Bolívar’s prophecy - saw the survival among revolutionary Latin American nationalists of the idea of the great Latin American homeland (*ibid.*). Thus as the capitalist-imperialistic stage starts to unfold and determine the course of Latin American history, it is Martí who emerges to take up this struggle also.

Accordingly, Martí’s speeches and writings champion the broader aspiration of Latin American unity. His vision in this regard however, sought to complement equally and simultaneously, his life-long pursuit of an independent and free Cuban nation.

As the ensuing Parts will illustrate, it was during the 1960s especially that this twin geo-political concept took on great meaning for the revolutionary Cuban regime and Cuban nation alike. Subjected to reinterpretation and amplification, this aspect of Martí's thinking became harnessed in a compelling way across all spheres of socialist Cuba. As a consequence it markedly inspired and molded the development and character of revolutionary Cuban society and politics, and more concretely, its policies pertaining to the arts and culture (see Parts III and IV).

The concurrent existence and parallel magnitude of the 'particular' and the 'collective', the erstwhile minister of culture in socialist Cuba, Armando Hart Davalos, regards as possibly constituting 'a contradiction in terms' (Century 1991, 9). Hart Davalos concludes however, that even if this concept denotes a contradiction, it nevertheless is 'most fruitful' (*ibid.*).

Exploration of the cognition and deployment of this 'fruitful contradiction' in twentieth-century revolutionary Cuba is taken up later in this thesis. For now, this section traces Martí's thoughts on the need for, constitution, and prospective gains of Latin American unity. It similarly albeit briefly, looks into Martí's conception of the place of an independent, sovereign and free Cuba within a cohesive geographical-political entity.

Martí's main ideas on the theme of Latin American unity are taken up in works like 'Mother America' (JM 1889/1999f), 'Our America' - better known as *Nuestra América* (1891/1999g), and 'Simón Bolívar' (1893/1999i). 'Mother America' and 'Simón Bolívar' are both speeches delivered at the Latin American Literary Society of New York. The latter serves as tribute to Martí's forerunner, arguably the most revered revolutionary directing Latin America's independence struggle from the late 1700s into the early 1800s. 'Mother America' is more a projection of Martí's personal visions of Latin American unity. On its delivery, delegates of the Pan-American Congress held at the time in Washington, constituted Martí's audience. *Nuestra América* is widely regarded as

Martí's most important literary work of prose. It was published in both New York and Mexico during the formation of the Cuban Revolutionary Party. The work offers Martí's vision of the ethical and political principles of a free Cuban Republic, which include his postures on continental union, human equality, race, and racial injustice (discussed below). It is relevant to point out that specific ideas from this work especially, have been adopted in their entirety by the existing Cuban revolutionary regime (see Sarduy and Stubbs 1993; Deutschmann 2003; Part IV).

Martí's initial, concentrated advocacy of Cuban independence² - as espoused more than a decade and a half before the appearance of 'Mother America' - reveals also some of his vision for continental unity. In his early petition to Spanish colonial rulers for example, Martí argues that the 'national honour' that would ensue from Cuban independence, should similarly exist within 'collective honor'. For him 'the universal conscience of honor' abjures not patriotic honor, but 'demands that *patriotic honor exist within universal honor*' (JM 1875/1999a, 33, emphasis added).

3.2.2 Rationale for Unity

In 'Mother America' Martí transmits that colonial injustice and the resultant human struggles across the South American continent, historically inaugurate a new geographical concept - 'Our America of the present':

Out of that troubled and sorely tried America, born with thorns upon her brow and with words and the heart's blood flowing out through the badly torn gag, like lava, our eager strivings have brought us to Our America of the present (JM 1889/1999f, 108-109).

Martí similarly sees historically internal continental strife and division, beyond those *directly* brought about by foreign rule, as possibly leading to the collapse of the entire continent:

Would she rather disintegrate at the hands of *her own children* than undertake the grandiose task of becoming more firmly united? (JM 1889/199f, 109).

But it is similarly ‘nature’ and ‘humanity’ that call for the union of all Latin American people. As he writes, ‘We will not be traitors to that which Nature and humanity demand of us’ (JM 1889/1999f, 110).

It is particularly in *Nuestra América* that Martí perceives an interconnected territorial realm as a vital challenge to foreign domination. He likens the people of Latin America to ‘leaves’ ‘buffeted and tossed by the storms’. In order to face up to the challenges of the time, ‘the trees must form ranks’ to keep the ‘giant’ ‘from passing’ (JM 1891/1999g, 112):

We can no longer be a people of leaves, living in the air, our foliage heavy with blooms and cradling or humming at the whim of the sun’s caress, buffeted and tossed by the storms. The trees must form ranks to keep the giant with seven-league boots from passing! It is the time of mobilization, of marching together, and we must go forward in closed ranks, like silver in the veins of the Andes (JM 1891/1999g, 112).

‘America’ he writes, ‘still suffers, from the tiresome task of reconciling the hostile and discordant elements it inherited from a despotic and perverse colonizer’ (JM 1891/1999g, 115). Martí thus sees the continent as comprising subjugated, dissenting, and detached entities that as a necessity, must establish a mutual basis for offsetting both the future aspirations and existing customs of foreign forces of occupation:

It [is] imperative to make common cause with the oppressed, in order to secure a new system opposed to the ambitions and governing habits of the oppressors (*ibid.*, 116).

He cautions that if a republic ‘refuses to open its arms to all, and move ahead with all, it dies’ (*ibid.*, 117). ‘The pressing need of Our America’

Martí repeats , ‘is to show itself as it is, one in spirit and intent, swift conquerors of a suffocating past’ (*ibid.*, 119). This past, Martí reiterates, is ‘stained only by the enriching blood drawn from the scarves left upon us by our masters’ (*ibid.*).

3.2.3 Character of Unity

Martí’s initial pronouncement on the *nature* of Latin American unity appears to emanate solely from his affinity with nationalism.³ He regards the ‘freedom’ stemming from an integrated continent, as having greater meaning and quality than that attained and experienced by other nations. For him it has ‘no more spacious site in any nation than the one prepared in our boundless lands’ (JM 1889/1999f, 108). He furthermore regards Latin America as the starting point – as ‘host and inspiration’ - of the road leading to the sublime – ‘where there is no forgetting and no death’ (*ibid.*, 110). His broader vision of the character and hopes of a united continent is that all discrete countries will experience ‘protection, equality, righteousness, and unlimited harmony’. In chorus, in such a continent all nations and people must become acquainted with her successes and triumphs:

It is an America without childish jealousies or naïve trust, fearlessly inviting all peoples to the fortunes of her home, because she knows she is the America of Buenos Aires’ defense and of Callao’s endurance, the America of Cerro de la Campanas and of the new Troy. Her own future . . . is that of bringing equity and justice in an atmosphere of unrestricted peace (JM 1889/1999f, 109).

Despite his episodic ultra nationalist stance, productive aspects arising from his thoughts are the social task and impact of acquiring understanding, intelligence, and awareness of people, cultures, and civilizations that exist beyond proverbial boundaries. This in itself does not pose a threat to ‘what is our own’ he writes. His address to attendees of the Pan-American Congress, among others, attests to this as follows:

We must convince these delegates that a just admiration and a usefully sincere study of other nations . . . does not weaken the ardent, redemptive, and sacred love for what is our own (JM 1889/1999f, 110).

Martí however, elevates this idea to a superior level of great import: still safeguarding the immediate, national domain, he simultaneously argues for the attachment of the universe ('the world'), to the particular ('our republics'):

Let the world be grafted onto our republics, but the trunk must be our own (JM 1891/1999g, 114, emphasis added).

In summation, besides advocating consciousness of other peoples and cultures, Martí similarly promotes the *importation* into the local domain, of diverse and far-off human cultures, with the proviso that the 'local' must retain its central stature in such a procedure.

Martí believes such an approach will bring 'the new Americans' to 'their feet'; that they will 'salut[e] each other from nation to nation'; that the 'eyes of the laborers' will 'shin[e] with joy' (*ibid.*, 118).

3.2.4 Benefits of Unity

Martí goes on to declare that a 'capable and indefatigable America' bestows 'generosity and a harmonious and artistic spirit' (JM 1889/1999f, 108) upon her people. From the new land will emerge 'the beauty and music of our nature' (*ibid.*) he writes. The ensuing 'humanitarian freedom' he portrays as being neither 'local nor racial nor sectarian'. This, he envisions, will eventually also flow from the different capitals of the world (*ibid.*).

'Not the beaten Indian serving as spur boy who holds the stirrup', but a people free and united, will prevail and assert themselves in a new America, Martí says (*ibid.*, 109). 'We certainly [will] not live here as

future slaves or dazzled peasants, but as people able and determined', he asserts (*ibid.*).

The more progressive aspects of Martí's thinking bring to light his devotion to *human solidarity*, something that the Cuban Marxist regime, and particularly Ernesto Guevara, took up with much fervor and determination (see Parts III and IV). Martí's address to the visitors at the Latin American Literary Society of New York, (JM 1889/1999f), in effect closes with words of human alliance, friendship, and companionship:

[After returning to your shores, you] will be able to say to her who is our mistress, hope and guide: 'Mother America, we found brothers there! Mother America, you have sons there!' (JM 1889/1999f, 110).

Nuestra América, Martí's most acclaimed revolutionary work of prose similarly concludes on the theme of harmony and accord:

With a single voice the hymn is already being sung; the present generation is carrying industrious America along the road enriched by their sublime fathers; from Río Grande to the Straits of Magellan, the Great Semí, astride its condor, spreading the seed of the new America over the romantic nations of the continent and the sorrowful islands of the sea! (JM 1891/1999g, 120).

¹ Bolívar's life was dedicated to the independence of the Spanish colonies, as well as the vision of the union of all countries situated on the Latin American continent. As a result of his skilled military leadership, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama won their independence, while Bolivia was named in his honour.

² See for example 'The Spanish Republic and the Cuban Revolution' written in 1873.

³ Marxist writers like Kowalewski for example, regard:

(1) Martí as the 'most remarkable revolutionary' to emerge in Latin America during the transition of capitalism to the imperialistic stage, and
 (2) his underlying political agenda, though rooted in nationalism, as a fitting 'revolutionary strategy' for this stage (Kowalewski 2005).

Marxist revolutionaries and scholars as diverse as Lenin and Durkheim have contended that the precondition for authentic internationalism is mature nationalism, which alone

distinguishes the shared aims of the diversity (Marshall 1994, 348). The position of this thesis is that Martí's overall political posture largely vacillates, something Lenin maintains, is an attribute of the petty-bourgeoisie (see Lenin 1983). Thus on the one hand, Martí's postures were at times highly progressive, as indicated for example, by the fact that his ideas – especially in respect of Latin American unity - formed the basis of socialist Cuba's commitment to international solidarity and universal culture (see ensuing chapters). On the other hand, his direct, consistent, and instinctive dismissal of foreign liberation theories and strategies - such as Marxism – places him in a similar camp to those accused in contemporary times of being 'Eurocentric' for example, by there failing to address and acknowledge the cultural, political, and scientific conquests that have emerged from post-colonial nations (see Marshall 1994, 347-48).

CHAPTER 4

RACE AND RACIAL PREJUDICE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The roots of Martí's posture on race and racism arguably trace back to his exposure to and subsequent abhorrence of 19th-century slave practices Latin American. Martí's petition to Don Estanislao Figueras (JM 1873/1999a) correspondingly deals with the continued cruelty inflicted upon African slaves, some of whom moreover, had already been granted their freedom. The document points out that it was Cuban revolutionaries who, in effect, had freed some '400,000 slaves' 'before Spain did any such thing', that Cuba's political prisons are 'filled with 10- and 11-year-old' captives, while 80-year-olds and older ones are 'whipped through the streets', 'mutilated' and 'killed'. He accuses Spanish occupying forces of shooting those who seem 'suspicious', while women are 'raped' and 'dragged through the streets'. Important also for Martí is the suffering of slaves who have joined in Cuba's struggle for independence. Freed slaves engaged in this fight are 'killed either immediately or, if their immediate deaths cannot be executed, slowly', he writes. Colonists, he charges, have 'beaten captured rebels to death', 'vent[ed] their rage on their dead bodies' and 'presented parts of the bodies of mutilated rebels as trophies' (*ibid.*, 39). Martí's moral judgment induces him to conclude, 'such horrors have taken place . . . they are so terrible' (*ibid.*).

With these and other similar experiences weighing on his moral consciousness, Martí undertakes to formulate what arguably amounts to 'a treatise' on race and racial discrimination, parts of which appear in separate writings (see JM 1891/1999g; JM 1891/1999i; JM 1892/1999j; JM

1893/1999k; JM 1894/1999m), and determine the focus of the discussion below.

4.2 THE CONCEPT OF RACE

In *Nuestra América* Martí's opening stance on racial issues is quite sweeping as he questions the very concept different of races itself. As he declares, 'there can be no racial animosity, because there are no races' (JM 1891/1999g, 119). 'My Race', an article published in *Patria* in 1893, takes up this theme: 'When you say 'men', you have imbued them with all their rights' (JM 1893/1999k, 160). To employ merely terminology like 'my race' amounts to performing 'the sin of redundancy' (*ibid.*). On another occasion, he qualifies this idea, asserting that factors such as 'environment' and 'human experience' ultimately determine humankind's way of life and appearance. These in themselves though, do not alter man's basic traits, as they remain indistinguishable and vital (JM 1894/1999m, 172). As he puts it,

There are no races; there are only the various modification of man in details of form and habits, according to the conditions of climate and history in which he lives, which do not alter the identical and the essential (*ibid.*).

Martí sees 'everything that divides men, everything that specifies, separates or pens' men as a 'sin against humanity' (*ibid.*). The advocacy of racial division and racial differences in an already divided society he holds, impedes 'public and individual happiness'. The latter he argues, can only be achieved by 'bringing people together as a nation'. Martí reasons that those who chose to proclaim 'their race' are in reality only asserting the 'spiritual identity' that distinguishes one group of people from another (JM 1893/1999k, 160-61)

4.3 RESOLUTION OF THE RACE QUESTION

Towards resolving this issue, Martí's advises that as a start, awareness of the 'essence of humankind' is essential. He regards past seekers of truth - in his words, 'theorists', 'feeble thinkers', the 'well-disposed observer', 'fair-minded traveler' - as having been futile in their search for the origin of man's

‘universal character’. The answer for Martí flows from ‘triumphant love and the turbulent hunger for life’. ‘Human souls’ he regards as ‘equal and eternal’, stemming from ‘bodies of different shapes and colors’. Thus whoever ‘foments and sows aggression and hatred amongst people, transgresses against humanity’, Martí restates (JM 1891/1999g, 119).

Martí rationalizes that over time as nations take shape there develop ‘vital and individual characteristics of belief, custom, development, success, pride and desire’ in people. In the process, the more powerful nations may come to consider ‘defenceless and secluded’ nations as ‘inferior and perishable’. In the context of Spanish (European/’white’) colonial occupation, he cautions that one should not attribute a ‘fatal and inborn wickedness’ to ‘all fair-skinned’ people simply on account of their different traditions, worldviews, and cultures. Neither should one instinctively disregard ‘the excitable, dark-skinned people’, nor necessarily look ‘charitably upon those less favored by history’ (JM 1891/1999g, 119). Hence, he holds that people should be considered on terms other than their skin colour or national origin.

‘Our Ideas’ (JM 1892/1999j, 151-52) resumes Martí’s more rational rather than overtly moral approach to the issue of racism. Among many other matters, the work looks into concepts like ‘democracy’ and ‘social equality’, arguing that mistreatment of their true meaning contributes to the problem of racial injustice. Martí reasons that if the ‘democratic system of equality’, ‘social equality’ means forcing one part of the population to set aside the rights of ‘friendliness and congeniality’, towards those practised by another group among its own members – then ‘social equality’ would be unjust for anyone who submitted to it, and wrong for those who wanted to impose it upon others. ‘Social equality’ for Martí entails but

fair and respectful treatment without limitations of regard not justified by corresponding limitations of ability or virtue in men of any color who can, and do honour mankind (JM 1892/1999j, 152).

In sum, ‘social equality’ amounts to nothing thing less than ‘recognizing the obvious impartiality of Nature’ for Martí (JM 1892/1999j, 152).

In addition to providing a stark *description* of racist practice during the age of slavery in Cuba, Martí thus also proffers some *explanation* for it. His moral stance in essence projects that people should neither be prejudged nor appraised on account of their skin shade. Martí’s thinking is anchored in the sincere belief in the universality of all people and the existence of one human race. He believes that the reasons behind the problem of racism should not be masked, because it is a problem that can be resolved. This, for him, is necessary to establish ‘the peace of centuries to come’; its achievability lies in ‘appropriate study, and by tacit and immediate union in the continental spirit’ (JM 1891/1999g, 120).

Whereas Martí initially directs his racial critique at Spanish authorities, he also seeks to address similar issues amongst fellow anti-colonial combatants. ‘With All, for the Good of All’ (JM 1891/1999i) his speech delivered at the Cuban Lyceum in Florida, America during a gathering of Cuban émigrés concerned with Cuba’s independence. Martí seeks to dispel ingrained bigotry and excessive suspicions, in this instance of those committed to a new and free Cuba.

Targeting chiefly his audience’s multitude of anxieties resulting from Spain’s manœuvres in their home country, Martí asks,

Must we be afraid [also] of the Cuban who has suffered most from being deprived of his freedom in the country where the blood he shed for it has made him love it too much to be a threat to it? Will we fear . . . our black brother – who for the sake of the Cubans who died for him has granted eternal pardon to the Cubans who are still mistreating him? Well, I know of black hands that are plunged further into virtue than those of any white man I have ever met. Others may fear him; I love him. Anyone who speaks ill of him I disown, and say to him openly: ‘You lie!’ (JM 1891/1999i, 140-41).

Although it may superficially appear so, Martí's quixotic devotion to 'blackness' is anchored in the high regard he holds for the Afro-Cuban who, triply oppressed on account of skin pigmentation, national origin, and social status, joined the battle - alongside those who may previously also have held him in contempt - for the common good of all.

Martí reiterates that for all Cubans, whether they come from 'the land of sun-burned skin' or from countries where 'the light is gentler', the revolution should be uniformly righteous (JM 1892/1999j, 151-152).

4.4 DOCTRINE ON EQUALITY

It is perhaps 'My Race' that most clearly projects Martí's doctrine on human equality (see JM 1893/1999k, 161-61). It is valuable to consider in detail Martí's vision in this social domain, albeit in the Cuban context, given the multitude of social harms ordinary citizens continue to endure in this regard (see Part III). In this context the protracted quotation below it is hoped will be deemed acceptable and appropriate. Martí writes as follows:

Men are more than whites, mulattos or blacks. Cubans are more than whites, mulattos or blacks. On the field of battle, dying for Cuba, the souls of whites and blacks have risen together into the air. In the daily life of defense, loyalty, brotherhood and shrewdness, blacks have always been there, alongside whites. Blacks, like whites, are divided by their character – timid or brave, self-sacrificing or selfish – into the diverse parties in which men group themselves. Political parties form around common concerns, aspirations, interests and characters. Essential similarities are sought and found beneath superficial differences; the common purpose is the fusion of that which is basic in the analogous characters In sum, the similarity of characters, which is a superior uniting factor, outweighs the inner frictions between men of varying colour and the difficulties that, at times, result. Affinity of character is more powerful than the affinity of colour. Blacks, consigned to the unequal or hostile pursuits of the human spirit, will never be able to join, nor will they want to join, against whites in like position. Whites and blacks are working together to develop men's minds, to spread virtue and to promote the triumph of creative work and sublime charity. In Cuba, there can never be a racial war. The Republic cannot go backwards. Civil rights cannot be denied – either by Spaniards who, as long as they

breathe in Cuba, will continue dividing black from white Cubans, or by those fighting for independence, who could never deny in freedom the rights which the Spaniards recognize in servitude. As for the rest, everyone will be free in the sanctity of his home. *Merit, the manifest and continuous evidence of culture . . . eventually unite all men.* In Cuba there is much greatness (JM 1893/1999k, 161-62, emphasis added).

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CHAPTER 5

EDUCATION, THE ARTS, & INTELLECTUALS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Following the triumph of the revolution in January 1959 the Cuban regime spared little effort in its endeavour to wipe out illiteracy and spread literature and art especially to the rural parts of the country (see Parts III and IV). Since Martí's thinking deeply influenced the cultural objectives of the modern Cuban state (see Cuban Constitution 2004), the sections below examine his ideas on related matters.

5.2 EDUCATION

Published in New York in 1884 'Wandering Teachers' (JM 1884/1999c) is a compendium of Martí's visions of the character and relevance of education in Cuba at the time. Written against the background of the high levels of underdevelopment and backwardness that existed especially in Cuba's rural areas, this work addresses the need and nature of education for Cubans living in the countryside. As will be perceived, on the one hand, Martí's ideas in this instance stem from his profound love for nature, and on the other and more significantly, his deep concern for raising the low education levels of Cubans far removed from the more advanced metropolis.

Not only does the rural setting bring man most closely in contact with nature, for Martí it also opens many possibilities for success. Hence, he motivates, 'the only open road to prosperity is that of knowing, cultivating, and benefiting from inexhaustible and indefatigable elements of Nature' (JM 1884/1999c, 47). As is habitual for Martí, 'Wandering

Teachers' is replete with phraseology steeped in morality. Proceeding in this manner Martí firstly sets out to establish the moral significance of rural education. 'Essential truths', he reasons, are crucial to national peace, to spiritual advancement and to 'the greatness of one's country' (JM 1884/1999c, 46). Flowing from this, 'men must be kept in the knowledge of their land'. In-depth awareness of the natural environment is important, since nature, Martí holds, sustains man's existence; a disregard of which will 'result in the ruin of the nation'. But Martí not only associates the rural locale with something as obvious as nature itself, it also evokes in him impressions of 'serenity', 'peace', and 'liberty' itself. He elaborates as follows:

a nation in which a taste for wealth and knowledge of the sweetness, needs and pleasures of life do not develop equally is condemned to death Men must live in the peaceful natural and inevitable enjoyment of freedom Men must know the composition, enrichment, changes and applications of the material elements from whose development they derive the healthful pride of one who works directly with Nature, the bodily strength derived from contact with the forces of the land, and the honest and secure wealth produced by its cultivation (JM 1884/1999c, 46-47).

For Martí there exists a close bond between being 'good' and being 'cultured' since these in turn, secure man's freedom. He reasons, 'Being good is the only way to be free. 'Being cultured is the only way to be free' (JM 1884/1999c, 48). Martí cautions that when removed from nature, man will steadily transform 'into pure solitude, carrying in his heart all the gray hair of winter time' (JM 1884/1999c, 46-47).

The material benefits generated by nature give rise to the possibilities of future trade, the character and objectives of which Martí believes, 'should benefit all': 'Men will always need the products of nature and thus active trade will assure wealth and freedom from want for all people' (JM 1884/1999c, 48).

The farmer comprises for Martí the ‘most valuable, healthful, and red-blooded segment of the population’, as they receive ‘the emanations of the soil from whose friendly intercourse they live’ (JM 1884/1999c, 48). Cities, Martí writes, are symbolic of the ‘minds of the nations’, but their hearts, ‘from where the mass of blood is sent in all directions’, lie in the countryside.

5.3 TEACHERS

Martí holds teachers in high regard since their role entails for him far more than merely offering rudimentary instruction. They must not only impart knowledge in the ‘field of agriculture or mechanical implements’, but also instill feelings of ‘compassion, warmth, kindness’, he says. Through, and in addition to their work, teachers must inspire the ‘tenderness which is so lacking in men and does them so much good’. Kirk (1986) observes that Martí considers teachers with great admiration, as if they were ‘mystics with unlimited supernatural powers’ (Kirk 1986, 112). Teachers can ‘sow and cultivate the seeds of their ideas’, ‘awakening the appetite for knowledge’ (JM 1884/1999c, 49) Martí writes. Rural education does not constitute for Martí an ‘infringement’ on the daily lives of those residing in the countryside, but rather ‘a sweet intrusion’, carried out in agreement with what is a ‘common concern of the human soul.’ Therefore, he argues, instead of sending mere ‘pedagogues’ to the country side, ‘we should send conversationalists’; ‘instead of pompous schoolmasters, educated people responsive to the doubts presented to them by the ignorant’. This engagement, he reiterates, should be ‘a campaign of gentleness and knowledge’. Martí feels assured that the rural poor can only but ‘appreciate’ the benefits of an education - they would be ‘happy if some good man arrived to teach them things they did not know’ (*ibid.*). It is urgent for Martí that Cuba in fact ‘scatter schools over the valleys, mountains and outlying regions’, an idea he relates to the Amazonian legend wherein ‘women and men were created by Father Almalivaca who scattered seeds of *moriche* palm over all the earth’. ‘Wandering Teachers’ concludes with Martí’s moral perception of the relevancy of a broad-based

education. As he writes, ‘the establishment of fundamental scientific education is as necessary as the sun’ (JM 1884/1999c, 50).

5.4 CONSCIOUSNESS AND IDEAS

It is in effect the fundamentals of education that for Martí establish the basis for developing a new consciousness, one infused not merely with ‘elementary knowledge’, but more so, *ideas* capable of meeting head-on any and all forms of injustice. Martí views the ‘ownership of ideas’ in exceedingly high regard, perceiving it as ‘intellectual armaments’, a means of resistance that supersedes all material weaponry (see JM 1891/1999g). This is how he projects this thought:

What remains of the village in America must rouse itself. These are not the times for sleeping in a nightcap, but with weapons . . . of the mind, which conquer all others. Barricades of ideas are worth more than barricades of stones. There is no prow than can cut through a cloudbank of ideas. A powerful idea, waved before the world at the proper time, can stop a squadron of iron-clad ships (JM 1891/1999g, 111).

With his own ideas, Martí endeavours to defend what he ‘considers a guarantee of, or service to, the revolution’ (JM 1895/1999n, 237). Notwithstanding his mortality as a human being, he trusts that after his demise what will prevail, are his ideas: ‘I know how to disappear. But my thoughts will never disappear’, he says (*ibid.*). On another occasion he associates his notion of ‘ideas’ with the impression of ‘trees’, since both rise from ‘deep roots and compatible soil in order to develop a firm footing and prosper’ (JM 1894/1999m, 175).

Martí’s posture on the concept of ‘ideas’ is taken up in his appraisal of Lieb’s art work (see JM 1887/1999d, 77-85), which is discussed below.

5.5 THE ARTS

Since literacy and basic education are but starting blocks for citizens’ academic development, it is in the domain of *literature* that Martí

recognizes a means of developing a deep consciousness of man's social realities as well as his own character, hopes, and responsibilities. Hence Martí regards literature, and effectively the arts in general, as vital tools for developing man's intellectual maturity and wellbeing, and above all, humaneness. As Kirk (1986) notes, Martí's ideas in this domain illustrate 'the fundamental importance of intellectual pursuits in any society' (Kirk 1986: 109). For that reason Martí writes,

what richness, if not that of spiritual strength and intellectual comfort, will help this people in its colossal misfortune? Life is unpleasant without the comforts of intelligence, the pleasures of art and the internal gratification that the goodness of the soul and the exquisiteness of taste produce to us (cited in Kirk 1986, 109).

In his collections of poetry Martí sought to achieve many things. Common to many is the voice of a poet who crafts a 'baroque, obscure, foaming, volcanic, abrupt and strange world' (Shnookal and Muñiz 1999, 14). The poems contained in the collection *Simple Verses*, published in 1891, for instance reaffirm Martí's close awareness of, and solidarity with, the subjugated, alienated human spirit. Arguably more serene than others, this collection is born of pain and anguish (see JM 1891/1999h, 251-71). It furthermore confirms the poet's insistence, as indicated also in the title, on a 'more direct and unencumbered form of expression' (Shnookal and Muñiz 1999, 14). This volume emphasizes the strong connection that exists for Martí, between life and thought, that is, human realities and reflective yet rousing literature, human experience and aesthetic expression. In his Prologue to *Simple Verses* Martí dwells on the personal experiences that inspired these works:

My friends know how these verses came from my heart. It was in that winter of despair, when, due to ignorance or fanatical faith or fear or courtesy, the nations of Latin America met in Washington, under the fearful eagle. Who among us has forgotten . . . the agony . . . the horror and shame [Up on] the mountains: there streams ran, clouds closed-in upon clouds, and I wrote poetry (JM 1891/1999h, 259).

The first poem (I) of *Simple Verses* has over time become Cuba's most beloved popular song, known also as *Guantánamera* (Kronenberg 2005a). It tenderly, yet austere, considers some elemental human experiences and emotions; most, if not all, are possibly the poet's own. At times deeply personal and placid, Martí's emotional flight is set in an uncomplicated, tranquil mode, thus validating 'the necessity of putting feelings in plain and sincere form' (JM 1891/1999h, 260). Extracts from the English version of the poem are offered below, accompanied by some brief commentary:

Serving as overture, the first verse considers themes inherent to humankind - character, heritage, and the quest to realize during one's lifetime, one's potential human talents:

*A sincere man am I
From the land where palm trees grow,
And I want before I die
My soul's verses bestow*

Verse 2 draws attention to the universal quality and significance of the human being. Accentuated also are a person's close affinity both with other human subjects and the natural sphere:

*I'm a traveler to all parts,
And a newcomer to none;
I am art among the arts,
With the mountains I am one*

The next verse bolsters human judgment, both in the moral and rational sense which ensues from an enriched intellect and human experience:

*I know the strange names of willows,
And can tell flowers with skill:
I know of lies that can kill,
And I know of sublime sorrows*

The following two verses symbolize a soaring outlook that merges diverse sensations - despair, intimacy, splendor, new life, and faith:

*I have seen through dead of night
Upon my head fall,
Rays formed of the purest light
From beauty celestial.*

*I have seen wings that were surging
From beautiful women's shoulders,
And seen butterflies emerging
From the refuse heap that molders*

Verse 6 conjures up thoughts of malice, loyalty, vulnerability, and reliability:

*I have known a man to live
With a dagger at his side,
And never once the name give
Of she by whose hand he died.*

Verses 7 and 15 reconsider the experience of pain, anguish and solitude – both in the particular and broader political realm:

*Twice, for an instant, did I
My soul's reflection descried,
Twice: when my poor father died,
And when she bade me goodbye.*

*I have hid in my brave heart
The most terrible of pains,
The son of a land in chains
Lives for it and dies apart*

Verse 8 dwells on the concerns of everyday family life:

*I trembled once, when I flung
The vineyard gate, and to my dread,
The dastard hornet had stung
My little girl on the forehead*

The next verse brings back albeit ironically, feelings of hopelessness and melancholy - as encountered by those committed to social change:

*Such great luck to me once came
As no man would dare to envy,
When in tears my jailer read to me
The death warrant with my name*

Verse 10 rekindles the innate liaison of the particular with the universal, articulated through feelings of desolation and dimness:

*I hear a sigh across the earth,
I hear a sigh over the deep;
It is no sigh reaching my hearth,
But my son waking from sleep.*

These verses not only echo Martí's deep-rooted cognition of human conduct and experience but also his compassion for them.

5.6 SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARTS

The interest of Martí in aesthetic production and his exploitation of literature as a liberating instrument are qualities that sustain his overall thinking. Shortly before his death in 1895 he remarks that 'a nation cannot be led counter to or without the spirit that motivates it' (JM 1895/1999n, 237). In this sense his own literature came to play a determined role in Cubans' inspiration and determination to fight for fundamental social-political change, something many have argued, culminated more than half a century after Martí's death in the Cuban socialist revolution.

Contemplating the social role of his own works, Martí firstly notes, ‘poetry has its own honesty’ (JM 1913/1999o, 251), thereby asserting art’s sovereignty. But he broadens this vision, likening his art simultaneously to a ‘heroic and virtuous warrior’. He sees a poem as a ‘shining sword that leaves the spectators with memories of a warrior bound for the heavens’ (*ibid.*), thus laying particular emphasis on the potential social force of the arts. Perhaps even more significantly he writes, ‘when he sheathes his sword in the sun, it breaks into wings’ (*ibid.*). The allegory is quite unmistakable, that after the conflict, when arms are laid to rest, the true value of the ‘warrior’ emerges, that of a champion of peace.

The fundamental source that determines the *purpose and meaning* of his creative craft is, for Martí, his inner being:

These poems – my warriors – are cut out of my very entrails. Not one of them has left my mind artfully or warmed over, but rather as tears leave the eyes and blood bubbles out of a wound (*ibid.*).

Though his literary skill is deemed supreme by many, for Martí it is his moral fibre - as shaped by his life experiences, social awareness, and devotion to human solidarity - that essentially arouses and molds his creative toil. My poems ‘are not written with academic ink, but with my own blood’ he declares (*ibid.*). Martí ultimately sees his wide experiences in life as determining the character and purpose of his inventive springboard and, as such, the subject matter of his art.

Martí’s advocacy is *not* however, for artists to be concerned purely with ‘political subject matter’, as reflected in his own poetic works. Though he writes the poet should

punish with his poems, as if they were a whip, those who want to take liberty from man or to steal with crooked laws the wealth of the people, or want the men of the nations to follow them like sheep and lick their hands like dogs (cited in Kirk 1986, 123),

he likewise considers the artist's role as 'sowing affection', 'exposing the world's splendors', etc. (see Kirk 1986). It is from his own distressing circumstances *and* sincere dedication to change them that he undertakes with his craft to rebuke those who bring about injustices. His mastery of artistic expression is but another facet of his commitment to the pursuance of human liberty. As stated, Martí equally recognizes other meaningful roles artists and the arts should undertake - as shown in his own poetic works and words here:

What the poet's duty is is to advise men to love each other and to paint the beauties of the world *Poetry should . . . be useful to the world*, teaching it that nature is beautiful, that life is duty, that death is not ugly, and that nobody should be sad so long as bookshops are full of books, the sky is full of light . . . (emphasis added, cited in Kirk 1986, 123).

Arguably the point of convergence of the 'radical political' and the 'purely aesthetic' lies in Martí's expression that poetry or the arts should be 'valuable to the world'. It can thus be deduced that Martí believes that artists should have the freedom to determine their work's content and form, provided these offer 'value to humankind'. That the arts do in fact carry social responsibility for Martí, is predicated in his notion that since artists and intellectuals are recipients of special and essential talents (Kirk 1986), by implication they are imbued with special and essential social obligation. As his moral posturing indicates,

Talent carries the duty of assisting the helpless. This is the yardstick by which man is measured (cited in Kirk 1986, 112).

This was also a means of avoiding what he called 'pigmeiso moral' – moral dwarfism (Kirk 1986) – in a population deprived of basic human development. In this regard it becomes the task of the artist and intellectual to raise the nation's intellect and social consciousness. The potential flourishing of 'ideas' – the emblematic weaponry to resist *all* of the wrongs inflicted upon humanity - constitutes for Martí both a catalyst

for, and measurement of, man's progress. In 'Our Ideas' Martí expressly holds that the objective of *Patria* – his esteemed publication and popular mouthpiece of Cuban exiles – is to 'maintain the intimate friendship which unites, and must unite, the various independent groups with one another' (JM 1892/1999j, 145). More significantly, 'The journal [*Patria*] intends to explain and determine the country's real and vital forces and their sources of composition and decomposition . . .' (*ibid.*). Interlinked, as ever, are his moral qualities and goals, as the same piece validates: 'Its function is to promote and proclaim virtue wherever it is found, and to unite and love and live in the passion for the truth (*ibid.*)'.

5.7 *Christ before Pilate*: MARTÍ'S CRITIQUE OF THE ARTS

With the above as backdrop, it is relevant to explore principles that Martí himself applies in his evaluation of other artists' works. His appraisal for example of the masterpiece *Christ before Pilate* (see JM 1887/1999d, 77-85), a work by the Hungarian painter Michael Lieb (1844-1900), known also Munkácsy, suitably offers some insight into this aspect of his thinking.

'The Munkácsy Christ', published in *La Nación*, Buenos Aires, was written after Martí's attendance of Lieb's much-admired 1886 US arts exhibition. The piece presents a detailed appraisal of the Hungarian artist, selecting for special scrutiny the art work entitled *Christ before Pilate*. As will be noted, Martí's valuation largely reiterates his own principles pertaining to himself as artist and his own literary works. It is patent also that Martí's explicit reverence of the art work stems equally from his immense appreciation of Lieb himself, notably his difficult background circumstances, something that Martí appears to understand fully and deeply respect. Thus it is the creator of the canvass that Martí accredits with special praise, writing, '*he* sees Jesus [the work's primary subject] as the most perfect incarnation of the invincible power of the idea' (emphasis added JM 1887/1999d, 81).

It is challenging to imagine that had Lieb *not* been victim of extremely difficult circumstances during his childhood development, whether Martí would still have bestowed such great honour upon his work, notwithstanding its artistic worth. Martí goes to some length to provide a broad awareness amongst his readers of Lieb's life history and more so, the abject social and personal conditions that characterized his upbringing. Accordingly Martí writes that Lieb was born during the era when 'Russians laid waste to Hungary', 'when people were starving to death and the artist's mother herself met her death through starvation while his father died in prison'. Counting himself extremely lucky, Lieb escaped injury and ruin after robbers murdered his entire household, leaving him alone next to the lifeless body of an aunt. As he had no formal education, his uncle employed him as a carpenter's assistant while some schoolchildren taught him to read and write. Lieb began painting the chests in the carpentry shop and after showing much insight, started taking lessons with a portrait painter. Being an avid reader, 'the heroic types and periods in history invaded his soul with light'; a soul, Martí considers that 'death, war, and the orphanage had clothed like a darkened funeral parlor'. Accordingly Lieb found it 'absolutely necessary to create, and had that thirst for truth, unknown to the learned, that makes men great' (JM 1887/1999d, 79). Continuing in this vein, Martí asks, 'How could Munkácsy paint his gloomy memories, but with the sorrows of his soul, the very colours that have given him no joy?' (JM 1887/1999d, 79). Therefore, Martí holds that, as for himself, Lieb's artistry flows from 'his soul' which 'seldom saw the sunlight' and from which he extracted his works' 'lugubrious tones' (JM 1887/1999d, 79). The 'pulsating beings' of Lieb's canvas 'evolved principally from inside the artist himself' (JM 1887/1999d, 80). In 'With all, for the good of All' (JM 1891/1999i), Martí records that when the artist creates his 'wonderful jewelry', initially the 'gold in his crucible is muddy', that it is from 'life's foulness that fruits derive their nectar and flowers their color'. The true artist he sees as being 'born of pain and darkness of the maternal womb, out of the scream and the sublime rending . . .' (JM 1891/1999i, 137).

Martí goes on to provide an account of arguably all of the characters presented in the painting – who they are and what each one signifies. In addition to the two central figures Jesus and Pilate, Martí's astute thinking both distinguishes and enlightens on the presence of a soldier, a bestial man, Caiaphas, two doctors, an old man, a wealthy Sadducee, some priests, a 'marvelously realistic peasant', a young mother with her baby, a bearded Bedouin, etc. (JM 1887/1999d, 82-83). Martí's exquisite interpretation of Christ reveals more pertinently also his gifted discernment of artworks generally. His commentary in this instance, at the same time offers broader insight into his spacious perception of Lieb's mastery of skill, which it is instructive to cite at length:

by some secret magic of the paintbrush, the white linen robe [of Christ] gives forth a great light which dominates and intensifies everything around it, restfully drawing together all varied movements of the whole, and investing with captivating majesty a solitary body from which the linen cloth hangs in graceful folds (JM 1887/1999d, 77-78). There he is in a loose-fitting robe, thin and bony. His wrists are bound, his neck stretched out, his tight lips partly open as if to make way for the final bitterness. One feels that evil hands have just been placed on him; that the human pack of hounds surrounding him has begun to sniff at him as if he were a wild animal; that he has had his robe torn to shreds, and has been reduced to the lowest and most despicable condition. And that instant of extreme humiliation is precisely the one which the artist chooses to make him emerge with a majesty that dominates the powers of the law before him, and the brutality pursuing him, without the aid of a single gesture or a visible muscle, thus making Christ emerge with the dignity of his garments, the height of his stature, the exclusive use of white pigments, and the mystical aureola of painters (JM 1887/1999d, 81).

Framing his observations of the artist's background circumstances on the one hand, and on the other, the painting's objective subject matter, Martí similarly proffers his appreciation of the human and social significance of both the artist and his creation. As he construes it, 'this painting contains something besides the pleasure produced by harmonious composition and the liking induced by an artist who impetuously addresses and splendidly completes a courageous work of art' (JM 1887/1999d, 84).

Martí distinguishes Lieb as an artist with ‘great admiration for intellectual power’. Striking therefore throughout his review are his perceptions of compelling and socially noteworthy *ideas* Lieb’s canvas generates. This possibly establishes the basis of Martí’s overall endorsement of the masterpiece as a whole. According to Martí the painter saw much value in an artist like Milton for instance, as the latter signifies the ‘finest model of the strength and beauty of ideas’. It is from this perspective too that Martí views Lieb’s conception of Christ as ‘the most perfect incarnation of the invincible power of the idea’. As he also remarks, ‘Munkácsy’s Jesus is the power of the pure idea’ (JM 1887/1999d, 81). Since Lieb’s artistic quality has been ‘nourished’ by the ‘force of ideas’, every one of Lieb’s canvasses has transformed into ‘an attack’ (JM 1887/1999d, 80). These attacks or *ideas*, epitomize for Martí a force that ‘purifies, sets ablaze, satisfies, praises, cleanses’. As he conveys in his own words, the idea ‘consecrates, inflames, attenuates, exalts, purifies’ (JM 1887/1999d, 81). It furthermore

gives stature that is invincible but can be felt; it cleanses the spirit of dross the way fire consumes the underbrush; it spreads a clear and secure beauty which reaches the soul and is felt in it (JM 1887/1999d, 81).

Martí concludes that the symbolism spawned by the figure Christ, should however be perceived in human terms. Thus he says ‘It is Jesus without a halo, the man subdued, the living Christ, the human, the rational and courageous Christ’ (JM 1887/1999d, 84). The character denotes not ‘charity’, ‘charming resignation’, or ‘immaculate and absolute forgiveness’ as these qualities are ‘not at all applicable to human nature’ (JM 1887/1999d, 80). It is the ‘body’s eyes’ which represent for Martí the work’s singular power since ‘anguish and aspiration are clearly seen in them’ (JM 1887/1999d, 81). Continuing in this vein, he writes, ‘one can feel that his glance, by means of his natural power, will continue to shed its fire’(JM 1887/1999d, 81). Contrasting the qualities of Christ (a

depiction of the human race) against the might of Pilate (an illustration of defective power), Martí pronounces,

All things will bow before those eyes which focus all the love, affirmation, splendor and pride that the spirit can hold. Jesus is near the four wide steps leading to Pilate's council chamber, and Pilate appears to be prostrate before him. Pilate's tunic is also white, but Jesus's robe, through no visible trick of the brush, shines with a light unlike that of the cowardly judge (JM 1887/1999d, 81-82).

Though Martí considers the key man in the painting as someone who 'delights and arrests one's judgment' through his 'triumph and resurrection', it is *how he lived his life as a human being* as well as *his human strength* that carries the greatest magnitude for him. In the end these qualities illustrate 'the vision of our own strength in the *pride and splendor of virtue*' (JM 1887/1999d, 84, emphasis added). Martí validates his thought as follows:

It is the victorious new idea aware that its light can free the soul without any extravagant and supernatural communion with creation; it is ardent love and disdain for self that took the Nazarene to his martyrdom (JM 1887/1999d, 84).

Martí ultimately sees Lieb as someone who possessed the valour to find in his own soul the divine nature of humanity. Thus, he believes, that with his creative imagination and power of mind, Lieb has shown that within the human soul, the divine also resides (JM 1887/1999d, 84-85).

Martí's positive critique of Lieb's ideas wholly affirms (1) his intense awareness, and their significance for him, of essential human qualities, (2) his sincere belief in a life based on honour and virtue, and (3) his notion of the power of ideas to combat human injustice in all its forms. In this instance the power of the idea presents itself in the figure of Christ, set before a purported 'throne of justice'. Although he was pronounced to be at fault and condemned to death, for Martí this idea has not perished as

ensuing human struggles and visions for an enhanced existence continue to nurture it.

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CHAPTER 6

MARTÍ AND MARXISM

6.1 INTRODUCTION

When Martí located to the United States in 1880, he at first wrote favourably of the country and its diverse people, but as he came to distinguish more and more the social truths of commonplace working people and Washington's imperialist objectives towards Latin America, his views were radically transformed (see Shnookal and Muñiz 1999). Thus in 1894, he came to express the view United States of 'the free and equal' 'is a fraud and delusion' (JM 1894/1999m, 173). He noted that the people living in the North are 'worlds apart from the choleric, poverty-stricken, broken, bitter, lacklustre' Southerners (*ibid.*), implicitly also rebuking US racist practices at the time. He recorded furthermore, that 'from the standpoint of justice and legitimate social science it should be recognised that . . . the North American character has gone downhill . . . and is today less human and virile' (*ibid.*, 176). Imbued with disillusion and adopting an increasingly critical standpoint, Martí's writing consequently endeavoured to reveal to the countries of Latin America

The crude, uneven and decadent character of the United States and the continuous existence there of all the violence, discord, immorality and disorder (*ibid.*).

Martí's status as a revolutionary nationalist stringently condemning colonialism and the socio-economic effects of US capitalism, especially in its imperialist dimensions, is suggestive of the socialist tradition. This argument is reinforced by his great impact on the social and liberation struggles across the Latin American continent during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Of obvious note is the

manner in which his ideas have been endorsed by Cuban Marxists (see Cuban Constitution 2004).

6.2 CUBAN RÉGIME'S POSITION

It is noteworthy from the start, that though Fidel Castro – in his position as the supreme representative of both the Cuban regime and nation, and insofar as he claims to be a Marxist himself - recognizes a great resemblance between Martí and Marx, he does not regard Martí as a Marxist (see Betto 1986). Castro's standpoint is that had 'Martí lived in the same environment as Marx, he would have had the same ideas and acted in more or less the same way' (Betto 1986, 113). Castro sees Martí's thinking as a basis that naturally leads to Marxism: 'Martí's thinking contains such great and beautiful things that you can become a Marxist by taking his thought as a starting point' (*ibid.*). Castro's final judgment is that although Martí was a man 'who always stood at the side of the poor and who bitterly criticized the worst vices of a society of exploiters', he did not 'explain why society was divided into classes' (*ibid.*). With these viewpoints as background, the passages below explore (1) Martí's personal perceptions of and stance towards Marxism and (2) instances where his general perceptions, visions, and ideas in effect do intersect with, as well as, fundamentally diverge from, the broad Marxist tradition.

6.3 MARTÍ'S PERSONAL PERCEPTION AND STANCE

A few days after the death of Karl Marx in March 1883, a memorial meeting took place in his honor at the Cooper Union Hall in New York City (see JM 1883/1999b). Following his attendance of this historic event which hosted a large assembly of the US and international labour movements, Martí wrote 'The Memorial Meeting in Honor of Karl Marx' (JM 1883/1999b). His commentary was published in *La Nación*, Buenos Aires in May of the same year. Comparatively brief, the piece nonetheless provides some valuable insight into Martí's perception of Marx the man, his ideas, and followers.

'The Memorial Meeting' firstly describes Marx in deferential terms as, 'ardent reformer', 'uniter of men of different peoples', a 'tireless, powerful organizer' (JM 1883/1999b, 44). Martí also expresses awareness of the link between Marx's

functionality, that is , the political inference of his thought, and theoretical implications, commenting he was not only ‘a titanic stimulator of the wrath of European workers’, but similarly “showed great insight into ‘the causes of human misery and the destiny of men’ (JM 1883/1999b, 44). In line with this he says, ‘Karl Marx studied the methods of setting the world on new foundations, and wakened those who were asleep, and showed them how to cast down the broken props’ (JM 1883/1999b, 43-44).

But Martí sees Marx perhaps more significantly, as a icon of morality – ‘the virtuous man’ (JM 1883/1999b, 43). This already is reflected in the opening lines, which launch both his high regard for Marx and the moral logic behind it: Marx ‘deserves to be honored *for declaring himself on the side of the weak*’ (emphasis added, JM 1883/1999b, 43). As he later in the piece substantiates, Marx was ‘a man driven by the *burning desire to do good*’ (emphasis added JM 1883/1999b, 44).

Marx’s expansive, all-encompassing worldview similarly finds in Martí a great measure of appreciation. For Martí, The International embodies an internationalist outlook, something that greatly impacted on the destiny of all the workers of the world. Hence, on the occasion of remembering Marx, Martí observes that ‘all nations honour him’, with the masses present consisting of the ‘valiant worker’, from ‘farm worker’, and ‘blacksmith’, to ‘seamen’ (JM 1883/1999b, 43). The piece furthermore shows Martí’s familiarity with and respect for Marxist-aligned scholars of his time, such as Schevitch; Swinton; Johann Most; Millot; McGuire and Henry George. The meeting’s intercontinental spirit finds some measure of expression also in the gathering’s relative gender parity. As Martí discerns, ‘among so many men, there are many women’ in attendance (JM 1883/1999b, 44).

While Martí’s admiration for Marx in the piece is not in dispute, there exists no real evidence in it either of his support for, or adherence to, Marxist views as such. Martí offers merely a personal account draped in flowery literary skill of an event he greatly admires without aligning himself with the ideological postures of the occasion. The piece does in effect project a degree of criticism of both Marx

and the gathering, which, as will be seen, evokes some confusion. In the first instance Martí writes, Marx, ‘being in a hurry’, ‘his understanding’ was ‘somewhat clouded’ (JM 1883/1999b, 44). Substantiating this view, Martí holds that Marx

did not see that children who do not have a natural, slow and painful gestation are not born viable, whether they come from the bosom of the people in history, or from the wombs of women in the home (JM 1883/1999b, 44).

Martí’s figurative expression it appears, suggests that Marx’s ideas and theoretical implications are either too advanced or perhaps even unworkable for the proletariat class, that possibly those who are fighting or must still engage in the struggle, be it for independence, social fairness, or equality, are far from fully perceiving and adopting Marx’s thinking.

Sustaining this is Martí’s belief that possible solutions to the social and political issues of his time should essentially emanate from his national milieu. In *Nuestra América* he repeatedly highlights this conviction, reinforcing his pursuance of Cuba’s total and complete independence in nationalistic terms:

the able governor . . . must know the elements that make up his own country, and how to bring them together, using *methods and institutions originating within the country*, to reach that desirable state where each man can attain self-realization (JM 1891/1999g, 113).

In *Nuestra América* Martí reiterates the idea that the structure of government – a ‘government that must originate in the country’ (*ibid.*) – must be consistent with the ‘rules appropriate to the country’ since good governance ‘is nothing more than the balance of the country’s natural elements’ (*ibid.*). While these ideas are broadly consistent with general political ideals inherent in independence struggles, it is his conviction that ‘the only route to freedom lies in knowing one’s country and to govern it with that knowledge’ (JM 1891/1999g, 114) that goes

directly against Marx's internationalist worldview. As his stark propensity to nationalism clearly shows:

The European university must bow to the American university. The history of America, from the Incas to the present, must be taught in clear detail and to the letter, even if the archons of Greece are overlooked. Our Greece must take priority over the Greece which is not ours (JM 1891/1999g, 114).

More than a decade after writing 'The Memorial' Martí penned 'The truth about the United States'. Apart from launching a scathing attack on the vices of US society, the piece also resumes the above line of thinking. In it Martí makes the comic assertion that 'a newborn baby is not given the wisdom and maturity of age merely because one glues on its smooth face a mustache and a pair of sideburns' (JM 1894/1999m, 174). 'Monsters', writes Martí, 'are created that way, not Nations' (*ibid.*). He goes on to explain that

people have to live of themselves, and sweat through the heat One must suffer, starve, work, love and study, even in vain, but *with one's own individual courage and freedom In this way a man can form opinions, with glimmers of reason* (JM 1883/1999b, 175, emphasis added).

The above instances, as do others, visibly affirm Martí's entrenched patriotic tendencies which clearly border on a belief system rooted in nationalism. It is not too much to deduce that since Marxism originates from foreign soil, this in itself makes it of little or no *political* value to Martí.

Returning to 'The Memorial Meeting in Honor of Karl Marx', in the second instance and arguably more pertinently, Martí's concluding lines leave behind his customary rousing script, closing the piece rather on a low note that similarly induces some perplexity. Making reference to the 'rousing ambiance' generated by the 'choral societies' in attendance, Martí writes, 'Music sounds; choirs resound; but note that *these are not the sounds of peace*' (emphasis added JM 1883/1999b, 45). In this instance Martí refers either to great upheavals, which of

necessity must follow for the establishment of social fairness, or to the notion that the Marxist tradition as a whole is one of conflict.

6.4 MARTÍ'S LITERATURE AND MARXISM

Beyond Martí's direct contact with, and subsequent commentary on, the international Marxist movement following Marx's death, what is the scope of intersection of his general ideas and visions with Marxist thought? How does his thinking digress from key Marxist standpoints?

As a start, it is quite evident that Martí had an in-depth perception of the hardships suffered by ordinary people and workers in particular of his age. More importantly and in line with general Marxist thinking¹, a sweeping *denunciation* of the working class's wretched circumstances perpetually accompanies his awareness of, and deep concern with, his social milieu. Martí's perceptions and standpoints in this respect thus noticeably validate the standpoints of the Cuban regime - as expressed by Castro (discussed above).

The more that Martí got to know US society the more he came to comprehend the harsh certainties that lay behind the 'vener of general opulence' (Ibarra 1986, 85). Martí similarly recognizes the extent and extreme nature of brutality utilized by the bourgeoisie to ensure its continued supremacy. He expresses it thus: 'the police, proud of the authority and uniforms that put fear into the hearts of the uncultured, manhandle and murder them' (JM 1888/1999e, 92). He releases an increasingly forceful attack against the living and working conditions of the lower echelons of society, especially the urban workers (*ibid.*). Consequently, much of his writing condemns outright the huge levels of social inequality that existed particularly in the US. He observes for instance in 'The Funeral of the Haymarket Martyrs: a Terrible Drama' - his commentary on police brutality published in *La Nación* in 1888 - that in the emerging West one finds on the one hand, 'astounding rapidity of growth, accumulating mansions and factories, and on the other, wretched masses of people'. This to him represents 'the evils of a system that punishes the most industrious with hunger, the most generous with persecution'. The industrialists he characterizes as

justified in their own eyes by the success of their grand and glorious factories; they are prejudiced by prosperity, they employ unjust methods and harsh treatment that keep them prosperous (JM 1888/1999e, 90).

About the impoverished Martí writes,

they are cold and hungry, live in stinking houses . . . these wretched people fail to understand that they are merely cogs in the gears of society; *if they are to change all the gears must change* (JM 1888/1999e, 92, emphasis added).

Though he clearly makes the distinction that ‘all the gears of society must undergo change’ – a universal Marxist position - this is precisely also where he stops short of offering (1) an exhaustive abstract clarification of the workings of these ‘cogs’, and more significantly, (2) a theoretical or political solution that could fundamentally challenge and alter ‘the gears’ of existing society. In these instances and elsewhere, though he does not articulate his ideas in Marxist theoretical terms, Martí’s thought is clearly in line with *Marxist perceptions* (but outwardly only) of the social and economic realities that ensue from the class structures in capitalist society. Martí though, highlights the *effects* of capitalist relations on the poor and industrial workers, presenting them predominantly and sometimes purely in moral terms. He regards the potential value of Marxism not so much in terms of its political strength, but on moral grounds, which he clearly finds agreeable.

What follows is a suitable example of Martí’s vivid awareness of the dismal material conditions on the one hand, and on the other, the ensuing hopes of the poor and working class of his epoch. Though not a Marxist analysis of class relations as such, it reveals the close correlation between Martí’s and Marxist thought. Here too, he expresses his ideas mainly in human terms, reaffirming his intimate sense of morality. In the context of heightened global capitalism today, the extract below in no tentative manner reveals the *pertinence and continuity* of Martí’s ideas expressed more than a century ago:

The worker believes he has a right to certain security for the future, a certain amount of comfort and cleanliness for his house, a right to feed without worry the children he begets, a fairer share in the products of the work of which he is an indispensable factor, some time in the sun for helping his wife plant a rosebush in his yard, some corner in which to live that is not a stinking hole one cannot enter without nausea, as in the city of New York. And every time the Chicago workers asked for this in some way, the capitalists banded together and punished them by denying them the work that means their meat, their heat and their light. The bosses set the police on them, the police who are always eager to let their nightsticks fall upon the heads of the shoddily clothed. At times a policeman would kill some daring soul who resisted with stones, or some child. The workers were finally starved into returning to their jobs, spirits grim, misery further irritated, decency offended, meditating vengeance (JM 1888/1999e, 94).

As Ibarra (1986) corroborates, Martí's sensitivity to his environment did not produce a theoretical formulation of the class struggle and the task of the workers (Ibarra 1986, 84) in bringing an end to oppression. While his intrinsic compassion for the anguished working class is plain, he was precluded by his ideological horizon (*ibid.*) not so much from *describing* as from fully *explaining* and offering *solutions* to the abject conditions of the proletarian class.

¹ A fitting illustration is the critical commentary by the Marxist scholar and writer Didi Cheeka. Her commentary (Cheeka 2005) deals with contemporary social and economic conditions of ordinary Nigerian citizens with responses thereto from the Nigerian presidency. The article was originally published on 08 December 2005 in arguably the leading international online Marxist journal, *In defence of Marxism*. Besides the socio-political impact of Cheeka's critique, and notwithstanding the variation in timeframe and geographical location, it brings to light Martí's essential likeness with, as well as, fundamental divergence from Marxist thinking. Whereas Martí's awareness and condemnation of workers' abject social conditions are principally expressed in moral terms, Cheeka, as with other Marxist scholars generally, primarily launches a scientific, analytical critique that incorporates historical, statistical, national, and economic data. In contrast to Martí, it is her methodical, rational-critical, yet humane analyses of class structures and their repercussions for humanity that in essence sustain her claims to universal rights and equality. Contrary also, and for obvious reasons, Cheeka openly champions socialism as the only means to human equality and contentment.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Martí's thinking is principally concerned with the (see) major political issues of his time, US imperialism, race and racial prejudice, the *complete independence* of Cuba from Spanish colonial rule, to the *total unity* of all countries on the South American continent.

The impact of Martí's wide-ranging intellect is not only prevalent today in his native country Cuba, but extends into the entire Spanish-speaking world. Thus, his acclaim and credence similarly reach into adversarial territory. Miami's right-wing Cuban émigré communities similarly have adopted his teachings to strengthen their anti-Castro/revolutionary cause. This fact already sums up Martí's underlying political carriage, that he was a bourgeois nationalist, fiercely patriotic in his devotion to the anti-colonialist movement of his age. His 'revolutionary status' in large measure stems from his dedication to take up arms in Cuba's struggle for independence from Spanish colonial rule, a loyalty that exacted from him the ultimate human sacrifice. For many, his revolutionary standing equally stems from his attentiveness and hostility to North American capitalist-imperialist measures.

Contemporary Cuban literary theorist and writer Fernandez Retamar, is of the view that whereas Rodó's 'temporal homeland was the nineteenth century', Martí's true place was 'the future'. For Retamar this implies that modern Cuban culture cannot be valued fully without knowledge of Martí's thought and work (Retamar 1989, 18). Martí's initial political schema – perhaps unconscious to him

- clearly ensued from his leanings towards patriotism, nationalism, and reformism. Whereas his early writing quite adequately reveals an unswerving patriotic/nationalistic stance, his poem XXXIX from *Simple Verses* is a clear expression of his early reformist beliefs:

*I have a white rose to tend
 In July as in January;
 I give it to the true friend
 Who offers his frank hand to me.
 And to the cruel one whose blows
 Break the heart by which I live,
 Thistle nor thorn do I give:
 For him too, I have a white rose*
 (Shnookal and Muniz 1999, 267).

By the late 1880s Martí came to understand that the popular vote, as it existed under 'democracy' in the US, was a 'fraud' (Ibarra 1986, 87). Notwithstanding his possible lack of knowledge or be it conscious disregard, or even premeditated dismissal of Marxist theory, these years marked his transition from liberal thought, characterized by a reformist dogma, to the 'most advanced democratic-revolutionary thought of his era' (*ibid.*) on the Latin American continent.

Martí's identification with the victims of his time imposed on him concrete tasks to be fulfilled for the good of all. Far from obstructing him, that realization compelled him to formulate the 'most radical and modern criteria' to resist colonialism on the continent (Retamar 1989, 20).

Martí's literary and overall cultural expression had far-reaching social impact - since the basic function of literature for him was to 'come close to life, to take

inspiration from it and to reform it after proper knowledge of it' (Kirk 1986, 114). In his painful circumstances Martí felt the desire for intellectual endeavors and the utilization of talents for educational goals. His model of the intellectual's rightful task entails being both an educator and a searcher for truth who contributes to the creation of consciousness. His anguish and deep moral concern caused him to denounce unfairness and solicit the assistance of all to fundamentally amend society - for the common good of all. Thus a significant mission of the intellectual, as revealed in his own example, is to use literary articulation as a means of reproaching wrongs, of pointing out the necessity for social transformation, of elevating consciousness, and of organizing citizens to engage in battle for social fairness. The concluding passage of 'Our Ideas' likens his literature to a 'bugle . . . sounding in the assemblies of Cubans abroad and on the island' (JM 1892/1999j, 153). The objective behind this was to 'watch over freedom, to be an invincible force for unity, and to prevent the enemy from again defeating us' (*ibid.*). On a further occasion he noted that 'politics and literature flourish only when they are direct' (cited in Retamar 1989, 20). But he equally saw the arts as a measure for exposing life's treasures.

Though he applauded the work of thought, he preferred the union of thought and action (Kirk 1986, 120-21) – as shown by his own undertakings in life and as clearly expressed here:

What is . . . thinking without acting, saying without doing, desiring without loving . . . what is the value of abhorring the tyrant, while living in his shadow and eating at his table? What is the value of preaching revolution, loudly or softly, without preparing the ill-ruled country for the revolution that is preached? (cited in Kirk 1986, 122).

Martí's political foresight went beyond a purely independent, sovereign, and free Cuban territory. He himself observed, 'It is a case of changing a nation's soul, their entire way of thinking and acting, and not just their external clothes' (cited in Shnookal and Muñiz 1999, xii). This in itself would have a critical bearing on

the cultural dimension of Cuban society. Though his thought was concerned with the ‘fundamental transformation of Cuban society’ and as such the thorough reorganization of the economic, social and political spheres (Shnookal and Muñiz 1999, xii), it did not ensue from a specific ideological, political, or theoretical standpoint, but *from moral and human considerations*. His stature as a bourgeois nationalist implies that his composite thought denotes diverse objectives to people set poles apart. Yet there are clear, relentless ideas emanating from his writings: his conflict with racial distinction and prejudice and his commitment to the equality and dignity of all. As he argued, ‘Is it not evident that America itself was paralyzed by the same blow that paralyzed the Indian? And until the Indian is caused to walk, America itself will not begin to walk well’ (cited in Retamar 1989, 20). On the 100th commemoration of Martí’s death, the Cuban régime distinguished him as ‘a universal man with extraordinary ideas’ (Shnookal and Muñiz 1999, 9).

Martí did not draw attention to the link between racial discrimination and class structures enforced by capitalism. His doctrine on human equality however, can be regarded as hugely progressive and scientifically sound as it not only condemned *racial discrimination* – a fairly universal reaction to racism – but also the notion of *racial distinction*. More than a century after his death the declaration of the United Nations Conference Against Racism held in South Africa in 2001 indisputable asserted that ‘Race/racism is scientifically false and morally condemnable’. In her piece ‘Identity on the borderline’ Rajasingham-Senanayake (2002) decodes this as meaning the following:

Human differences are made cultural sense of: whether in terms of ‘caste’, ‘class’, ‘culture’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘language’, ‘race’, ‘religion’, ‘region’, ‘gender’, ‘sex’, or a myriad other possible labels. It is not so much the facts of difference among groups or individuals *per se*, but rather how those differences were and are culturally coded, rendered politically significant and meaningful or reduced, erased or made insignificant, that are of interest to the student of history and politics (Rajasingham-Senanayake 2002, 44).

Retamar considers Martí's humanistic contribution to Cuban culture as flowing from the acquiescent convention advanced by his forerunner, Simón Bolívar. In his message to the congress of Angostura in 1819, Bolívar proclaimed,

Let us bear in mind that our people is [sic] neither European nor North American, but a composite of Africa and America rather than an emanation of Europe; for even Spain fails as a European people because of her African blood, her institutions, and her character. It is impossible to assign us with any exactitude to a specific human family. The greater part of the native people has been annihilated; the European has mingled with the American and with the African, and the African has mingled with the Indian and with the European. Born from the womb of a common mother, our fathers, different in origin and blood, are foreigners; all differ visibly in the epidermis, and this dissimilarity leaves marks of the greatest transcendence (cited in Retamar 1989, 5).

Continuing in this tradition, Martí saw the ethos of the Cuban people and in effect, the people of the continent as follows:

we are descended from Valencian fathers and Canary Island mothers and feel the inflamed blood of Tamanaco and Paramaconi¹¹ coursing through our veins; we see the blood that fell amid the brambles of Mount Calvary as our own, along with that shed by the naked and heroic Caracas as they struggled breast to breast with the gonzalos in their iron-plated armour (cited in Retamar 1989, 19).

Conjuring up the memories of the continent's original inhabitants, Martí proclaimed, 'We must stand with Guaicaipuro, Paramaconi, and not with the flames that burned them, not with the ropes that bound them, nor with the steel that beheaded them, not with the dogs that devoured them' (*ibid.*). In this sense Martí's rejection of colonialist oppression and tyranny, and his solidarity with the people of the Latin American continent, is complete.

¹ According to Retamar (1989, 19) these are natives of what is today called Venezuela.

University of Cape Town

PART III

HUMANISM IN REVOLUTIONARY CUBA

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER 8

GUEVARA'S IDEOLOGY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

8.1.1 Aims of the Chapter

This chapter endeavours to demonstrate that Guevara's adoption of Marxism, in effect, translates into an acceptance of categories of Marxist-humanist thinking. The findings here serve also as background to ensuing chapters which illustrate Guevara's ideological standpoints as he sought to employ and apply them within the Cuban revolutionary process.

8.1.2 Anti-Capitalist-Imperialist Stance

As a result of his exposure to the abject social and economic conditions prevalent at the time in Latin America, Guevara developed a deep consciousness of, and hostility towards, US capitalism and its central role in the political and economic conditions of oppressed nations. Subsequently some of his speeches and writings strongly condemn US imperialism and capitalist exploitation (see EG 1960/2003g; EG 1961/2003i; EG 1962/2003m; EG 1962/2003x; EG 1964/2003r; EG 1964/2003s; EG 1965/2003v; EG 1967/2003w). His theories for (1) opposing US capitalism-imperialism and (2) instituting a new world order, in essence advance the establishment of internationalism and universal solidarity amongst all oppressed nations, topics which are discussed in detail in Chapter 14. Emanating from his deep-seated devotion to the complete well-being of all human subjects, Guevara similarly developed ideas relating to the economy (see Chapters 9 and 12).

8.1.3 On revolutionary theory

In his 1960 'Notes for the study of the ideology of the Cuban revolution' (EG 1960/2003f), Guevara states quite boldly that during the period leading up to the revolution, the principal actors of the revolution 'had no coherent viewpoint'. At this time the awareness of revolutionary theory and its application to revolutionary praxis were 'not of paramount importance' since Cuba's revolutionary leadership did possess 'other important qualities' (EG 1960/2003f). Thus, while a definitive Marxist theory may have been lacking in their consciousness, he justifies this by asserting that the leaders were not oblivious to various concepts of history, society, economics, and global discussions on revolution at that time:

A profound knowledge of reality, a close relationship with the people, the firmness of the objectives being sought, and the experience of revolutionary practice gave [our leadership] the opportunity to form a more complete theoretical conception (EG 1960/2003f, 121).

It appears that Guevara sought to defend this 'lack of revolutionary theory' on the basis of the victory of the Cuban revolution. He calls the Cuban revolution a 'unique revolution' which does not fit in with orthodox premises of the revolutionary movement as expressed by Lenin 'without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement' (EG 1960/2003f, 121). For Guevara, revolutionary theory is 'an expression of a social truth, standing above any particular presentation of it'. In other words, he concludes, a revolution can be made if historical truths are understood accurately and if the forces involved are employed correctly, 'even without knowing theory' (*ibid.*). Guevara came to regard the Cuban revolution as embracing Marxist thinking at the point where Marx 'put aside science to pick up his revolutionary rifle' (*ibid.*, 123):

We, practical revolutionaries, by initiating our struggle were simply fulfilling laws foreseen by Marx the scientist. Along that road of rebellion, by struggling against the old power structure, by basing ourselves on the people to destroy that structure, and by having the well-being of the people as the foundation of our struggle, we are simply fitting into the predictions of Marx the scientist. *That is to say, and it is well to emphasise this once again: the laws of Marxism are present in the events of the Cuban revolution, independently of whether its leaders*

profess or fully know those laws from a theoretical point of view (EG1960/2003f, 123, emphasis added).

8.2 GUERRILLAISM

Throughout his life Guevara held guerrilla warfare in high esteem, perceiving it as a deed that ‘deserves to be studied in the history of the contemporary world’ (*ibid.*). Guevara developed some interest also in the revolutionary processes of China, Vietnam, Algeria, and Puerto Rico, especially the role of the peasantry in bringing about land reform. The Chinese régime was adopting a more ‘radical face’ internationally after the rupture which had taken place between itself and the USSR bureaucracy. Guevara became attracted towards the Chinese model, not only because of its ‘radical face’, but more so as a result of the victory of the peasant army which had taken place in 1949. It appeared to confirm his own analysis that the predominantly-peasant guerrilla movement situated in and operating from the countryside - on its own could bring about a social revolution. Thus he believed that, after the initial defeat of Mao’s revolutionary forces, the latter were able to stabilise themselves and begin their forward march only when they had settled in rural territories and made agrarian reform the basis of their demands.

Similarly, he viewed the struggle of Ho Chi Minh as being authentic since it was ‘based on the rice-growing peasants oppressed under the French colonial yoke’ (EG 1960/2003c, 67). In the case of Algeria, for Guevara the ‘great idea of Arab nationalism’ had its ‘economic counterpart’ in gaining control of the arable land owned by French settlers. Although conditions were markedly different in Puerto Rico, which did not allow for the outbreak of guerrilla warfare at the time, Guevara saw ‘the aspiration of the peasantry’ as the basis of the country’s ‘nationalist spirit’ – a spirit ‘deeply wounded by the acts of discrimination’ by ‘the Yankee invader’ (*ibid.*).

Guevara, however, did not consider warfare as the only revolutionary means to be adopted by all the forces engaged in the fight for a new and just social system. In 1962¹ he proposed that:

when faced with the decision to bring about more socially just systems in the Americas there exists . . . some possibility of peaceful transition; this is pointed out in the studies of classical Marxist authors . . . [A]ll the progressive forces do not have to initiate the road of armed revolution but must use . . . every possibility of legal struggle within bourgeois conditions (EG 1968/2003x, 297).

8.3 MARXIST-HUMANISM

Whereas various Marxist scholars and indeed Guevara himself have pointed out his deficient theoretical understanding of Marxism overall, he at times, and especially in his later writings, he reveals a deeper understanding of, and more coherent commitment to, aspects of Marxist-humanist thinking, something that arguably forms the basis from which he launches his perceived goals and visions for a future socialist society. This, conceivably, is the most articulate category of Marxist thought Guevara adopted that furthermore, frames his subsequent denunciation of bureaucracy and totalitarianism (see below). The sections following in large measure endeavour to illustrate this supposition.

8.3.1 The Moral and Human Factor

Hart Davalos, revolutionary Cuba's first minister of education who also held the portfolio of culture until the late 1990s, concludes from his studies of Guevara that he (Guevara) initially became inspired by 'the spiritual heritage of *Our America*', brought to the forefront by Martí through his commitment to moral and human values. This in turn led to Guevara adopting ideas of Marx and Engels to motivate and guide the revolutionary action of the masses and society as a whole (Hart Davalos 2000). Hence, flowing from his condemnation of the Stalinist bureaucratic course (discussed below), Guevara developed theories of a new society structured not only on Martí's visions, but also on aspects of the Marxist tradition. This is shown especially in his passion to construct a 'new personality' infused with human principles and operating in a socialist society. His standpoints in this regard reflect some of the significant issues he sought to deal with after the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959. Hart Davalos (2000) furthermore argues that since the moral factor had been lacking in Cuban politics - a factor which often ends up leading to revolution - it was Guevara's conviction that without it there could be no revolution. Hart Davalos maintains

that Guevara recognised ‘the enormous role of culture and moral values in the history of civilization, and extracted from it the essential practical values for social transformation’.

8.3.2 Guevara’s attitude towards Marxism

Guevara considers that the merit of Marx lies in the fact that he ‘interprets history, understands its dynamic, and foresees the future’. But in addition to foreseeing it, he shows that it is not enough to interpret the world, *it must be transformed*.² Through Marx’s teachings humanity ceases to be ‘the slave and instrument of his environment and becomes an architect of his own destiny’. Guevara sees Marx, furthermore, as someone who became ‘the target’ of those who wish to preserve the status quo (as was the case with ‘Democritus, whose work was burned by Plato himself and his disciples’ – ‘the ideologues of the Athenian slave-owning aristocracy’) (EG 1960/2003f, 123).

8.3.3 Role of Marxists

In 1963, drawing on ideas from Kuusinen’s *Manual of Marxism-Leninism* (Deutschmann 2003, 169), Guevara advocates that, as revolutionary leaders, they should (1) operate within the framework of Marxist-Leninism (2) become united around common ideas (3) join together to give life to Marxist ideas, and (4) carry out the historic mission of the working class (169). Of importance to him is that the revolutionary party (1) *cannot exist isolated from the masses* and, therefore, (2) *must be in permanent contact with the people*, (3) *must practice criticism and self-criticism*, and (4) *be very severe with respect to its own errors* (EG 1963/2003o, 169, emphasis added).

8.3.4 On Alienation and Humanism

Since the early 1960s and in subsequent years, confronting the problems brought about by erstwhile exploitative and oppressive labour practices, Guevara writes that work should always be part of ‘the good life’, ‘something exciting’ and associated with ‘life’s happiest moments, not its burdens’ (EG 1962/2003j, 150). He counsels that each person should feel content at work (EG 1962/2003j, 151) since work should cease to be ‘an obsession’, as it is in the capitalist world: work should become a ‘pleasant social duty, done joyfully to the rhythm of revolutionary songs, amid the most fraternal camaraderie and

human relationships that are mutually invigorating and uplifting', he writes. (EG 1962/2003l, 161).

In one of his most important writings, 'Socialism and man in Cuba', Guevara emphasises that the ultimate and most important revolutionary aspiration is to 'see human beings liberated from their alienation' (EG 1965/2003u, 219).

Guevara foresees the need for the working class to move beyond that 'old-fashioned mentality' of the capitalist world, where work was not only 'a duty and a necessity', but 'a sad duty and necessity' (EG 1962/2003l, 164). He argues that in capitalist society individuals are controlled by a 'pitiless law', 'blind' and 'invisible to ordinary people', 'usually beyond their comprehension' (EG 1965/2003u, 215). The 'alienated human specimen', he says, is tied to society by an 'invisible umbilical cord: the law of value' (*ibid.*), which acts upon all aspects of one's life, 'shaping its course and destiny' (*ibid.*).

The 'capitalist propagandist' who holds aloft the success of someone like 'Rockefeller', disregards the 'amount of poverty and suffering' required for such a person to emerge and 'the amount of depravity entailed in the accumulation of a fortune of such magnitude', he says (EG 1965/2003u, 215). Guevara sees capitalism as using both force and education in forming people's consciousness in class society.

In his citing from the Havana Declaration - made public to the Cuban nation in April 1962 Guevara undertakes to spell out quite pertinently the significance to him of the humanist dimension of Marxist thinking:

Who says that Marxism is the renunciation of human feelings, comradeship, love for a *compañero* respect for a *compañero*, consideration for a *compañero*? Who says that Marxism means not having a soul, not having feelings? Indeed it was precisely love of man that gave birth to Marxism. It was love of man, of humanity, the desire to combat the distress of the proletariat, the desire to fight poverty, injustice, suffering and all the exploitation of the proletariat, that gave rise to Marxism from Karl Marx's mind precisely when it had become possible for Marxism to emerge. It arose precisely when a real possibility emerged – and more than a real possibility, the historical necessity – of the social revolution, of which Karl Marx was the interpreter. But what made him become that interpreter if not the

abundance of human feelings of men like him, like Engels, like Lenin? (EG 1963/2003o, 175-76).

Guevara goes on to conclude that a Marxist must be ‘the best, the fullest, the most complete of human beings – but above all, a human being’ (EG 1963/2003o, 176).

Drawing on Marx directly, Guevara expresses the view that individuals have been trying for a long time to free themselves from alienation through culture and art. While human beings ‘die daily’ during the eight or more hours in which they operate as commodities, individuals ‘come to life’ in their ‘spiritual creations’ beyond the work place. In class society the ‘solitary being seeks harmony with the world’, an environment however, that oppresses the individual. This individual strives to interact with the aesthetic as a unique being trying to reach perfection and happiness. For Guevara this is nothing more than ‘an attempt to escape’ (EG 1965/2003u, 221-22), since there are more significant factors at play:

It is not a matter of how many kilograms of meat one has to eat, or of how many times a year someone can go to the beach, or how many pretty things from abroad you might be able to buy with present day wages. It is a matter of making the individual feel more complete, with much more inner wealth and much more responsibility (EG 1965/2003u, 225).

Guevara reasons that, as revolutionaries, they must seek something new and peculiar that would not impede the bond between the revolutionary government and the people. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, he shows a deep concern for freeing people from social estrangement and partition.

we must seek something new that will allow a perfect identification between the government and the community as a whole, adapted to the conditions of the building of socialism peculiar to our country The major thing holding us back has been the fear that any formal mechanism might separate us from the masses and the individual, making us lose sight of the ultimate and most important revolutionary aspiration: *to see man freed from alienation* (cited in Zeitlin 1970, li, emphasis added).

8.3.5 Roots of Guevara's Marxist-humanist stance

Whereas the above citations are illustrative of Guevara's advocacy of Marxist-humanist values, it is 'On the budgetary finance system' (EG 1964/2003q) that portrays more precisely the roots of his thinking.

Starting off, Guevara refers first to Marx's *economic manuscripts*, which for him date back to the time of the 'young Marx', when 'the weight of the philosophical ideas that contributed to Marx's education is very noticeable' when Marx's thoughts on economics were 'more imprecise', he writes (EG 1965/2003q, 185). Marx, then in the prime of his life, had already embraced the 'cause of the poor' and explained it philosophically. Thinking 'more like a philosopher', he referred more specifically to the 'human individual and to the problems of his liberation as a social being'. Guevara views Marx's later treatise, *Capital*, as a work that illustrates Marx as the 'scientific economist who meticulously analyses the transitory nature of social epochs and their identification with particular relations of production'. But Guevara reasons that the '*weight of Marx's human intelligence is such that the humanistic character of his concerns is frequently forgotten*' (EG 1965/2003q, 185, emphasis added). The mechanisms of the relations of production and their result, the class struggle, obscure the objective fact that it is 'human beings who are actors in history', he reaffirms. Accordingly, for Guevara conditions in Cuba determine that 'our interest is man'. In the same article Guevara proceeds to cite from Marx's manuscripts, selecting to highlight arguably Marx's most manifest vision for an ideal human existence in a future socialist society.³ Hence Guevara points out the following theoretical concepts as formulated by Marx:

- The direct role of private property in instituting and maintaining human self-estrangement and alienation.
- Socialism as a means for the real appropriation of the human essence.
- The importance of citizens to be able to live as real social and human beings.
- Humanity's embrace of the entire wealth of previous development.
- The resolution of the conflict between humans and nature, and amongst human beings themselves.

- The resolution of the strife between ‘existence and essence’, ‘freedom and necessity’, and between the individual and the human species as a whole (EG 1964/2003q, 185).

8.4 STANCE ON THE SOVIET UNION ⁴

8.4.1 Initial Standpoint

The Soviet path served as a model for emulation by many other revolutionaries, including Guevara, who initially sought to build strong relations with the USSR régime. For some time he held that the resolution to the world's social and economic struggles ‘lay behind the iron curtain’ (Taibo II 1997, 154). Preceding his exposure to, and subsequent censure of, the objective social conditions as they prevailed in Russia, Guevara saw the future of global socialism as possibly emanating from the Russian socialist model:

Beginning with the revolutionary Marx, a political group is established with concrete ideas, which, based on the giants Marx and Engels, and developing through successive stages with individuals such as Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung and the new Soviet and Chinese rulers, establishes a body of doctrine and, shall we say, examples to follow (EG 1960/2003f, 123, emphasis added).

Anderson records that Guevara at first perceived the Soviet Union as a world that was not ‘all slogans and manifestos’, a world that ‘intoxicated him’ and made him feel that it offered ‘the solution to life’. Guevara believed what he had read had in fact been applied there (Anderson 1997, 565). As to the question, ‘what was the USSR to Che?’, Taibo II answers this as follows:

It was four novels about the October Revolution and the war against fascism. The heir to socialist mythology. Lenin’s homeland. The birthplace of Marxist humanism. The cradle of egalitarianism. The alternative, in a polarized [sic] world, to U.S. imperialism (Taibo II 1997, 298)

8.4.2 Break from the USSR

When Guevara visited the Soviet Union in 1960, 1962, and again in 1964, he became increasingly unreceptive to the Stalinist bureaucratic order, seeing the

need to challenge and fight capitalism internationally. Since he actively sought to spread socialist revolution throughout Latin America, this, among other factors, brought him into direct conflict with the Stalinists in Moscow, who subsequently denounced him as a 'Trotskyist' (Anderson 1997, 388).⁵

In 1961 the Marxist writer K.S. Karol paid a visit to Cuba during which he spent some time conducting interviews and discussions with Guevara. Taibo II's account (1997, 332-333) of this event is worth quoting at length as it reveals that already during his early stage as official governmental functionary, Guevara was experiencing some difficulty with the Kremlin's version of socialism:

Karol asked whether it was not dangerous to toss doctrinaire Soviet ideological garbage, the vacuous and dogmatic Communist doctrinaire manuals, into such a political vacuum. Che said that he did not know these manuals, that he would have to ask others to tell him about them. Karol felt he couldn't explain his question further. Their experiences were worlds apart: one was a left-winger whose views were shaped by the contradictions between the rhetoric of Stalinism and its authoritarian practice, the other a Latin American radical whose firsthand revolutionary experience, with a Marxist ideological gloss and a very limited view of the real history of socialism, gave him an entirely different perspective. Che told Karol that Marxist formulas from manuals seemed to be a side-issue, that political education in Cuba did not depend on them in the slightest. He tried to explain that Stalinism would not prosper in Cuba, that collective farming was in line with the campesinos' wishes, not against them, that industrialization would not be achieved by sacrifice, and that a capitalist blockade of the type that had been imposed on the U.S.S.R. was no longer possible.

Importantly also is Karol's own interpretation of Guevara's standpoints:

I would be a liar . . . if I said now that Che's arguments persuaded me in 1961. His forceful personality and intellectual charm immediately made their mark, but I had the impression he was closing his eyes to reality in the socialist block because it was convenient for him to do so. A man of his intelligence and gifted with his sensitivity could not have failed to be tormented by the number of shortages and imbalances he must have noticed in the socialist societies he had just discovered. Unlike true believers, he

did not chant simplistic Soviet propaganda slogans (Karol cited in Taibo II 1997, 333).

During his 1964 visit to Moscow to attend the celebrations for the 47th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Guevara's observations of conditions there led to his protesting about the lifestyle of Kremlin officials. He furthermore argued that economically the soviets are '*in an economic dead-end*', '*dominated by bureaucracy*' (Taibo II 1997, 387, emphasis added).

8.4.3 Denunciation of the USSR model

Guevara's critical stance arguably reached its high point during what was to be his last speech on the African continent entitled 'At the Afro-Asian conference in Algeria' and delivered on February 24th, 1964. After laying the foundation of his argument the need to forge solidarity 'as there are no frontiers in the struggle against imperialism' (Anderson 1997, 624) – Guevara then launched into a 'shocking rebuke of developed socialist states' (*ibid.*), with the USSR being the main target of his denigration. In this instance Guevara sought to address the exploitative nature of trade agreements that existed between the more advanced socialist bloc and poorer countries, something the Kremlin considered as 'mutually beneficial' (Anderson 1997, 624; see EG 1965/2003u). 'How can "mutual benefit" mean selling at world market prices raw materials that cost unlimited sweat and suffering to the backward countries and buying at world market prices the machines produced in the large automated factories of today?' Guevara asked. Guevara went on, arguing, 'if we establish that type of relationship between the two groups of nations, *we must agree that the socialist countries are, to a certain extent, accomplices to imperialist exploitation* [They] have the moral duty of liquidating their tacit complicity with the West' (Anderson 1997, 624-25, emphasis added). As Anderson puts it, this was not the first time Guevara had criticised what he saw as the Soviets' 'capitalist-style profiteering' in its relationship with Cuba and other developing nations. As a result of his utterances, the Kremlin was 'outraged', especially by Guevara's assertion that it is 'imperialism's accomplice'. This moreover, came to be considered as an 'astounding breach of protocol' within the socialist bloc (*ibid.*, 625).

More pertinently though, since the post-Leninist Soviet model included material incentives which induced vast inequalities, and the use of extreme force to repress dissent, Guevara and others ultimately came to reject it as a prototype for socialism (Zeitlin 1970, 1). He viewed these developments as characterised by social discrimination and dictatorial controls which, furthermore, reinforced and strengthened each other. As such he found the Stalinist model untenable for the ideals and goals he envisaged for the Cuban revolution (*ibid.*; Suchlicki 1972, 2). As a close acquaintance of Guevara relates, ‘when he realised they [Soviet bureaucrats] had been tricking him – you know Che couldn’t stand being lied to – then came the violent reaction’ (Anderson 1997, 565). On yet a further occasion, in a reply to the critical Cuban writer Huberto Padilla’s own denunciation of Stalinist tyranny, Guevara said,

I must tell you I don’t need to listen to what you have to say *because I already know all of that is a pigsty, I saw it myself* (Anderson 1997, 608, emphasis added).

As Guevara became beset by a host of practical inconveniences domestically,⁶ his outlook became ‘blunted’, (*ibid.*, 565), a disquiet that was due to

his loss of faith in the imperfect Soviet model he had originally embraced with such innocent fervor [sic]. He now chafed at the slipshod efforts to transplant it in Cuba, complete with its *concomitant inefficiency, bureaucracy, and triumphalist rhetoric* (Anderson 1997, 565, emphasis added).

Confronted by the difficulties of the revolutionary situation in Cuba and the failures he witnessed as a result of his visits behind the ‘iron curtain’ to the USSR, as well as the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, China and North Korea (see Deutschmann 2003) – Guevara seemed to be probing for a substitute and began to investigate other ideas.

A few years before his death he started to explore some of the writings of Leon Trotsky.⁷ This subject is of course hypothetical: if he had sustained his studies of Trotsky's theories would he have adopted them?⁸

8.4.4 Fidel Castro's Attitude

Complementing Guevara's anti-Kremlin stance, during the mid-1960s Fidel Castro's scepticism of USSR-style politics similarly reached a high point (see Ramm 1978). A disagreement over the goals of the historic Tricontinental Conference a meeting of representatives of Latin America, Africa and Asia held in Cuba during January 1966 – revealed a growing rift between Cuba and the Soviet camp. At the event Latin American representatives denounced the Soviet Union's 'interventionist tactics', which was followed by Soviet diplomats attempting to reduce the magnitude of the conference, something the Cubans in turn criticised. As the Soviets disputed Cuba's 'unorthodox and radical' domestic doctrines, Castro expressed his impatience by resuming his earlier disapproval of official Soviet theorists of Marxism-Leninism. In his May Day speech of the same year, Castro sought to slate the 'stagnation and rot' that for him exemplified the theories of those who contested Cuba's national projects. Castro's critique was echoed by Cuban delegates to the World Federation of Democratic Youth who considered it necessary to avoid 'thinking which becomes putrid'. Castro also rebuked adherents of the Marxist theoretical textbooks formulated and published by the USSR's Academy of Science. These texts were obligatory in the cadre training schools of pro-Moscow parties globally and had initially been employed in Cuba's Schools of Revolutionary Instruction (EIR). As Ramm puts it, 'The manuals soon became objects of ridicule and the focus of Cuba's diatribes against Soviet theory'. For the latter half of 1966 a critique of the manuals continued in the pages of the EIR journal *Teoría y Práctica*, and *El Caimán Baróudo*, a publication founded by students of the Philosophy Institute of Havana University who were dissatisfied with the Soviet-oriented interpretation of Marxism' (Ramm 1978, 42-43). On the political front Castro censured the Kremlin for not 'doing enough for Vietnam', for making 'friendly overtures to reformist régimes', and for not supporting more fully the guerrilla movement. Castro also sought to condemn the Soviet government for promoting the claim that the masses can rise to power 'without

breaking their imperialist ties with the US'. Castro went on to rebuke what he called, 'pseudo-revolutionaries', whom he regarded as the 'most important allies' of 'Yankee imperialism' (*ibid.*, 42-44).

8.4.5 Further influences

The above viewpoints, coupled with his exploration of the ideas of Leon Trotsky, led to Guevara being attacked in Moscow (Taibo II 1997, 388), something he brought up himself in a meeting held at the Cuban Embassy with Cuban students during his 1964 Soviet Union visit. On the occasion he commented as follows:

I have expressed opinions that may be closer to the Chinese side . . . with some Trotskyism mixed in. They say the Chinese divide the revolutionary movement and are Trotskyists and I'm also tarred with the same brush.

According to Taibo II (1997), as a result of this experience, Guevara began to change his opinion of Trotsky and Trotskyism (Taibo II 1997, 388). As he himself remarked,

An opinion someone wants to smash to bits is an opinion that is good for us. You can't smash opinions to bits and that is just what stunts the growth of intelligence Clearly, you can derive many things from Trotsky's thinking (*ibid.*)

Guevara's ideas on warfare overall, appear to be cemented in a combination of standpoints emanating from Martí, Lenin, and classical Marxism generally. In 1963 he argued that 'in conditions of conflict, the oligarchy breaks its own contracts, its own mask of democracy, and attacks the people' (EG 1963/2003n, 74). Accordingly, violence, he reasons, 'is not the monopoly of the exploiters and as such the exploited can use it too' (*ibid.*). In strengthening this position, Guevara embraces Martí's expression: 'he who wages war in a country when he can avoid it is a criminal, just as he who fails to promote war which cannot be

avoided is a criminal' (*ibid.*). In citing Lenin, Guevara sought to defend his own stance on resistance:

social democracy has never taken a sentimental view of war. It unreservedly condemns war as a bestial means of settling conflicts in human society. But social democracy knows that as long as society is divided into classes as long as there is exploitation of man by man, wars are inevitable. In order to end this exploitation we cannot walk away from war, which is always and everywhere begun by the exploiters, by the ruling and oppressing classes (EG 1963/2003n, 74-75).

¹These ideas were published in 1968 as 'Tactics and Strategy of the Latin American Revolution (Deutschmann 2003, 294; see EG 1968/2003x).

²This arguably, is one of the more significant points of convergence of Martí's and Marx's thinking (Part II).

³ Here Guevara quotes from Karl Marx, 'Economic and philosophical manuscripts of 1844', in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, pp. 296-97.

⁴ See also Part IV which delves into Guevara's stance on culture and the arts, especially his critique of socialist realism.

⁵ Martín (1999) explains the concept of permanent revolution as follows:

The workers, having taken power at the head of the other oppressed classes, especially the peasantry, would then proceed to carry through the tasks of the socialist revolution as the only way to ensure the survival of the revolution., but, as the national democratic revolution also challenge[s] the interests of imperialism, in order to survive, the revolution ha[s] to spread internationally seeking the help of the mighty working class in the advanced capitalist countries. Trotsky was the first one to give a full theoretical explanation of this theory which is known as the permanent revolution. The revolution in a backward country therefore, has to be permanent in two regards: because it starts with the national democratic tasks and continues with socialist ones, and because it starts in one country [it] has to spread internationally in order to succeed (Martín 1999).

⁶ According to Wright (1991), Guevara's goals were frustrated domestically by the 'hard realities of imbedded attitudes, infrastructural weakness, heavy defense expenditures, and a damaging US economic blockade' (Wright 1991, 29).

⁷*The age of permanent revolution and The history of the Russian revolution* (Taibo II 1997, 474).

⁸ In this respect, Part IV discusses the prospect that elements within the top echelons of Cuba's cultural establishment may have structured their programmes on Trotsky's vision of culture and the arts in socialist society.

CHAPTER 9

HUMAN AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES, BUREAUCRATISM, AND THE ECONOMY

9.1 AIM OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter examines aspects of Guevara's ideas and theories as he sought to apply them within the context of the Cuban revolution. Selected for special scrutiny is his argumentation pertaining to (1) the creation of a new Cuban personality and human value system, (2) revolutionaries' role and character in the social reconstruction process, (3) citizen participation and the process of socialist democracy, (4) the rise of bureaucratism within the Cuban state administration, and (5) a more authentic socialist-orientated economic system. In the absence of an agreeably existing socialist model, and in the light of his seemingly 'unawareness' of a coherent anti-Stalinist socialist programme, this chapter contends that Guevara's ideological visions and standpoints nonetheless embody some semblance of socialist political forms appropriate to human equality, freedom, and collectivisation, aspects intrinsic to the Marxist-humanist tradition (see Zeitlin 1970; Fromm 1961).

9.2 THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

As an integral part of the country's revolutionary programme, the early stage of the revolution was marked by an alluring endeavour to fashion 'the new man and woman' in an egalitarian socialist society through the growth of consciousness, moral incentives, and labour organisation (Mesa-Lago 1974, x). The new Cuban personality would be a creation, as well as an end product of

the revolutionary course and possess a heightened consciousness and an all-embracing cultural intellect.¹

The creation of ‘the new personality’ was viewed as even more decisive for the revolution’s future than the drive at the time to produce ten million tons of sugar – a new record the régime hoped would improve Cuba’s sagging economy and that relied on full national participation. The desire for meaningful social change was endorsed by members of the Cuban public as follows:

No one knows the Cuban past as only we can, of whoredom and corruption, of the infinite capacity to deceive oneself and others, to sell oneself to the highest bidder in all things, to lack faith in anything but the vulgar and to accept the obscene as natural What was Cuba? – an insignificant whorehouse for the West, a country known only for its sugar and the delights of the flesh, a country of ‘simple blacks and *tropicales*’, and now we are trying to create ‘the new man’ (cited in Zeitlin 1970, xlix).

Within two years of the revolution the Cuban leadership had laid the fundamentals for a systematic change in the country’s social, economic, and political construction and in 1968 completed the conversion to socialism by eliminating the last remnants of capitalism on the island. It was the initial years that witnessed some of the most profound changes based on a ten-point programme. These included: national autonomy, economic sovereignty, work for all, social fairness, education, political democracy, civil authority, religious freedom, public morality, and constructive friendship with all countries. Evident from this programme was the intention of addressing the historic condition of Cuba – US dominance, lopsided reliance on sugar with its attendant social and economic problems, social fragmentation and injustice, and a discredited political system (Wright 1991, 21).

The quest for wide-ranging social renewal had great implications - without it Cuba would not have that form of socialism which Guevara and others had hoped for: ‘the socialist society that is absolutely democratic and based on the needs and aspirations of the people’ (Zeitlin 1970, xlix-1, emphasis added).²

9.2.1 Guevara's critical socialist doctrine

In his role as governmental official, Guevara and his followers, became openly intolerant towards the USSR because, according to their standards, this state's national and foreign programmes did not adhere to basic socialist principles (Mesa-Lago 1974, 7; see Zeitlin 1970; Anderson 1997; Taibo II 1997; Chapter 10). Mesa-Lago is of the view that underlying their doubts were the facts that they were (1) in favour of the strategy of 'permanent revolution'³ and (2) opposed to institutionalisation (Mesa-Lago 1974, 7).

According to Zeitlin (1970), during his academic research in Cuba in the early 1960s, Guevara indicated to him,

Our task is to enlarge democracy within the revolution as much as possible We feel that the government's chief function is to assure channels for the expression of the popular will (Zeitlin 1970, l).

Guevara argued that political forms in the Communist countries, especially the USSR, have led into 'dogmatic extremes', 'cold scholasticism' and 'isolation from the masses' (Zeitlin 1970, l). Guevara furthermore felt that they should seek 'something new' that will lead to:

a perfect *identification* between the government and the community as a whole, adapted to the conditions of building socialism peculiar to their country and avoiding as much as possible the commonplaces of bourgeois democracy transplanted to the society in formation (Zeitlin 1970, li).

The major cause that obstructed Guevara's goals has been the concern that any prescribed mechanism might disconnect them from the masses and the individual, making them lose sight of the 'ultimate and most important revolutionary aspiration', namely, 'to see man freed from alienation' (Zeitlin 1970, li). It was their dream, in Guevara's words, 'to make possible humans' conscious, individual, and collective participation in all mechanisms of directions and productions' and 'the realisation of their fullest human potential' (*ibid.*, viii). Zeitlin argues that this idea of socialism was held by all pre-Stalinist

revolutionary socialists. It failed to endure in Russia where Stalinist measures led to one-party totalitarian rule and so-called ‘democratic centralism’, all of which was absent from the original Bolshevik programme to build a real workers’ democracy⁴ (*ibid.*; see Grant 2002; Deutscher 1964). Vast social disproportion, the support for rigorous competition between workers, and the collapse of class solidarity translated into ‘vulgar Marxism’ and the return to Russia’s ‘imperial backwardness’ (Zeitlin 1970, vii). Unlike this experience, the Cuban revolutionaries came to power in a society relatively free of chaos, and the spirit and energies of its people were not exhausted – as Russians had been by its civil war – but were ‘waiting to be tapped’ (*ibid.*, ix).

9.3 ‘THE NEW MAN AND WOMAN’ AND NEW SOCIETY

9.3.1 Introduction

As a start, soon after the triumph of the Cuban revolution Guevara declared metaphorically that only the ‘skeleton’ of Cubans’ freedom had been achieved, that ‘the flesh and the clothing are still lacking’. Hence ‘we will create them’, he said. (EG 1965/2003u, 227). For him the many and varied contradictions and anomalies in Cuban society compelled the revolution to devise guidelines that would lead to individual *and* social transformation. He considered for instance, the critical conditions of the Cuban peasantry, calling it ‘a class that has been kept in ignorance’ and ‘isolation’ (EG 1963/2003n, 72). Looking at the Latin American continent, he held that the revolution would also spread there because of the ‘horrifying conditions of exploitation under which the people live’ (EG 1963/2003n, 73).

The re-education of the nation, is of some importance which should be advanced by ‘readings imbued with the spirit and teachings of José Martí’ (EG 1959/2003a, 94) is of some importance. Guevara posits socialism as ‘a goal of humanity’ accordingly education – which he perceives as ‘the elimination of the vestiges of the old society in people’s consciousness’ – becomes an important factor in social transformation (EG 1964/2003q, 190). He concludes, proclaiming as Marx does, that ‘socialism is the riddle of history solved’ (*ibid.*) furthermore, that this will be translated concretely into the ‘*reconquering of one’s true nature through liberated labour, and the expression of one’s own human condition through culture and art*’ (EG 1965/2003u, 220).

Profound social change, he reasons, also demands ‘very profound changes in the mentality of the people’ (EG 1960/2003e, 115). Similarly, ‘individualism should ‘disappear’ since it sustains ‘the isolated action of a person alone in a social environment’ (*ibid.*).

Guevara cautions revolutionaries, not merely to ‘offer their wisdom’ to the people, but rather to demonstrate that they are ‘ready to learn with them’, ‘to carry out that great and beautiful common experience – to build a new Cuba’ (*ibid.*, 117-18).

In his 1962 speech to the Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (EG 1962/2003j), Guevara counsels unionists that the new society has not yet been fully created since ‘memories of the past, memories of struggle, and *the vices of a wretched past that strangled man*’ – have not yet been obliterated (EG 1962/2003j, 146). He points out that the working masses, including himself, are ‘human beings’ carrying with them *a succession of corrupt behaviours inherited from the prior age*. Though the primary structure of Cuban society has been transformed, for Guevara the revolution has not as yet erased people’s *unpleasant attitudes and beliefs* (*ibid.*):

we all have those bad habits inherited from the previous epoch, which weighed heavily on us over many years. We are all children from that environment. We have destroyed the fundamental thing and have changed it, but we have not been able to wipe out as rapidly those bad habits from our consciousness (*ibid.*).

9.3.2 The Moral and Human Factor

As with Martí, we find in Guevara’s discourse a similar weight on moral and human dynamics, that he felt, ought to launch and permeate the social reconstruction process. Guevara not only consistently advocates consideration of these qualities in his writings and speeches, but he himself is regarded in Cuba and elsewhere as an exemplary model of someone who steadfastly lived by them (See Deutschmann 2003; Kronenberg 2005a; conclusion to Part III).

It is noteworthy, first of all, to observe some of the conclusions he came to for imbuing the new personality and society with human and moral values. Though

structured as a letter to the Uruguayan weekly *Marcha*, 'Socialism and man in Cuba' (EG 1965/2003u) is considered by many to be one of Guevara's most significant writings. In writing the piece, Guevara intended to provoke debate and at the same time, provide new viewpoints on some of the fundamentals of socialist thought (Deutschmann 2003, 393). In the piece he argues that:

one must have a large dose of humanity, a large dose of a sense of justice and truth in order to *avoid dogmatic extremes, cold scholasticism, or an isolation from the masses*. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force (EG 1965/2003u, 226, emphasis added).

From the above a number of things emerge: first, Guevara reasons that the quality of human existence is indistinguishable from the value of existing social standards, like justice and truth. Conversely, the quality and presence of these principles in the social sphere (such as justice and truth) directly determine the value of human life. Second, the above pronouncement clearly defines Guevara's awareness of, and subsequent hostility to, totalitarian political practice. Besides being conscious thereof, and in conflict therewith he also publicly records his sentiments in this regard. Third, he argues that awareness and elevation of the human factor will contradict the ascendancy of doctrinal excesses and bureaucratic tendencies, that is, undemocratic measures, governmental oppression, and governmental self-importance. Their survival, he reasons, disconnects the bond that exists (or should exist) between power structures and the people. This line of interpretation is suggestive of his personal awareness of oppressive conditions prevalent at the time in other revolutionary societies. Last, following closely in the tradition set by Martí, (see Chapter 5) Guevara advances the proposition that 'thought' must translate into actual deeds. In this instance, he holds that mere awareness of the struggle for fairness and legitimacy is not adequate that consciousness must generate the required action. To him this is a model of transformative power in the social reconstruction process.

One of the overriding factors that initiates a revolutionary response for social change is for Guevara, the legacy of the oppressive and exploitative Batista

dictatorship. He writes, 'It is for that reason that the revolution is compelled to destroy the roots of the *evil* that afflicted Cuba'. He sees this 'evil' in the broader context as 'having defended the interests of the reactionary class - the large landowners, parasitic capitalists closely linked to foreign colonialism' (EG 1960/2003c, 102-3).

9.3.3 Role and character of the cadre

In his writings and speeches during the unfolding of the revolution Guevara places great trust in the devoted revolutionary – 'the cadre' - to launch the goals and principles of the new Cuban society. For him the cadre him/herself should be imbued with certain qualities that must serve as an example to others. He defines the 'true cadre' as an individual who has achieved 'sufficient political development to be able to interpret the larger directives emanating from the central authority, make them his/her own, and convey them as an orientation to the masses. The cadre must at the same time also perceive the signs manifested by the masses of their own desires and their innermost motivations. In this sense, then, for Guevara, the cadre forms the highly significant conduit between the ruling party and the people. Furthermore, Guevara perceives the cadre as someone of 'ideological and administrative discipline', who knows and practises 'democratic centralism' and who knows how to 'evaluate the contradictions in current methods in order to make the best of them'. In the field of production, the cadre knows how to practise *the principle of collective discussion and individual decision-making* and responsibility. He or she is a 'creator', 'a leader of high standing', 'a technician with a good political level', he writes. The cadre 'reasons dialectically and can advance his sector of production, or develop the masses from his position of political leadership' (EG 1962/2003k, 155).

In building a new Cuban society, Guevara argues that closely connected to the concept of cadre is the concept of 'capacity for sacrifice', 'for demonstrating through personal example the truths and watchwords of the revolution'. The cadres, as political guides, should earn the respect of the workers *by their actions* and not simply as '*transmitters of slogans or demands*', he writes (EG 1962/2003k, 156-7).

9.3.4 Internationalism & universal solidarity⁵

Emanating from the above standpoints is Guevara's spacious stance concerning the plight of humanity as a whole, and subsequently Cuban revolutionaries' responsibilities thereto. This arguably forms the basis of his concentrated viewpoint on the establishment of internationalism and universal solidarity (see chapter 11).

In his 1962 address to representatives of various youth organisations, Guevara advises that they should feel 'honoured for being part of the emancipatory process'. They should develop a 'great sense of duty' not only towards their new society, but also towards their 'fellow men and women', and furthermore, '*all men and women around the world*'. Along with that they should cultivate a 'deep sensitivity to all problems', 'sensitivity to injustice', and develop 'a spirit that *rebels against every wrong*, whoever commits it' (EG 1962/2003l, 165-66).

Revolutionaries, he says, should 'question anything not understood, discussing and asking for clarification on whatever is not clear'. They should always pay attention to the mass of human beings, always being open to new experiences. '*Everyone must be essentially human and be so human that he draws close to humanity's best qualities*'. The 'new man and woman', Guevara pronounces, should 'distil the best of what humanity is through work, study' and 'ongoing solidarity with the people and all the peoples of the world'. The new personality should 'feel *anguished* when someone is murdered in any corner of the world' and '*enthusiasm* when a new banner of freedom is raised in any corner of the world' (EG 1962/2003l, 166).

To construct the new man and woman 'we have to work every day, work in the inner sense of improving ourselves, of inquiring, finding out, and knowing why things are the way they are and *always considering humanity's great problems as our own*' (EG 1962/2003l, 167).

Addressing some of the same topics in his later piece⁶ Guevara reasons that the new Cuban personality gains authenticity when he/she is guided by 'great feelings of love' (EG 1965/2003u, 225). To Guevara, it is 'impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality'. Vanguard revolutionaries, he

says, ‘must idealize this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible’. Guevara holds that the new individual plays a role in mobilising and leading the masses insofar as he/she *embodies the highest virtues and aspirations of the people*’ (EG 1965/2003u, 225-26).

Already in his 1961 address to the Inter-American Economic and Social Council in Paraguay, Guevara sought to advocate that the Cuban revolution is a ‘revolution *with humanist characteristics*’ that it seeks to affirm ‘the *dignity of the human being*’ (EG 1961/2003i, 252-53, emphasis added).

9.4 ON MASS PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRACY ⁷

9.4.1 Mass participation

Insofar as Guevara came to renounce the USSR model, and whereas he guards against possible degeneration of mass participation in the revolutionary process, what are his postures on real citizen involvement in the Cuban revolutionary course?

In his writings Guevara recalls past instances where in his view, the Cuban populace took part directly in various revolutionary measures (EG 1965/2003u, 214-15). Hence he cites the fact that the Cuban masses participated in processes such as ‘the agrarian reform’ ‘administering state enterprises’ that they defended Cuba’s sovereignty against ‘bandits armed by the CIA’ that ‘it lived through the October missile crisis’. In current times, he says, the masses continue ‘to work for the building of socialism’. Guevara believes that, in these circumstances; the masses have carried out ‘with matchless enthusiasm and discipline the tasks set out by the government, whether in the field of the economy, culture, defense, sports, etc.’ He perceives however that governmental initiatives need to be *explained* to the people, who in turn will ‘make it their own’. In this regard, he stresses the importance of, for example, the ‘mass meeting’. He explains that in such a setting one is able to observe something like ‘the dialogue of two tuning forks’ - that of the leadership and public – ‘whose vibrations interact, producing new sounds’. ‘These forks vibrate together in a dialogue of growing intensity until they reach the climax in an abrupt conclusion crowned by our struggle and victory’.

9.4.2 Democracy

Guevara's standpoints on mass participation, as a consequence immediately provoke questions on his notion of the broader concept of *democracy* itself. In an article written in the final weeks before the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship (EG 1958/2003a), he advances the proposition that the future revolution is not about the use of 'demagogic tactics in order to display political cleverness' that the revolutionary leadership will not 'investigate the feelings of the masses out of simple scientific curiosity', but, that 'we respond to their call' (EG 1958/2003a, 62). Guevara reasons that the combative front line of the workers and peasants, for example, should not be secluded from the popular masses, but is very much part of the people. The leadership's role, he argues further, does not isolate it from the masses but rather imposes obligations on those leading the revolution (*ibid.*).

Addressing the concept directly, Guevara notes that the word 'democracy' should not be utilised 'apologetically' in order merely to represent 'the dictatorship of the exploiting classes' (EG 1963/2003n, 74). More importantly, he argues that the deeper meaning of democracy should not be lost – that of *granting people their liberties*. To struggle only to reinstate 'a certain degree of bourgeois legality', without considering the fundamental interests of the masses, is to struggle for the return of 'a dictatorial order established by the dominant social classes', he reasons. Hence Guevara argues that the struggle for real participatory democracy should not be a struggle for continued oppression, albeit in subdued forms - 'for a lighter iron ball to be fixed to the prisoner's chain' (*ibid.*, emphasis added). The toppling of the Batista dictatorship presents for Cubans a 'strategic objective to re-establish *all the ideas of democracy and sovereignty and independence* that were trampled underfoot by the foreign monopolies (EG 1960/2003c, 102, emphasis added). Since the early 1950s, he justifies, all of Cuba had 'become a garrison' (*ibid.*).

Guevara's August 1962 Trade Unions speech more clearly defines his perceptions of a workers' democracy. In it he stresses firstly the significance of 'discipline' in the working environment (EG 1962/2003j, 147), reasoning that 'discipline' is fundamental to the growth of production that it should not be considered a negative factor or as submission to power structures, but that it

should be viewed rather in dialectical terms: he explains that discipline consists of ‘abiding by majority decisions in accordance with democratic centralism’.⁸ The latter concept, something he returns to time and again, ‘follows the guidelines of a government supported by the masses’ (*ibid.*).

For Guevara ‘democracy’ means ‘collectively discussing, on each level, the fundamental problems of the shop, the factory or enterprise to ensure better production’ (EG 1962/2003j, 147). Most importantly, though, he argues that democratic practice involves *taking part in the decision-making process itself*, and that all – including the leadership – should abide by the same set of rules (*ibid.*, emphasis added). Hence, for Guevara, democracy fundamentally entails

increasing the workers’ *participation* through *their organisations* in the *management* of the factory, in the sense of being able to *participate in discussions and decisions* about production and to constantly *supervise* the administration in *carrying out* every one of the disciplinary rules that *we must all impose upon ourselves* (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

In his introduction (EG 1963/2003o) to his book entitled *The Marxist-Leninist Party* (Deutschmann 2003, 169), Guevara offers greater clarity on the broader implications of ‘democratic centralism’ (EG 1963/2003o, 175). In this instance, he looks at the fundamental link that should exist between the ruling party, public workers, and ordinary citizens, proclaiming

The party of the future will be *intimately linked to the masses* and will *absorb from them* those great ideas that will then take shape as *concrete guidelines*. It will be a party that will strictly apply its discipline in keeping with democratic centralism and, at the same time, where *there will permanently be discussion and open criticism and self-criticism, in order to continuously improve our work . . .* [The] cadres will have to carry out their dynamic task of being *in contact with people, of transmitting their experiences to higher bodies, of transmitting concrete guidelines to the masses . . .* (EG 1963/2003o, 175, emphasis added).

His thought essentially contradicts totalitarian, autocratic, undemocratic governmental practice. Conceivably Guevara’s most premeditated pronouncement on ‘democracy’, is presented in his historic 1961 speech ‘The

OAS conference at Punta del Este' (EG 1961/2003i). The speech – in large measure both a condemnation of US imperialism *and* validation of the Cuban revolution was delivered when Guevara headed Cuba's delegation to the 1961 ministerial meeting of the inter-American Economic and Social Council sponsored by the Organisation of American States (OAS). Also present at Punta del Este, where a crowd of thousands of supporters welcomed him, was the US delegation which presented Washington's proclaimed Alliance for Progress for official ratification by the OAS. Accordingly Guevara's speech should be considered in the context of his complex audience, i.e., (1) Latin American officials, described by Rose as 'the willing tools of US imperialism' (Rose 2001, 3), (2) Latin American leaders who, in Rose's words, were 'deeply compromised in their acquiescence to US hegemony' (*ibid.*), and (3) representatives of US capitalism, at whom Guevara 'principally directs his deviance' (*ibid.*). But, according to Rose again, Guevara also sought to address not only the people of Latin America, but the entire third world, 'the full spectrum of imperialism's victims' (*ibid.*, 4). It is within this broad framework, then, that Guevara offers his perspective on the concept of democracy. Citing entirely from the Declaration of Havana proclaimed in Cuba on April 16, 1961, Guevara announces that

The National General Assembly of the People of Cuba expresses the Cuban conviction that democracy *cannot consist solely of elections that are nearly always fictitious and managed by rich landowners and professional politicians*, but rather it lies in *the right of the citizens to determine their own destiny*, as this Assembly of the People is now doing. Furthermore, democracy will come to exist in Latin America only when people are really *free to make choices, when the poor are not reduced – by hunger, social discrimination, illiteracy and the legal system - to the most wretched impotence* The National General Assembly of the People of Cuba condemns, in sum: the exploitation of man by man and the exploitation of the underdeveloped countries by imperialist finance capital (cited in EG 1961/2003i, 247, emphasis added).

The announcement demonstrates the Cuban régime's departure from western-style democracy which Castro, on occasion, had called 'the dictatorship of the capitalists' (cited in Wright 1991, 25). Wright is of the view that the régime was 'undoubtedly correct in asserting the incompatibility of western democracy with

social revolution, given the corrupting power of money in elections and the restraints on action inherent in constitutional democracies' (Wright 1991, 25).

On another note, in the following year in a piece written for *Verde Olivo*⁹ the mouthpiece of Cuba's revolutionary armed forces Guevara returns to the topic of the US-inspired Alliance for Progress programme. In the piece he views the programme as 'nothing more than an imperialist endeavour to prevent the growth of the revolutionary situation of the masses'. This it sought to accomplish by 'sharing a small quantity of the profits with the native exploiting classes', thus creating 'allies of the exploited classes'. In other words, he writes, 'they [US capitalists] sought to suppress the internal contradictions of the capitalist system as much as possible' (EG 1968/2003x, 299).

9.5 BUREAUCRATISM

In February 1963, some four years into the Cuban revolution, Guevara penned 'Against bureaucratism' (EG 1963/2003p), a piece that serves both as a critique of existing governmental administration and an offering of how, in his view, the situation should be remedied. From the outset of the piece Guevara reasons that, since the triumph of the revolution, the revolutionary state was influenced by 'fundamental elements of guerrilla tactics as a form of state administration'. As he puts it, 'Guerrillaism translated the experience of the armed struggle in the Cuban mountains and countryside into the work of the different administrative and mass organisations' (EG 1963/2003p, 178). In addition to this, he writes that 'the method of solving concrete problems was chosen at will by each leader'. Since they occupied the entire social machinery, the respective domains of the 'administrative guerrillas' 'clashed among themselves, producing constant friction, orders and counter-orders, and different interpretations of the law' (*ibid.*). This reached the point, in some cases, of state institutions countering laws by issuing their own dictates in the form of decrees, ignoring the central administrative apparatus. He concludes that, after some 'painful experiences', the assumption had been reached that their style of work had to be 'totally revamped' and that the state apparatus similarly required rational reorganisation. Guevara furthermore relates that a strong bureaucratic apparatus characterised the initial period of building a socialist state. But, he says, 'the swing went too far, and a whole number of institutions initiated a policy of

centralisation that put too many restrictions on the initiative of administrators' (*ibid.*).

Guevara theorises that the concept of bureaucracy is not the offspring of socialist society, nor should it necessarily be an element of it. For him bureaucratism – as it existed in the Cuban domain emanated from bourgeois rule with its 'retinue of hangers-on', 'lackeys' and 'opportunists' (EG 1963/2003p, 179). He reasons that in a capitalist society, where the entire state apparatus is at the service of the bourgeoisie, the state bureaucracy's importance as a leading body is very small and it is thus ineffectual. The combination of the state apparatus from the previous epoch and the misjudgements of the revolution allowed for the 'evil of bureaucratism' to begin to develop strongly. In the piece Guevara proceeds to list three fundamental factors that explain the continued existence of bureaucracy in Cuba. These for him are

1. lack of inner motivation, which he describes as the individual's lack of interest in resolving problems and rendering a service to the state
2. lack of organisation, which he depicts as 'insufficient administrative experience'. The latter, according to him, leads to 'dislocations and bottlenecks' that unnecessarily curb the flow of information from below, as well as instructions or orders coming from the central apparatus above, and
3. lack of sufficiently developed technical knowledge. This leads to 'endless discussions', insufficient authority to resolve issues, as well as 'lack of perspective for solving problems' (EG 1963/2003p, 179-80).

In view of the above, Guevara calls on all to 'break away from these malignant influences' and take concrete measures to streamline the state apparatus that enables the leadership to direct the economy, while also releasing initiative as much as possible. In such a manner the relationship among the productive forces will be developed logically.

As a possible remedy, Guevara advises that revolutionaries must set themselves the task of 'working seriously and persistently with the masses' to fill the vacuum left by those – the bourgeoisie mainly who had left Cuba's shores. That is why training is 'a top priority of all the revolutionary government's plans', he

writes. Significant, then, are the eradication of any enduring illiteracy in the most isolated areas, ongoing education and workers' enhancement courses, programmes in basic technical skills, engineering courses, and university programmes for professionals and administrators (EG 1963/2003p, 180-82).

Most significantly, in closing, Guevara reflects on instances during the course of the revolution where bureaucratism seemed to have been at its lowest levels. He recognises that it was during the mobilization of the Cuban citizenry against possible US invasion (during October 1962) that there existed a 'great national impulse' to resist imperialism a sentiment that was shared by the majority of the Cuban people. On the production level, each worker, at his own level, 'became a soldier of the economy, ready to solve any problem'. During this time 'organisational norms were boiled down strictly to pointing out what could not be done and the fundamental problem that needed to be solved', namely, to maintain production 'at all costs', to maintain certain production with even greater emphasis, and to free the enterprise, factories and institutions from all unessential functions. 'We were faced with a situation of national emergency, and decisions had to be made whether they were correct or not; we had to make them, and quickly. This was done in many cases'. What lessons are to be drawn from this? Guevara asks. For him

- workers, toilers, peasants and office workers must come to realise the dangers of imperialist aggression
- each official's responsibilities must be analysed and defined within limits that must not be overstepped
- bureaucratism must be dismantled, ultimately, which, for him, is not a task for a single economic body or even all the economic bodies in the country
- the dismantling of bureaucratism is the task of the entire nation, the leading bodies of the revolution, as well as the mass organisations

Guevara concludes his speech by proclaiming 'we must all work to implement the following pressing slogan of the day: *War on bureaucratism. Streamline the state apparatus. Production without restraint, and responsibility for production* (EG 1963/2003p, 183).

9.6 THE ECONOMY

During 1963 to 1964 Cuban leaders debated the comparative qualities of two opposing systems of economic management, both of which were in use during the initial years of the revolution. One was Guevara's proclaimed 'budgetary finance system' (see EG 1964/2003q - 'On the budgetary finance system') and the second, 'the economic accounting system', as devised by one of the revolution's prominent personalities, the pro-Moscow economist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez. Thus confronting Guevara's perceived socialist economic vision were Rodríguez and his supporters, a grouping composed of pro-Kremlin members of Cuba's pre-revolutionary Communist Party (PSP) (Mesa-Lago 1974, 7). Under the influence of trends inaugurated by Stalin and adapted by Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Kosygin, this group advocated

1. Central planning with some independence at the enterprise level based on market mechanisms. They introduced self-financing in about one-third of the state enterprises and received loans from the Cuban Central Bank towards preserving parts of its income for reinvestment and further expansion.
2. Economic institutionalisation structured on a well-organized bureaucracy, high labour efficiency through work quotas, and material motivations, like wage disparities, gratuities, overtime compensation, and rewards in kind.
3. A strong Communist Party, USSR-style unions, and close links with the Kremlin (*ibid.*).

In contrast to Rodríguez's economic programme, Guevara argued against the creation of salaried workers 'docile to official thinking', and 'fellows who live under the wing of the budget, exercising "freedom" in quotation marks' (Zeitlin 1970, li).

The dialogue between the two groups dealt with a broad range of elemental issues regarding the phase of transition from capitalism to socialism. Policies from the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries were commonly referred to during the 1963-64 discussion (Deutschmann 2003, 393). Guevara wrote a number of articles as contributions to this debate with 'On the budgetary finance system' being his key economic treatise published in the Cuban

magazine *Nuestra Industria, Revista Económica (Our Industry, A Journal of Economics)* in February 1964 (*ibid.*, 184).

In the piece Guevara cites some key Marxist theorists, with a quotation from Marx's historic 'Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844' forming the basis of his ensuing arguments:

Communism [is] the positive transcendence of private property as human self-estrangement, and therefore as the real appropriation of the human essence by and for man; communism therefore as the complete return of man to himself as a social (i.e., human) being – a return accomplished consciously and embracing the entire wealth of previous development. This communism, as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism equals naturalism; it is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man – the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it is conscious that it is this solution (Marx cited in EG 1964/2003q, 185, editor's emphases).

In his essay Guevara also proceeds to cite Lenin¹⁰ and Oskar Lange¹¹ at length, in essence arguing that the reintroduction of capitalist laws in the Soviet Union does not imply that similar measures should be undertaken in Cuba (EG 1964/2003q, 190-91). Guevara argues that an analysis of the economic system used in the USSR, for instance, reveals that there is a conceptual difference between that system and the Cuban one, one 'perhaps comparable to the one that exists in the capitalist camp between competition and monopoly' (EG 1964/2003q, 191). He contends that basic to the budgetary finance system is the understanding that the building of communism is a 'goal of humanity', which should be achieved consciously. Therefore, education, 'the elimination of the vestiges of the old society', is additionally important. Guevara cautions that, without parallel advances in production, such a society will never be achieved' (EG 1964/2003q, 190).

In the same piece Guevara argues overall that his plan, if properly developed, can increase the 'effectiveness' of economic management of the socialist state and simultaneously 'deepen the consciousness of the masses'. Through

cooperative measures this can further strengthen the bonds of the world socialist system (*ibid.*, 191).

Though he does not deny ‘the objective need for material incentives’ (*ibid.*, 194), Guevara believes that if this should become the *main lever of society*, it will translate into a return to capitalism, something socialism is supposed to eradicate in the first place (*ibid.*, emphasis added). The struggle against the predominance of material incentives for him goes hand in hand with the struggle to develop a ‘socialist morality’ (*ibid.*). As such Guevara maintains that the development of consciousness does more for the development of production than material incentives do (*ibid.*, 194):

What we want to achieve with the budgetary system is for the lever not to become something that compels the individual – either individually or collectively – to struggle desperately with others in order to assure certain conditions of production or distribution that would put him *in a privileged situation* (EG 1964/2003q, 210, emphasis added).

In his critique of the USSR’s *Manual of Political Economy*¹² Guevara cites the following passage from the document which, for him, serve to strengthen the development and employment of ‘the law of value’, something he perceives is integral to capitalist relations:

Commodity production, the law of value, and money will disappear only when the higher stage of communism is reached. But in order to make the disappearance of commodity production and circulation possible in the higher stage of communism, it is necessary to *develop* and use the law of value as well as monetary and commodity relations during the period when the communist society is being built (*Manual of Political Economy* cited in EG 1964/2003q, 200, editor’s emphases).

In response to this, Guevara strongly contests the development of the law of value, advancing the proposition that it is precisely during the transition period that society ‘rids itself’ of its ‘old bonds’ and ‘old categories’ (EG 1964/2003q, 200) to enter into the stage of socialism. In his denigration of the *Manual*, Guevara asks,

Why *develop* [the law of value]? We understand that the capitalist categories are retained for a time and that the length of this time cannot be determined beforehand. But the characteristics of the transition period are those of a society throwing off its old bonds in order to arrive quickly at the new stage. *The tendency* must be, in our opinion, to eliminate as vigorously as possible the old categories, including the market, money, and, therefore, the lever of material interest – or to put it better, to eliminate the conditions for their existence (*ibid.*, editor's emphases).

Guevara goes on to highlight his rejection of consciously using the law of value in the absence of a free market. As he also puts it, 'We reject the existence of the commodity category in relations among state enterprises. We consider all such establishments to be part of the single enterprise that is the state (although in practice this has not yet happened in our country)' (EG 1964/2003q, 201). Guevara believes 'centralised planning' lies at the heart of socialist society, perceiving it to be not only its central attribute, but the point at which 'man's consciousness finally succeeds in synthesizing and directing the economy toward its goal: the full liberation of the human being . . . ' (*ibid.*). The final passages of 'On the budgetary finance system' call attention to the role of the Cuban ruling party in 'transforming the work center' as it is this mechanism that determines 'the collective expression of the workers' aspiration and concerns and a place where their desire to serve society will take shape' (*ibid.*, 211). He concludes the piece, thus, 'One could think of the work center as the basis of the future society's political nucleus' (*ibid.*).

9.7 CONCLUSION

It is perceptible that Guevara's writings and speeches attach special significance to aspects central to socialist construction. Guevara's discourse projects a consistent, conscious argument for human contentment and granting the Cuban people a broad range of rights and liberties previously denied them. Of the topics discussed above, the following instantly elicit further consideration Guevara's concept of citizen participation and democracy on the one hand, and, on the other hand his perception and analyses of state bureaucratism. As it transpires, Guevara perceives the following as important: (1) participation of the masses in the revolutionary process, (2) democratic practice in the revolutionary

process, and (3) the curtailment and eventual elimination of bureaucratism from state administration.

In his study of Stalinist totalitarianism and Trotsky's fight against it, Deutscher (1964) analyses some classical Marxist theories as depicted also in Lenin's revolutionary programme. A concept Deutscher finds worthy of drawing attention to is that of democratic centralism, a conception Guevara highlights in his discourse on socialist democracy. Deutscher strongly argues that Lenin's 'democratic centralism' must be distinguished from the 'bureaucratic ultra-centralisation' unique to Stalinist governmental practice. As Deutscher points out, 'The elite party was not, in Lenin's intention, to have been a self-sufficient body replacing the working class as agent of socialism. It was to remain part of the working class, just as in any army the vanguard remains part of the fighting force even while it acts as a special detachment to perform a special function' (Deutscher 1964, 30). Deutscher emphasises that in the Leninist Party the rank and file were at liberty to transform the constitution of the Central Committee, just as in the Soviet Republic the working class was in precept unconstrained to unseat and interchange party officials. 'Proletarian democracy' Deutscher argues furthermore, embraced innerparty democracy as its particular aspect'. Though Lenin's Party was highly disciplined, it was distinct from Stalin's and ensuing Stalinist régimes in the sense that it was an unrégimented alliance of revolutionaries, 'taking for granted, and making full use of, their leaders without fear or favour, and debating, most often in public, every major issue of policy'. The rights and privileges of the Leninist Central Committee, its strength of power, and the responsibility of Party members to act in accord with its mission were in effect offset by uninhibited critique and influence from the masses. Under Stalin's régime, Deutscher points out, over the period of two decades millions of ordinary citizens were subjected to years of 'slavery and torture in the inferno of Stalin's concentration camps' (Deutscher 1964, 30-32).

Though Guevara identifies and highlights concepts of mass decision making and mass participation *within* the revolution, fundamental aspects such as *workers' control and direction over the course of the revolution itself* are absent from his ideological discourse. It appears that Guevara sees the need to strengthen workers and/or mass *participation* purely in terms of cementing the

control and organisation of the ruling party itself, something he considers however, should act in the best interests of the people.

Regarding bureaucratism: Though Guevara makes the significant *assessment* that, during instances of direct citizen participation and decision-making bureaucratism appeared to have diminished markedly, he does not come to the fundamental *conclusion* that direct citizen participation and decision-making in the revolutionary course could essentially stop the proliferation of bureaucratic norms itself. And though he calls on all spheres of Cuban society to halt administrative bureaucratic procedure, he does not come to the realisation that authentic, unambiguous citizen involvement may in itself serve as an answer to the 'evil' of bureaucratism.

Fastidious analyses of bureaucratism in state administration carry great importance in revolutionary Marxist circles (Wright 1978; Deutscher 1964; Trotsky 1964; Woods and Grant 2000; Grant 2000; Diaz 2004).¹³ The introduction to Diaz's critical analysis of Stalinism in the USSR (Diaz 2004) corroborates this as follows:

[Diaz] explains clearly how the rise of the Soviet bureaucracy meant a clear break with Bolshevism and shows how it was precisely this bureaucracy which led to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR (Diaz 2004)

In Cuba policies pertaining to the creation of new national programmes were guided by the Cuban Communist party, which was intended to be 'the political organisation of the masses and responsible to them' (Zeitlin 1970, xl). Despite the fact that Guevara and others commanded the admiration of the Cuban people and endeavoured to represent and respond to their interests, in practice the Cuban ruling party took all primary decisions and was responsible to itself, and, above all, to Fidel Castro, and not to the citizenry at large (*ibid.*).

Martín (1999), is in accordance with the above, advancing that during the 1960s especially, the revolution enjoyed mass support since its advantages included huge advances in living norms, the purging of illiteracy, the development of 'one of the best health systems in the world', etc. However, he likewise cautions that without authentic workers' control and management of the state and the

economy real socialism cannot exist. Under such conditions he concludes, the development of bureaucracy and mismanagement become inevitable, which for him is 'one of the most important lessons to be drawn from the collapse of the Soviet Union'.

As Rey (2002) puts it, 'unlike the classical workers' revolution, the Cuban revolution did not triumph as an insurrectional movement of the working class'. Rey advances that the Cuban working class was not the leading force of the revolution nor did it act through its own organs of workers' power, as was the case in Russia during 1917 to 1922 when power rested with the Soviets (workers' councils) of workers and peasants. In accordance with Guevara's self-critique (see EG 1063/2003p), Rey (2002) is of the view that in Cuba real power rested with the '*hierarchal structure of the guerrilla army* that occupied the empty space left by the disappearance of the capitalist state' (*ibid.*, emphasis added). Rey furthermore concludes that this was inevitable, given the absence of genuine organs of workers' power emanating from the factories, companies, and agricultural estates (*ibid.*). Consistent with Zeitlin's review, Rey notes that all fundamental decisions on the economy and society were, and continue to be taken directly by the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. Though there were workers and peasants' militia and revolutionary committees, their role was not to rule but merely to approve and bring into fruition decisions taken elsewhere. And though hundreds of thousands of Cubans would gather to listen attentively to and overwhelmingly support the orations of the Cuban leaders, they had little power to take decisions themselves (Martín 1999). Viewed against this backdrop, was Guevara's role and endeavours in the Cuban revolution inconsequential?

In their discussion paper 'Che Guevara and Marxist Continuity', Clark and Barnes (1997) particularly highlight Guevara's departure from Stalin's 1952 manual, 'Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR' which, according to them, set the foundations for a return to the deployment of capitalist laws, both in the Soviet Union and later in Cuba. They note that Guevara explicitly opposed the view that building socialism is a task of 'administrators adept in manipulating laws and mechanisms inherited from capitalism'. Guevara, in turn, insisted that revolutionary tasks are based on advancing the political

consciousness and collective experience of the masses towards the *reorganization* of economic and social relations inherent in capitalist society (Clarke and Barnes 1997).

It is advanced furthermore that Guevara's advocacy of, and struggle for, the institution of anti-exploitative/human values - his desire to see the Cuban people freed from alienation and the elimination of the remnants of the old society; the evading of dogmatic extremes; to feel *anguished* when someone is murdered in any corner of the world' and '*enthusiasm* when a new banner of freedom is raised in any corner of the world' – profoundly impacted on the development of a new humanistic ethic across the Cuban political, economic, social and cultural spheres (see also chapters 10, 11, & 12; Part IV). The assessment that arguably best illustrates the deficiency as well as some of many positive outcomes of Guevara's humanistic contribution, is that of Zeitlin's (1970). As he concludes from his findings,

For the masses of Cuba the most significant economic achievement of the revolution [during the 1960s] has been *a substantial increase in living standards*. This has been accomplished through a radically *egalitarian redistribution of income and wealth*, and a reorientation of the pattern of investment to give *priority to the construction of schools, homes, and cultural and recreational facilities*. At the same time, a start has been made toward diversification of Cuban agriculture. *The direct action of the working class in seizing industry and in many cases, in exerting democratic control over this industry; the organization of the peasantry into democratically run cooperatives; the arming of the masses with the formation of the militias—all this, while it was not consummated in the actual control over the state by the working class, did give the masses a very real weight in the political life of the country*. This was an important acquisition of the Cuban masses and marked the Revolution as a profound social upheaval which brought the Cuban masses for the first time in history *into partial control of their own destiny* (Zeitlin 1970, emphasis added).

According to Clark and Barnes (1997) Guevara reasoned that to rely on processes incompatible with the political consciousness and collective experience of the masses will replicate the capitalist social relations and partitions that the revolution was made to contest and supplant in the first place.

As Guevara put it, ‘It will not only block the advance towards socialism but will guarantee inefficiency, waste, corruption, class polarization, and depoliticization’ (cited in Clark and Barnes 1997) – emblematic features of capitalist societies today. The precision of Guevara’s judgement, they record, can be seen in tendencies that developed and more and more in Cuba following the reliance during the 1970s and beyond on political and economic methods imported from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Clark and Barnes 1997).

¹ See Part IV which discusses fully the Cubans’ concept of national culture and the operation of culture on institutional level.

² Zeitlin (1970) is deemed of special significance as the volume contains data drawn from interviews with industrial workers in revolutionary Cuba during the 1960s. During his period of research, Zeitlin travelled the length of the country interviewing workers in 21 plants scattered over its six provinces. He received the cooperation of the revolutionary government and its various bureaus, especially the Ministry of Industry and its head at the time, Guevara. Zeitlin records that Guevara’s ministry provided him with the necessary or desirable credentials to enter any factories, mines, or mills he found necessary and to take from their work – for whatever time required – any workers he wished to interview.

³ Martín (1999), amongst other scholars, explains the concept of permanent revolution, see page p.90. See also Deutschmann 1964, pp. 13-39; and especially, Trotsky 1964, *The age of permanent revolution: a Trotsky anthology*, pp. 145-162.

⁴ In the context of his highly supportive attitude to both Trotsky and Lenin, Deutscher’s (1964) conception of, and standpoint on, democratic centralism are both considerate and accommodating. This subject receives some attention in the conclusion to this chapter.

⁵ See Chapter 11 for an in-depth discussion of these topics.

⁶ ‘Socialism and man in Cuba’ (1965).

⁷ For a more in-depth critical discussion on Cuban democracy and the economy during the early years of the revolution in see Marxist Bulletin No. 8, particularly Wohlforth and Robertson 1960; Marge 1961; Wohlforth 1961; Robertson 1963 & 1966.

⁸ The concept of ‘democratic centralism’ Deutscher (1964) argues is in line with Lenin’s standpoints pertaining to a workers’ democracy; (see conclusion to the chapter).

⁹ ‘Tactics and strategy of the Latin American revolution’.

¹⁰ Lenin, 'Five years of the Russian revolution and the prospects of the world revolution' in Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, pp. 419-22 (Deutschmann 2003, 393).

¹¹ Polish economist and government official of the Polish People's Republic (*ibid.*).

¹² *The Manual of Political Economy* was produced by the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (*ibid.*).

¹³ See especially the theoretical treatise of Erik Olin Wright, *Class, Crisis and the State* (1978), and particularly Chapter 4 'Bureaucracy and the State', which deals at length with both Weber's and Lenin's assessments of, and theories on, the concept of bureaucracy.

CHAPTER 10

RACE & RACISM

10.1 GOALS OF THE CHAPTER

The chapter selects for inspection (1) the official Cuban standpoint on race and racism as proclaimed by Guevara as well as Fidel Castro¹ in his role as Cuba's supreme revolutionary leader, (2) Guevara's spacious anti-racism stance, i.e., his commentary on racism in the US, Apartheid South Africa (the leading exemplar globally of institutionalised racism) as well as the broader African colonialist milieu, and finally, (3) Cuban intellectuals' standpoints on similar matters.

The chapter endeavours to illustrate that

(1) the core of Cuba's revolutionary establishment sought to advocate and institutionalise Martí's humanistic ideas pertaining to the universality and equality of the Cuban citizenry as a whole (see Part II). Hence, far from merely opposing the historical issue of racial *discrimination*, *racial prejudice*, and *racial segregation*, the revolutionary régime sought to oppose and eradicate equally, the concept and institutionalisation of *racial distinction*²

(2) Guevara's condemnation of bigoted ideas and practices extends far beyond Cuba's borders into the international terrain, a feature that portrays his aspiration to establish internationalism and universal solidarity amongst all oppressed nations of his time (see chapter 11).

(3) Guevara and other prominent Cuban intellectuals in effect perceive racism as a mechanism for capitalist oppression and exploitation, an assessment that supersedes Martí's anti-racist humanist doctrine (see Chapters 4, 12).

In addition, the conclusion draws attention to the conception that the abolition of racial discrimination and racial prejudice is closely connected to the goal of establishing economic equality amongst the Cuban working masses.

Pedro Serviat ³ (1986/1993) contends that one of the ‘most difficult and complex’ of the many problems that embodied the legacy of Cuba’s past, was ‘without doubt that of racial discrimination’ (Serviat 1986/1993, 86). As he puts it, ‘It was one of the questions that had been systematically sidestepped by all previous governments since independence’ (*ibid.*).

10.2 GUEVARA’S IDEAS AND STANDPOINTS

10.2.1 Race as a category of capitalism-imperialism

Following in the steps of the triumph of the revolution, frank deliberations and analyses of the island’s race question were conducted by a cross-section of the nation. Among other institutions The National Integration Committee addressed this problem during the early months of 1959. The Committee was supported by Guevara and delegates from trade union, women, and youth organisations, prominent artists and writers such as Nicolás Guillén and Lázaro Peña; Fernando Ortiz; and Gonzalez Martín, a renown psychologist. In safeguarding Martí’s thoughts (see Part II), delegates both called for an end to racism *and* questioned the very concept of ‘different races’. Also examined by the Committee were the socio-economic and psychological causes generating racism and social prejudice (Serviat 1993, 88-90).

This was followed by the revolutionary government opening segregated restaurants, hotels, and beaches to black Cubans, something that ‘irritated’ US business men and women and the white Cuban middle class, the primary clientele of such establishments (Brock and Cunningham 1991).

In his speeches and writings Guevara places special emphasis on a new Cuban society devoid of racist practices, attitudes, and behaviours. As will be noted, his anti-racist stance links directly with his standpoints on democratic political practice and capitalist exploitation. His citing of the Declaration of Havana in

his Punta del Este speech (see EG 1961/2003i, 247) offers some insight into this aspect of his thought:

The National General Assembly of the People of Cuba – confident that it is expressing the general opinion of the peoples of Latin America – reaffirms that *democracy is not compatible with financial oligarchy; with discrimination against Blacks and outrages by the Ku Klux Klan* (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

Guevara reasons that, while an economically exploitative system governs and controls society, racially discriminatory practices will continue to exist. The reference to the white supremacist establishment is arguably intended to highlight the US administration's seeming lack of concern with, and reluctance to, decisively halt decisively organised racist customs in the US at the time. Guevara defends his stance, arguing as follows:⁴

Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of the color [sic] of their skin; those who let the murderers of blacks remain free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free men – how can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom? (EG 1964/2003s, 337)

10.2.2 New measures in Cuba

In his endeavour to advance the revolution's commitment to 'affirm the dignity of the human being', Guevara recalls in his Punta del Este speech that among the first measures the revolution instituted

was the abolition of racial discrimination, which existed in our country. The beaches of our island were not for the black nor for the poor to swim at, because they belonged to some private club Our hotels . . . which were built by foreign companies – did not allow blacks to sleep there, because tourists from other countries did not like blacks. That is the way our country was (EG 1961/2003i, 253).

In the same speech Guevara recounts that tens of thousands of literacy volunteers of all ages are in the Cuban countryside teaching reading and writing to millions of illiterates, many of whom were denied an education because of their skin colour.⁵ In this instance again, he conjures up Martí's desire to see an

educated Cuban nation, especially those living in rural areas (see Part III, Chapter 14). Guevara furthermore maintains that, while primary and secondary education has been made compulsory for all, university reform measures ensure that all Cubans have free access to higher education, science, and modern technology. In this sphere, he notes, 'we have greatly promoted national values to overcome the cultural deformation produced by imperialism'. Reaffirming the revolution's all-encompassing, non-racial goals, Guevara pronounces,

we have promoted the cultural heritage of all Latin America
We have extended the social function of medicine to benefit the peasants and the poor urban workers. Sports for all the people
Popular beaches have been opened to all . . . without distinction of color [sic] or ideology, and free besides. And the exclusive social clubs of our country, of which there were many, we transformed into workers' social clubs (*ibid.*, 254).

It is noteworthy that Guevara perceives 'discrimination' or 'oppression', not only in terms of skin colour, but, more so, class. The above extracts reveal his desire for new revolutionary measures to have at heart the interests of both the racially oppressed and, equally, the economically exploited of whatever hue. It is striking too that Guevara perceives all inequities as a cohesive whole which, to him, directly emanates from the previous exploitative and oppressive régime. In this respect his thought is both similar to and patently different from Martí's postures on related matters. Whereas Martí does not make a connection between racial discrimination and capitalism-imperialism (see Part II), for Guevara this is the essence of what lies beneath all discriminatory, oppressive, and exploitative practices (also chapter 12).

10.2.3 On Apartheid South Africa

Of some relevance too in other speeches are Guevara's attentiveness to racist practices in Africa and his denunciation particularly of the then South African Apartheid régime (see EG 1964/2003k, 307; EG 1964/2003s, 328, 330; EG 1965/2003v, 349; EG 1967/2003w, 355-56).

Heading Cuba's delegation to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, Switzerland, during March 1964 (Deutschmann 2003,

303), Guevara principally condemns the presence of an official South African delegation while other socialist republics are not represented (see EG 1964/2003t). Guevara declares, ‘we cannot say with complete accuracy that this is a forum of the world’s people’ (EG 1964/2003r, 306) as ‘delegations representing the Democratic Republic of Korea and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the genuine governments of those nations, are absent, while representatives of the governments of the southern parts of both those divided states are present’ (*ibid.*, 307). ‘And to add to the absurdity of the situation’, Guevara points out that:

the government of the Union of South Africa, which violates the United Nations Charter with the inhuman and fascist policy of apartheid embodied in its laws, and which defies the United Nations by refusing to transmit information on the territories that it holds in trust, makes bold to occupy a seat in this hall (*ibid.*).

Addressing the 19th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York on December 11, 1964 (Deutschmann 2003, 325), Guevara selects for particular condemnation, again, the Apartheid establishment (see EG 1964/2003s). He furthermore petitions the world body to bring an end to what he perceives as, ‘the brutal policy’:

Once again we speak out to put the world on guard against what is happening in South Africa. The brutal policy of apartheid is applied before the eyes of the nations of the world. The peoples of Africa are compelled to endure the fact that on the African continent the superiority of one race over another remains official policy, and that in the name of this racial superiority murder is committed with impunity. Can the United Nations do nothing to stop this? (EG 1964/2003s, 328).

10.2.4 Racism in Africa

In the same speech Guevara turns to acts of atrocities committed elsewhere on the African continent. He notes, ‘and as if this [South Africa] were not enough, we now have flung in our faces these latest acts that have filled the world with indignation’ (*ibid.*, 329). In this instance he identifies other ‘perpetrators of atrocities’ as among others, ‘Belgian paratroopers, carried by U.S. planes, who took off from British bases’. These forces, he remarks, are ‘murdering in cold

blood thousands of Congolese in the name of the white race', 'just as they suffered under the German heel [Nazism] because their blood was not sufficiently Aryan' (*ibid.*, 329-30). In this instance, likewise, Guevara directly associates European colonialism (Belgian and British) and North American capitalism-imperialism, with racist oppression in Africa. He regards the racist ideology imposed on Africa in a similar light as the racist dogma which underpinned Nazi rule in Germany. Though not mentioning him by name, in the speech Guevara in this speech proceeds to recall a standpoint advanced by Martí in earlier times. However, in reviving one of Martí's most cherished ideas, Guevara endeavours to imbue it with a distinctive class perspective:

Perhaps many of those soldiers, who were turned into sub-humans by imperialist machinery, believe in good faith that they are defending the rights of a superior race. In this Assembly, however, those peoples whose skins are darkened by a different sun, colored [sic] by different pigments, constitute the majority. And they fully and clearly understand that *the difference between men does not lie in the color [sic] of their skin, but in the forms of ownership of the means of production, in the relations of production* (*ibid.*, 330, emphasis added).

Concluding his standpoint on this issue, Guevara goes on to express Cuba's support for various oppressed and poor nations, both in Africa and beyond the continent's borders. This is an instance that portrays his awareness of global human struggles and above all, his allegiance to universal solidarity, topics which receive in-depth attention in chapter 14:

The Cuban delegation extends greetings to the peoples of Southern Rhodesia and South-West Africa, oppressed by white colonialist minorities; to the peoples of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Swaziland, French Somaliland, the Arabs of Palestine, Aden and the Protectorates, Oman; and to all peoples in conflict with imperialism and colonialism. We reaffirm our support to them (*ibid.*).

10.3 OFFICIAL CUBAN STANDPOINT

Sarduy and Stubbs (1993) point out that there exists little doubt that the Cuban revolution moved rapidly to dismantle institutionalised racism (Sarduy and

Stubbs 1993, 6). As Robaina (1990/1993) substantiates, 'One of the first problems the Revolution took on board was racial discrimination' (Robaina 1990/1993, 102). Hence, during March 1959 Fidel Castro announced what has become known as the Proclamation Against Discrimination, which declares among other rulings,

- 1) The Cuban government had no need to formally establish a right that belongs to all
- (2) No man or woman possessed 'superior value' to other men or women, and
- (3) Nobody stemmed from a 'pure' or 'superior race' (*ibid*).

Following from this Castro demarcates the yardstick by which Cubans would be appraised in the new society:

Virtue, personal merit, heroism, generosity, should be the measure of men, not skin colour' (cited in Sarduy and Stubbs 1993, 6).

From these declarations it is apparent that the revolutionary régime sought to propagate and inculcate the idea that all citizens are fundamentally equal, that 'skin colour' should not constitute a factor either in the consideration or appraisal of citizens.

Fernandez Robaina argues that education played a decisive role in the revolutionary régime's endeavour to broach the island's historic racial question. In this regard, Castro sought to adopt the idea held by many for decades, that only through education could racial discrimination and prejudice be purged. As a consequence, in the early stages of the revolution education was put forward as a means of helping eliminate the harms of the neo-colonial republic, among which discrimination and prejudice were deemed as highly significant (Fernandez Robaina 1990/1993, 102). Fernandez Robaina contends furthermore that the new position of the revolutionary government was distinct in that in the past the racial issue was addressed without thorough investigation. As he points out, in the past there were 'only philanthropic ideas, without relating the two phenomena with their economic origins and the imposition and penetration of ideological currents of the dominant class among the popular sectors of the population' (*ibid*). As a direct result perceptions of discrimination and

prejudice cut across not only class, but similarly colour. As Castro endeavoured to point out,

. . . in all fairness, I must say that it is not only the aristocracy who practices discrimination. There are very humble people who also hold the same prejudices as any wealthy person, and this is what is most absurd and sad . . . and should compel people to meditate on the problem (Castro cited in Fernandez Robaina 1990/1993, 102).

On a further occasion, Castro censured racial discrimination and racial prejudice, calling them ‘anti-nation’, arguing ‘what the eternal enemies of Cuba . . . want is for us, to be divided into a thousand pieces’ (*ibid.*). Pedro Serviat, a prominent Cuban intellectual, strengthened this pronouncement, arguing as Guevara and Fernandez Robaina does - that it is, in effect, commercial manipulation that has a vested interest in maintaining human discrimination and categorisation. These mechanisms he considers exist merely to sow competition and division among citizens (Serviat 1986/1993, 89-90).

In his March 1959 address Castro also pronounced what would become one of the fundamental pillars of the new Cuban nation. As can be observed both here and in the citations above, the influence of José Martí is quite evident:

Are we to be a small people and on top of that divided? . . . Are we . . . now to be divided into white and black? To what end if not to weaken the nation, to weaken Cuba? Are we to be weak and also divided by colour? Why do we not tackle this problem radically and with love, not in a spirit of division and hate? Why not educate and destroy the prejudice of centuries, the prejudice handed down to us from such an odious institution as slavery? The problem here is not a change of government but changing the essence of what colonial politics have been until today. *We have to uproot the last colonial vestiges, conscious of making that phrase of Martí a reality: he said it before, we have to repeat it now, that a Cuban is more than white, more than black, and we are Cuban* (Castro cited in Fernandez Robaina 1990/1993, 103-4, emphasis added).

In line with Guevara and Castro’s anti-racist standpoints, Raul Castro, brother of Fidel and leader of Cuba’s military forces, issued this pronouncement during a commemorative gathering in Havana in 1959:

What should we do about the men and women of black skin, for whom Maceo⁶ fought, suffering the same anguish of inequality that he suffered in his admirable body and spirit? We know what we must do. Because we take the commitment of José Martí and Antonio Maceo as our own. On this night of tribute, I wish to remember those great heroes of yesteryear, as we embark upon this new revolution, the phase which is ours to live . . . (Raul Castro cited in Serviat 1986/1993, 88).

10.4 CONCLUSION

As a result of Guevara and the broader revolutionary leadership's anti-racism undertakings, and in light of a growing voice within the revolution arguing against 'mere access to public facilities' (Sarduy and Stubbs 1993, 9), to what extent did the Cuban revolution achieve full citizen integration and equality, with the rights of those previously marginalised fully protected?

In upholding Martí's humanist principles, the Cuban régime essentially proclaims the conviction that citizens should no longer be classified, partitioned, or labelled as 'white' and 'black', but that all Cubans, collectively, constitute the Cuban nation. Sarduy and Stubbs (1993) concur: 'In the 1960s, pronouncements on race took their cue from Martí: man should be judged according to merit, not race, and above all, the enemy should not divide and thereby rule' (*ibid.*, 12). Serviat's estimation (1986/1993) is that

Without a doubt, the main gain was to guarantee the right to work for all citizens under equal conditions. This was achieved with some concrete measures (Serviat 1986/1993, 88-89).

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Towards offsetting discrimination in the social domain, the admission of black men and women into previously prohibited sports such as fencing, gymnastics, swimming, tennis, shooting, horse riding and rowing, was made prominent and encouraged. Secretarial schools were also initiated, with priority given to 'former domestics', the majority of whom were black who went on to secure employment in banks as secretaries and clerks, etc. The opening of catering, management and Foreign Service schools enabled many ordinary citizens from unprivileged backgrounds to receive training in a range of fields. According to Serviat the nationalization process did not only extend into the field of business

and economics, but the beaches, sports and recreational centres became state-owned and thus open to all. Arguably most importantly, the revolution:

put culture at the service of the people; revindicated the Cuban national culture; encouraged popular values in young people, irrespective of race or sex; helped to promote values previously discriminated against such as those of African origin practised by slaves, blacks and free coloreds; promoted mass study of all the popular arts; and, it goes without saying, set up a socialist education system, one for the whole island, for all citizens, male and female, blacks, whites, workers and peasants (Serviat 1986/1993, 89)

As a result of the above measures private education became abolished, which likewise was a source of 'racial discrimination' in the pre-revolutionary era. With the abolition of discrimination, housing in places once restricted to the white bourgeoisie was offered to needy and deserving families, irrespective of skin colour. Other anti-racist revolutionary measures led to the incorporation of the Cuban people in mass social organisations such as the Central de Trabajadores de Cuba (Confederation of Cuban Workers, CTC), Federacion de Mujeres Cubanas (Federation of Cuban Women, FMC) and the Asociacion Nacional de Agricultores Pequeños (National Association of Small Farmers, ANAP). Serviat reasons that Cubans' right to full equality, with no distinction of race, sex or national origin, became laid out in the country's socialist Constitution, passed by the overwhelming majority of working people and officially brought into effect on 24 February 1976.

Serviat assesses furthermore that the economic, cultural and social development of the nation had shown that 'Marxism-Leninism' is the 'only theory that is scientific and can offer adequate solutions to the complex social problems of any nation'. For him, and conceivably the revolutionary Cuban regimé, because the ruling classes had a vested interest in sustaining racial inequity as an instrument of antagonism and partition between the black and the white worker, and thereby benefited more, 'it is precisely through the expropriation of these classes that the main economic factor propping up racial or sexual discrimination is eliminated' (Serviat 1986/1993, 89-90).

Arguably, the most significant gains resulting from the abolition of discrimination and the institution of egalitarian measures were not only the development of a truly non-racial social order, but more concretely, the institution of economic equality and the break down of human alienation. From his field research Zeitlin construes that for the Cuban black, where previously it had been unintelligible, the revolution made the association between their fate and the fate of privileged workers, and the pre-revolutionary economic order, manifestly understandable. The revolution increased the black workers' revolutionary consciousness and cemented the links between all sectors of the island's working masses (Zeitlin 1970, 281). Moreover, Zeitlin points out that the revolution has given all Cuban workers a sense of 'basic human equality, associated with full community membership' that they never had in the pre-revolutionary epoch. In the past, Cuban workers, to a lesser or larger degree felt themselves to be *neither human nor citizens*; they were alienated from control over their lives and not fully part of society. They rejected, and were rejected by, the ruling and dominant institutions. They were ruled, in the words of a sugar mill worker, by 'individuals who, after destroying the Constitution⁷ submitted the Republic to the abyss of viciousness and corruption'. Before the revolution, they expected nothing but 'ill treatment and theft at the hands of government officials' (Zeitlan 1970, 285, emphasis added). Zeitlin contends, that aside from the array of factors that distinguished workers from one another, what unified them and made them what they were and what they could be is the fact that they constituted the working class – that before the revolution, according to a Cuban worker, 'we produced riches that we could see but never touch; for we were the exploited and the trampled on. That has ended here' (cited in Zeitlin 1970, 284-85).

¹ Castro's pronouncements in this respect receive some attention as they are deemed of particular relevance to similar questions post-Apartheid South Africa continue to confront in current times.

² See various editions of *The Bulletin* for South African socialist positions.

³ Born in Havana in 1914, Pedro Serviat was a graduate of the 1920s José Martí Popular University and worker activist in the communist movement. He was the first director of the Nico Lopez National School when it was set up in the 1960s, and then became head of the Party Movement of History Activists. Prior to his death, he was director of Party Institute of History of the Communist Movement and the Socialist Revolution of Cuba (Sarduy and Stubbs 1993, 296).

⁴ Anderson's version of this extract from Guevara's speech reads as follows:

How can a country that murders its own children and discriminates between them daily because of the color [sic] of their skins, a country that allows the murderers of Negroes to go free, actually protects them and punishes the Negroes for demanding respect for their lawful rights as free human beings, claim to be a guardian of liberty? (Anderson 1997, 617).

⁵ Changes in Cuba's education system, as perceived by Guevara, are presented in greater detail in Chapter 11.

⁶ Antonio Maceo (1845-1896) – a prominent military leader and strategist in Cuba's independence wars; opposed the 1878 treaty that ended the first war; played active role in the 1895 independence struggle under Martí's leadership; killed whilst in battle (Deutschmann 2003, 409).

⁷ Promulgated in 1940.

CHAPTER 11

IMPERIALISM, INTERNATIONALISM & SOLIDARITY

11.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores what is conceivably Ernesto Guevara's most recognised and ardent humanistic attribute - his deep concern with the well-being and commonality of the destitute and oppressed nations of his time. Guevara's enduring consideration of the ordinary people of Latin America particularly, contained in many, if not all, of his speeches and writings, portrays not only a remarkable awareness of the continent's economic and social difficulties, but also an in-depth knowledge of the people's historical and cultural conditions (see Deutschmann 2003). This is significant insofar as Martí (and arguably many other influential thinkers in Guevara's life) promoted the concept of gaining familiarity with, and understanding of, the cultural circumstances of other nations on the continent (see Part II). Martí, furthermore, drew attention to the significance of *employing the cultural successes* from beyond Cuba's own boundaries (see Part II), what has become a fundamental principle of Cuban cultural policy today (see Part IV). Though records suggest Guevara did not go that far in his theoretical suppositions, this inclination is portrayed clearly in aspects pertaining to his personal life and deeds¹ as illustrated in the preceding chapter. It is especially in his speeches on imperialism, together with his global campaign to foster internationalism and universal solidarity as countermeasures to it, that we encounter his deep consciousness and discernment of the dominated continent (see Deutschmann 2003). Going far beyond the tradition advanced by Martí however, Guevara envisions the *plight and fellowship* of the

whole of the Third World, the full gamut of the victims of colonialism, post-colonialism, and capitalist-imperialism. It is noteworthy that Guevara's unfailing, authoritative anti-imperialist stance continues to elicit support and praise from arguably all the major quarters of the global socialist movement, despite the lack of a more consistent and developed Marxist theory in his political programme.

11.1.1 Goals of the Chapter

The chapter selects for discussion some of the most perceptible features of Guevara's postures on imperialism, internationalism, and universal solidarity as illustrated in a selection of his speeches and writings. As indicated at the inception of Part III, it is contended that his ideas in this regard especially, have endured over the course of the Cuban revolution, becoming an underlying feature of Cubans' world outlook and as such, a distinguishing trait of the country's political culture. Continuing unabatedly in modern times (see Part IV), it is strongly suggestive of Marx's internationalist viewpoint (chapters 12, Conclusion to thesis) and supportive also of the creation and development of a universal culture (see Part IV).

The passages that follow, explore (1) the composition of Guevara's widely targeted audiences and readers, and, more so, (2) some of the major themes he deemed significant enough to popularise amongst the oppressed. The discussions endeavour to illustrate that whereas Guevara's fraternal stance embraces victims, active fighters, and universal opponents of imperialism on the one hand, *and*, on the other, human casualties of natural disasters, the principal concerns of his addresses and writings are

1. The goals, procedures, and effects of imperialism, in Cuba, Latin America, and arguably all other Third World nations, and above all,
2. The greater goal of establishing internationalism and universal solidarity as countermeasures to world imperialism, an ambition that for him extends far beyond the perimeters of the Latin American continent. In this respect, Guevara sought to

- campaign for the attainment of sovereignty, both in the national and broader continental domain,
- popularise the Cuban revolution, especially its gains in strengthening his argument that a new society is possible,
- offer awareness and deeper comprehension of all the nations that constitute Latin America, of which the Cuban people are a part and promote a new set of global guidelines, that for him will usher in a socially-just and equal world order.

11.2 SCOPE OF GUEVARA'S FRATERNAL STANCE

Guevara's public oration, (EG 1960/2003g), offers some insight into the diverse natures of his targeted audiences and supporters. The speech is both an earnest campaign for universal solidarity and an illustration of his deep perception of the degree of suffering experienced by Latin American people. The speech starts off by drawing attention to countries 'afflicted by natural catastrophes' on the one hand, and 'catastrophes caused by imperialism' (EG 1960/2003g, 231) on the other. Accordingly, Guevara extends Cuba's 'special greetings' to the Chilean people, whose 'unfortunate land has been devastated by one of the most terrible earthquakes in history' (*ibid.*). But he not only shows awareness of such disasters; he considers it vital to offer concrete assistance to nations suffering the effects of such calamities. In his later Punta del Este speech, he again refers to Chile's humanitarian plight, pointing out Cuba's endeavour to bring relief to its afflicted people. Far from singing the island's own praises, Guevara emphasises the notion that humanitarian aid should not be subject to reward:

when the earthquake struck Chile, our people came to her aid to the extent of our resources, with our only product, sugar. It was a small amount of aid, but nevertheless it was a type of aid for which nothing was demanded in return. It was simply handing over to a sister nation some food to tide her over those anxious hours. *Nor does that country have to thank us, and much less does she owe us anything. It was our duty to give what we gave* (EG 1961/2003i, 252, emphasis added).

In his Youth Congress speech Guevara also offers his well-wishes to the president of Guatemala, as this was the first Latin American nation 'to raise its voice fearlessly against colonialism' by expressing the 'cherished desires of its

peasant masses'. He then directs his attention to the people of two countries that 'perhaps have suffered the most in the Americas', Puerto Rico and 'paradox[ically]', the US. The former is singled out for special mention because, despite '150 years of proclaimed freedom' – the first 'free' country in the Americas - it continues to fight to institute a government of the people. His uniquely constructive mention of the US is based on his perception that the US delegation present represents the 'purest' of the US nation. He 'salutes' them, he says, because *the US people are not accountable for the 'barbarity and injustice of their rulers'; they are 'innocent victims of the rage of all the peoples of the world'* (EG 1960/2003g, 232, emphasis added). In further speeches and writings Guevara refers to the wretched conditions of arguably each and every Latin American nation, also of many other Third World countries, both on the Asian continent and especially in Africa (see below).

11.3 GOALS, PROCEDURES, AND EFFECTS OF CAPITALISM-IMPERIALISM

Guevara's 1964 United Nations Trade Conference speech delivered in Geneva, lays particular emphasis on the global role and effects of capitalist-imperialism. With this as background, he endeavours to offer an official set of guidelines which may serve as countermeasures to the status quo. He starts off by arguing that most of the underdeveloped countries are in 'total stagnation' and that in some of them the rate of economic progression is exceeded by that of its population growth. These phenomena he reasons, are 'not accidental' but operate in tandem with the objectives of the developed capitalist system in the process of expansion. This development imposes onto the poor nations 'the most abusive and naked forms of exploitation'. Guevara argues that, since the close of the nineteenth century, this 'aggressive expansionist trend' has been exhibited in various economically-backward countries. In present times, he maintains, it takes the form of control by the developed powers over the production of and trade in raw materials in the dependent countries. This is shown also by the dependence of a given country on a single primary commodity. This infusion of capital from the industrial countries is the essential provision for this economic dependence he says. He sees this economic infiltration and subsequent domination, as taking on the following forms: loans issued on 'onerous terms', investments that subject a given country to 'the

power of the investors', 'technological subordination', 'control of a country's foreign trade by big international monopolies', as well as, 'the use of force as an economic power to reinforce other means of exploitation'.

Guevara goes on to cite the International Monetary Fund, the then International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Inter-American Development Bank as examples of international organisations used by colonial powers to dominate poor nations, among which the US features as foremost for him. All these organisations are governed by 'rules' and 'principles' that safeguard 'fairness and reciprocity' in global financial dealings. These, in reality, are for him 'mere fetishes behind which hide the most subtle instruments for the perpetuation of backwardness and exploitation'. He regards the IMF for instance, as preventing underdeveloped countries from shielding themselves against competition and penetration by foreign monopolies. The establishment of 'equal treatment' and 'reciprocal concessions' between developed and underdeveloped nations maintains the status quo and serves the economic interests of the dominant nations. Bodies like the IMF neglect to diminish exploitative measures such as 'agricultural protectionism, subsidies, tariffs', and the like, in the expansion of exports from the dependent countries' (EG 1964/2003r, 311-13). As a direct result of these measures, Guevara argues, the wealth created by the masses who live in conditions of 'backwardness, hunger and poverty', is enjoyed predominantly by the capitalist class.

Continuing his speech, Guevara records furthermore that since 1961, while '\$1.735 billion' left Latin America in the form of interest on foreign investment, '\$1.456 billion' was transferred from the continent as a result of short-term and long-term loans. As such, Latin America's experience of the type of aid offered by the developed capitalist world, as in the Alliance for Progress, for instance, 'has been a sad one'. For this reason, this experience must serve as a 'warning' to other regions and to the underdeveloped world in general (EG 1964/2003r, 314-15).

Guevara states, moreover, that at the time the region's economic growth is virtually at a standstill as it is 'devastated' by inflation and unemployment; it is 'caught up in the vicious circle of foreign indebtedness'. He warns that because

of the existence of deep social tensions, armed conflict could flare up (EG 1964/2003r, 315).

Cuba, Guevara remarks, revealed these facts as they arose in the past and, furthermore, forecast the outcome of capitalist rule. The decline of trade relations results in underdeveloped countries exporting more raw materials and primary commodities in order to import industrial goods – charged at much higher costs. In addition, there exists ‘outright discrimination’ against countries that have chosen to institute different economic structures. Trade discrimination is practised by the imperialist countries against the socialist countries with the aim of ‘blocking their development’. He notes this has been tantamount to ‘a real blockade’, not only in the case of Cuba, but also in the cases of East Germany, China, North Korea, and Vietnam. The ultimate aim of imperialism he reaffirms, is to warrant that ‘the monopolies do not lose their field of exploitation and at the same time strengthen the blockade of the socialist camp’ (EG 1964/2003r, 317).

‘The world has plenty of hunger, but not enough money to buy food’ Guevara maintains. In the underdeveloped countries - ‘the world of hunger’ - projects for increasing food production are deferred in order to sustain existing prices. ‘This is the inexorable law of the philosophy of plunder, which must cease to be the rule in relations between peoples’ Guevara declares. Furthermore, he believes that certain bourgeois governments have made ‘common cause with imperialism’ – ‘they have become appendages and agents of imperialism’ (EG 1964/2003r, 318-19).

11.3.1 Imperialist measures in Cuba

In his address ‘The philosophy of plunder must cease’ - delivered in March 1964 at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Geneva, Switzerland (Deutschmann 2003, 305) - Guevara delves into US imperialism’s role and its wide-ranging consequences for Latin America and, particularly, Cuba. At the inception of the speech Guevara states that Cuba’s location alone should make it clear that it is ‘an underdeveloped country’, ‘one that bears the scars of colonialist and imperialist exploitation’ that it knows ‘from bitter experience’ the consequences of subjugating its ‘markets’, ‘entire economy’,

and ‘governmental machinery’ to a foreign power. Being fully aware of the gravity of Cuba’s existing situation, a matter that conceivably compelled immediate international attention for him, he announces that ‘Cuba speaks here as a country under attack’ (EG 1964/2003r, 304), proceeding to list a host of imperialist measures that have been instituted against the island since the triumph of the revolution. In his extensive list of ‘threats’ and ‘offences’ that have come from the country’s northern neighbour, he announces that

- Cuba has been the object of ‘imperialist wrath and the object of every conceivable kind of repression and violation of international law – known to all’.
- Acts of aggression by the US against Cuba began since the triumph of the revolution.
- These acts initially took the form of ‘direct attacks’ on Cuban production centres.
- This was followed by acts aimed at ‘paralyzing’ the Cuban economy.
- In mid-1960 attempts were undertaken to cut off Cuba’s fuel lines, needed for its industries, transport, and power stations.
- The independent US oil companies have refused to sell petroleum to the island.
- Efforts were made to exclude Cuba from gaining access to the foreign exchange required for foreign trade.
- An initial cut in July 1960 of 700,000 tons in the country’s sugar quota for the US was followed by a complete boycott from March 1961 of all sugar products – the country’s main export commodity.
- The prohibition in October 1960 on shipments reaching the island practically crippled, the Cuban industry as raw materials and spare parts could not reach the country.
- On February, 3, 1962, President John F Kennedy placed an official embargo on all US trade with Cuba.
- Following the above acts, the US administration subjected the country to an economic blockade with the aim of preventing trade with other countries as well.

- From January 24, 1962, the US Treasury Department instituted a ban on the importation into the US of any article made in whole or in part from products of Cuban origin, even if manufactured in another country.
- The US issued a decree on February 6, 1963 which entails that goods bought with US government funds would not be shipped in vessels flying the flag of foreign countries that had traded with Cuba after January 1 of that year.
- The above measure was the beginning of a US blacklist, which at the time, included more than 150 ships belonging to countries that had not yielded to the blockade.
- On July 8, 1963 the US Treasury Department froze all Cuban property owned in the US and prohibited the transfer of dollars to or from Cuba.
- On February 18, 1964 the US announced the suspension of its aid to the United Kingdom, France and Yugoslavia since they continued trading with the island.

Following these pronouncements, Guevara enquires from the delegates present whether these 'economic transgressions' can be considered legitimate:

I ask whether that attitude is or is not at odds with the principle of the organisation that brings us together – that of practicing tolerance among states . . . of abandoning all forms of discrimination and removing the barriers between countries with different social systems and at different stages of development (EG 1964/2003r, 310-11).

In his prior speech, 'The Cuban revolution's influence in Latin America' (EG 1962/2003m) delivered to the members of the Cuban Department of State Security (DSE) (Deutschmann 2003, 275). Guevara deduces that 'the US has chosen and meticulously followed a policy of isolating the Cuban people' from the Latin American masses. He reasons that it intends to weaken both the island's economic and social relations with neighbouring states: 'The US will engage in acts of aggression and isolation' in order to 'cloak us so nobody will see us and we won't have any pernicious influence' (EG 1962/2003m, 286-87).

11.4 THE CUBAN REVOLUTION: AN EXEMPLAR OF DEFIANCE AND SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENT

In his speeches following the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship, Guevara naturally had great cause to popularise the island's achievements amongst his local and international audiences.¹ At the Latin American Youth Congress, citing the possible danger of atomic warfare breaking out between Cuba and its alliance partners, on the one hand, and the United States, on the other (EG 1960/2003g), Guevara announces that even if Cuba 'might disappear from the face of the earth . . . the Cuban people would consider themselves satisfied and fulfilled if each of you, upon returning to your countries, would say'

We have . . . seen the dawn, and our minds and our hands are filled with the seeds of that dawn. We are prepared to plant them in this land, and defend them so they can grow (EG 1960/2003g, 240).

Following from this Guevara argues that Cuba's revolutionary course, and, more so, its ensuing social achievements, have turned it into a target of attack by its northern neighbour '*because we show to each nation of the Americas what is possible*' (EG 1960/2003g, 238, emphasis added). His Punta del Este speech (EG 1961/2003i) particularly emphasises some of Cuba's social achievements since the revolutionary conquest. In this instance, he selects for more detailed dialogue various measures that have been undertaken to fundamentally reform Cuba's educational system:

The following data illustrate among other matters, (1) Guevara's great interest in, and knowledge of, the educational-cultural sphere of Cuban society, (2) some of the major changes and developments that have taken place in Cuba's education system and (3) his desire to reveal to Latin America, Cuba's adversary - the US administration - as well as the international community at large, some of the significant successes of the Cuban revolution. According to Guevara

- Since new revolutionary measures were instituted, Cuba occupies 'first place' in Latin America in the distribution of wealth to education', that is, '5.3 percent' of the national income.

- While developed nations devote 3 to 4 per cent of their national income to national education, Latin America generally allocates 1 to 2 per cent to education.
- '28.3 percent' of the current expenses of the Cuban state are allocated to the Ministry of Education. Among all Latin American countries, this is the highest, with the next highest being 21 per cent.
- Cuba increased its education budget from '\$75 million in 1958 to \$128 million in 1961' – an increase of 71 per cent. The total expenditure for education, including the literacy campaign and building schools, totalled 170 million dollars, or 25 pesos per capita. In Denmark this is 25 dollars per capita a year, in France 15 dollars, and in Latin America generally it is 5 dollars.
- Cuba built, in two years, 10,000 schoolrooms and appointed 10,000 new teachers.
- One of UNESCO's objectives for Latin American primary schools earmarked for 1968, has already been achieved in Cuba.
- Cuba has nationalised its methods of instruction.
- Education in Cuba is secular and entirely free of charge.
- A system of scholarships has been introduced towards meeting both the students' and country's needs; the allocation of scholarship is as follows:
 - 20, 000 for secondary schools
 - 3,000 for pre-university institutes
 - 3,000 for art instructors
 - 6,000 for university students
 - 1,500 for courses in artificial insemination
 - 1,200 for courses in agricultural machinery
 - 14,000 for courses in tailoring and sewing and home economics
 - 1,200 for the preparation of rural school teachers
 - 750 for introductory courses in elementary education
 - 10,000 scholarships for students of technology in the socialist countries abroad
- 100 centres of secondary education have been created, with at least one in each municipality.
- Illiteracy is being systematically wiped out across the entire country.

- Some 104,000 young students have embarked on a country-wide literacy programme, concentrating on raising the literacy and educational levels of the peasantry.
- 32,000 teachers have joined in Cuba's national literary drive.
- Seven regimental barracks have been converted into school-cities.
- 27 barracks have been converted into schools.
- The enrolment of the Camilo Cienfuegos School-city, situated in the remote Sierra Maestra region, has increased to 5000 pupils.
- New educational units are being built for some 20,000 pupils.
- The construction of a school-city in each province is projected.
- Each school-city will be sufficient in foodstuffs and introduce peasant children to agricultural techniques.
- From 1958 to 1959 primary school enrolment increased from 602,000 to 1,231,700 pupils; over the same period
- Enrolment for secondary education increased from 21,900 to 83, 800
- Commercial education, from 8,900 to 21,300, and
- Technical school enrolment increased from 5,600 to 11,500
- A total of 58 million dollars has been invested in school construction over the past two years
- The National Printing Plant guarantees textbooks and other printed matter for all students without charge
- The national television and radio broadcasting services are used to supplement national learning programmes
- The newly-established Cuban Cinematographic Art and Industry, the National Library, and the National Theatre, with departments throughout the country, assist in the dissemination of culture
- The National Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation (INDER), promotes physical development on national scale (EG 1961/2003i, 264-66)

Concluding this statistical presentation Guevara announces that, 'that, distinguished delegates, is the cultural panorama of Cuba at this time' (EG 1961/2003i, 266). Guevara advises his Latin American delegates that it is Cuba's desire to see their countries develop 'we want to see you grow, if possible, at the same rate that we are growing, but we don't oppose your

growing at another rate' (EG 1961/2003i, 273). Turning to the US delegation, he states that, while social injustices prevail amongst the poor, Cuba cannot pledge that the revolution will not expand beyond its margins:

we cannot stop exporting our example, as the United States wants, because our example is something intangible that crosses borders . . . we cannot guarantee . . . that the idea of Cuba will not take root in some country of Latin America . . . what we do guarantee this conference is that if urgent measures of social prevention are not taken, the example of Cuba will take root in the people (EG 1960/2003g, 273).

In the face of imminent danger and the possible collapse of the revolution due to various imperialist counter-revolutionary measures, Guevara issues a clarion call to all Latin American nations: 'From all the sister countries of the Americas, and from our own land, if [Cuba] should still remain standing as an example, from such a moment on and forever, the voice of the people will answer: 'Thus it shall be: Let freedom triumph in every corner of the Americas' (EG 1960/2003g, 240-41).

11.5 COUNTERMEASURES TO IMPERIALISM

11.5.1 Sovereignty

Continuing from Martí, Guevara similarly views Cuba's sovereignty of paramount importance for citizens' future development and sanctity. In his Punta del Este speech (EG 1961/2003i) he reasons that the Cuban revolution came to power 'with its own army and on the ruins of the oppressor's army'; that it dedicated itself to 'the systematic destruction of all old formal structures that upheld the dictatorship of an exploiter class over the exploited class' (EG 1961/2003i, 252). Moreover, since the revolution has 'reaffirmed the country's national sovereignty for the first time in its history', it is empowered to 'call in its own name' – legitimately – 'and in the name of all the people of the Americas and of the world for the return of all territories unjustly occupied by foreign powers'. Quite significant is his ensuing argument, which advances that the Cuban nation similarly will struggle for the independence of other countries and occupied territories '*indiscriminately, without asking about the political*

régime or about the aspirations of those who fight for their independence' (EG 1961/2003i, 252, emphasis added).²

He goes on to pledge support for the state of Panama, which 'has a piece of its territory occupied by the United States', affirming also the right of nations to assign names to land which rightfully belongs to them: 'we call the islands near the south of Argentina the Malvinas and not the Falkland Islands. And we call the island that the United States snatched from Honduras and from which it is insulting us over radio and telegraph, Isla del Cisne' (EG 1961/2003i, 252).³ In the same talk Guevara proceeds to declare Cuba's support for the independence struggles of the people of the Guianas, the British Antilles, Belize, as well as colonies as far a field as Africa and Asia. For him it is vital to lend support to any part of the world where 'the powerful oppress the defenceless', 'so that the weak may achieve independence, self-determination, and the right to self-rule as a sovereign state' (EG 1961/2003i, 252).

From these declarations it is useful to emphasise the following: as with Martí, Guevara *simultaneously* advocates the attainment of continental liberty *and* national sovereignty. Extending this perspective, he pledges support to colonial countries situated both on and far beyond the continent. Operating in a new era and under 'liberated' circumstances, Guevara postulates that because the revolution was essential and therefore justifiable in the face of widespread oppression, the Cuban people are entitled for the first time in their historical development to make lawful demands. According to him, they do so on behalf of themselves and those who continue suffering from colonial domination and, as a result, are denied channels of expression. Lastly, and most significantly, he emphasises the concept of *political indiscrimination* - that support for the anti-colonial struggle should be infinite, devoid of boundaries, and not take into account the nature of the politics in question.⁴ In 1964 Geneva returns to this stance, declaring, 'though our convictions are so firm that no arguments can change them, we are ready to join in constructive debate in the framework of peaceful coexistence between countries with different political, economic and social systems' (EG 1964/2003r, 309).

11.5.2 Latin American unity

In his frequent references to the Latin American people in several, if not all, of his writings and speeches, Guevara endeavours to spell out the importance of continental unity in light of the risks posed by capitalist-imperialism. Such unity, in turn, will guarantee each individual country's freedom as well as, and especially, the future welfare of the Cuban nation. Hence it is important for Cubans to acquaint themselves with the nations of the continent. In his DSE speech of 1962 Guevara maintains that Latin America overall should be *a great source of interest for Cubans because they are part of it, culturally and historically*. He regards Cubans as being part of a broader assembly of oppressed nations fighting for their liberty, and maintain that the attitudes and aspirations of the Latin American people are closely related to 'our future and to our revolution's future' (EG 1962/2003m, 276). The Cuban revolution has had 'an enormous influence' on the continent, though to varying degrees in each country. Consequently it is vital to evaluate the grounds for this sway and why it has been larger in some countries, than in others. Similarly, the political life and attitudes of the progressive parties of each of the countries he says, should be examined (EG 1962/2003m, 276-77).

In his DSE address Guevara goes to some length to point out the political and economic characteristics of individual Latin American countries (see EG 1962/2003m, 277-286) that, for him, constitute the mutual basis of imperialist rule (EG 1962/2003m, 276). Returning to the need to obtain deeper awareness of the Latin American continent, he argues that Cubans will also learn '*about themselves*', '*draw closer together*' and '*understand more about their relations and their own history*'. Ultimately, *a thorough study of the Latin American continent means in effect also, 'a study of imperialist penetration – that is, its economy'*. There, he says, '*you will discover the seeds of everything that is growing and happening now*' (EG 1962/2003m, 293, emphasis added).

In the same speech Guevara goes on to vindicate why profound social change not only in Cuba, but across the Latin American continent is unavoidable. He justifies the quest for liberty, equality, and fairness as, not the concept of one individual or based on dishonourable intentions, but as rather deriving from the objective conditions ensuing from human oppression and exploitation of the

most abominable and cruellest kinds. All people of the continent he notes, whether white, black, of African origin ('mulatto'), mixed origin ('mestizos') or primary descendants ('Indians'), share anguish, degradation, and the burden of imperialism. Accordingly there exists a collective 'hope for a better tomorrow' (EG 1968/2003x, 296-97):

In many Latin American countries revolution is inevitable. This fact is not determined by the will of any one person. It is determined by the horrible conditions of exploitation under which the Latin American people live, the development of a revolutionary consciousness in the masses, the worldwide crisis of imperialism and the universal liberation movements of the subjugated nations.

Today's restlessness is an unmistakable symptom of rebellion. The insides of the continent are stirring after having witnessed four centuries of slavery, semislavery, and feudal exploitation of man by man: from the indigenous peoples and slaves brought from Africa to the national groups that arose later – whites, blacks, mulattoes, mestizos and Indians – who today share pain, humiliation and the Yankee yoke, and share hope for a better tomorrow (EG 1968/2003x, 296-97).

Guevara's DSE address concludes with his restatement of the continent's overriding historical features. Amongst others, he sees these as

- The goals of imperialism to (1) quell the spread of social revolution and (2) extend existing bourgeois rule across all states,
- The historic struggles waged between different power structures, and
- The aspiration of the US to gain 'absolute control' over the continent's economies.

'Imperialism', his DSE address concludes, 'uses Latin America as a source of raw materials and as an area of expansion for its monopolies'. These conditions he declares, '*have also unified us, creating a unity that must be held sacred and must be defended and strengthened*' (EG 1962/2003m, 292-93, emphasis added).

Ultimately, it is Guevara's judgement that the objectives of capitalism-imperialism on the continent amount to gaining control over the continent's

combined resources. Hence, it is more than ‘Cuba’s nickel mines or sugar mills, Venezuela’s oil, Mexico’s cotton, Chile’s copper, Argentina’s cattle, Paraguay’s grasslands or Brazil’s coffee’ that constitute the basis of imperialism’s objectives. ‘It is the *totality of these raw materials* upon which the monopolies feed’, he proclaims (EG 1960/2003g, 238, emphasis added).

11.5.3 Anti-imperialist global programme

In his endeavour to resist the objectives of imperialism worldwide, Guevara’s 1964 Geneva address also contains what arguably amounts to an internationalist/anti-imperialist programme for global change. On this occasion he calls on all delegates present to consider the adoption of ‘clear principles and a specific action programme’ to usher in a new era for the world. Guevara sees this as follows (EG 1964/2003r, 320-322):

- The institution of a ‘justice’, such as the one desired by the ‘masses oppressed by generations of exploitation’
- The reformulation of international trade suitable for swifter economic development of the poor nations and those suffering from discrimination
- A programme to eliminate all forms of discrimination and all differences amongst people
- Fair treatment of all nations, in the sense that fairness would enable all the exploited people to attain an acceptable standard of living
- The creation of a new international division of labour
- Raising levels of production in dominated countries until they have achieved the most complex forms of manufacturing
- Restoring traditional export markets, previously siezed through measures of protectionism and subsidisation, to underdeveloped countries
- Bringing to an end the exploitation of poor nations’ surplus primary commodities, a strategy that serves as an ‘instrument of penetration’ by foreign capital’
- Offering relief to underdeveloped countries in terms of their ceasing to bear the burden of foreign debt
- Suspension of all payments of dividends, interest, and capital until such time as the export prices of the underdeveloped countries reach sufficient levels

- Outlawing the domination of any country's economy by foreign capital investment and the use of force as an instrument of 'persuasion' (since these are dangers to world trade as well as world peace)
- Affirming the right of all nations to unrestricted freedom of trade
- Condemning the application or instigation of economic measures by one state which infringe on the sovereignty of another state
- Implementation of the principle of self-determination as embodied in the United Nations Charter
- Affirming the right of each state to adopt the desired form of political and economic organisation that suits it best
- Adopting measures and rules internationally for the establishment of 'absolute' equality, justice, and fairness
- Condemning the presence of foreign bases and troops in a country for the purposes of maintaining colonial rule.

In the context of the above demands, Guevara anticipates that imperialist rulers – that is 'the cause of the evils from which we are suffering' – will 'try to obscure the facts with twisted statements' of which 'they are masters'. He believes imperialism will endeavour to maintain the existing order 'that serve[s] their ends so well'. Imperialist rulers will offer reforms, but 'not fundamental ones', he asserts. He furthermore foresees that imperialist countries will go so far as to 'boycott' new equitable measures; 'they will try to show that the existing international division of labour is beneficial to all', alleging that the 'blame for underdevelopment' rests with the underdeveloped world. In this regard, Guevara believes they will be entirely accurate, but only if the oppressed masses are unable to unite 'in wholehearted determination, to form a united front of victims of discrimination and exploitation'. Guevara predicts, likewise, that, should new propositions for global change not be adopted internationally, the underdeveloped countries will persist in confronting severely difficult economic conditions, and global hostility will consequently intensify.

11.5. 4 Internationalism and universal solidarity

Guevara's internationalist outlook and spacious consideration of oppressed human subjects globally are expressed most convincingly in some of his last

major international addresses. His 1964 Trade Conference speech in Geneva concludes with his proclaiming Cuba's support for, and alliance with, oppressed nations who, in their struggle for change, have attempted all non-violent resolutions. On the occasion he similarly calls attention to the importance of establishing the unity of the oppressed and exploited nations in presenting a solid resistance to global oppression:

Let it be known that Cuba supports and applauds those peoples who, having exhausted all possibilities of a peaceful solution, have said 'Enough!' to exploitation, and that their magnificent demonstration of rebellion has won our militant solidarity. The aim of our efforts is to . . . rally the underdeveloped countries of the world to unite, so as to present a cohesive front We join in friendship with the poor of this world (EG 1964/2003r, 324).

In his 1964 United Nations speech delivered to the organisation's 16th General Assembly in New York (EG1964/2003s, 325), Guevara starts off by welcoming new members to the world body. Greeting the presidents and prime ministers of the peoples of Zambia, Malawi, and Malta, he expresses the hope that these countries will join with others that struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neo-colonialism. '[T]he final hour of colonialism has struck, and millions of inhabitants of Africa, Asia and Latin America rise to meet a new life and demand their unrestricted right to self-determination and to the independent development of their nations', he announces. He goes on to emphasize the scope of human sacrifice and material barriers that customarily accompany existing struggles worldwide. In his address, he proceeds to list an assortment of oppressed countries, ranging from Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Cyprus, to Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. Hence, he pronounces that

- the Kingdom of Cambodia 'did not bow to the machinations of US imperialism'. As a result it has confronted 'all kinds of treacherous and brutal attacks from the Yankee bases in South Vietnam'.
- A divided country like Laos has been the object of 'imperialist aggression of all kinds'; its people have been 'massacred from the air'. Existing Geneva conventions have been 'violated, and part of the country's territory is in constant danger of attack by imperialist forces'.

- Owing to ‘pressures’ from the Turkish government and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), ‘peaceful coexistence has been put to the test in Cyprus’. As a result Cyprus’ people and government have been obligated to make ‘a heroic and firm stand in defense of their sovereignty’
- The people of Guinea, Angola and Mozambique have been ‘massacred’ for the ‘crime’ of petitioning for their freedom; ‘we are prepared to help them to the extent of our ability in accordance with the Cairo declaration’.
- The people of Southern Rhodesia and South-West Africa as well as Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland, have been ‘oppressed by white colonialist minorities’.
- The leader of Puerto Rico, Pedro Albizu Campos, has been jailed for ‘almost a lifetime’, experiencing ‘mental torture, solitude, and total isolation’ from his people and family.
- The administration of British Guiana has been ‘the victim of every kind of pressure and manoeuvre’, resulting in the postponement of the country’s independence ‘to gain time to flout the people’s will’.
- The Congo has shown ‘how with absolute impunity, with the most cynicism’, the rights of its citizens can be ‘flouted’. The direct reason for all this is ‘the enormous wealth’ of the African colony
- A fair resolution must be found also to the conflict facing Indonesia and Malaysia.
- Since the close of the 19th century, the US has intervened in the internal affairs of, and entered into direct acts of aggression against, countries like Venezuela, Nicaragua, Central America, Mexico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, etc.

Proceeding to list many more countries afflicted by colonialist and imperialist rule, Guevara expresses the Cuban nation’s support for, and solidarity with, all these nations (EG 1964/2003s, 325-39).

In conditions of slavery, he argues, the exact nature of human oppression may not have been perceptible to all. In present times, however, it can be observed that ‘Western civilization’ – disguised behind the ‘façade of a picture of hyenas and jackals’ – has gone to fulfil so-called ‘humanitarian’ tasks in colonies like the Congo. ‘A carnivorous animal that feeds upon unarmed peoples’ - ‘that is

what imperialism does to [humankind]', he states (EG 1964/2003s, 330). Continuing his address at the UN, he goes on to inform the world representatives that in the area of the Caribbean as well as in the US state of Florida, preparations are underway to train mercenaries 'for acts of aggression against the Cuban people' (EG 1964/2003s, 332-33).

On February 24, 1965 Guevara delivered what became known as 'At the Afro-Asian Conference in Algeria', a speech given at the Second Economic Seminar of Afro-Asian Solidarity. Held in the capital city, Algiers, the conference was attended by representatives from 63 African and Asian governments, as well as 19 liberation movements. The meeting was chaired by the then Algerian President, Ahmed Ben Bella, and Cuba was invited as an observer to the conference (EG 1965/2003v, 340). Serving on the Seminar's presiding committee (*ibid.*), Guevara delivered his last and what is arguably his most acknowledged oration on universal solidarity.

In his address, he endeavours from the outset to clarify the geographically-remote island's direct association with the oppressed nations of the continents of Asia and Africa:

It is not by accident that our delegation is permitted to give its opinion here, in the circle of the peoples of Asia and Africa. A common aspiration unites us in our march towards the future: the defeat of imperialism. A common past of struggle against the same enemy has united us along the road (EG 1965/2003v, 340).

The struggle against imperialism, for freedom from colonial or neo-colonial 'shackles', he goes on to argue, is not disconnected from the combat against 'backwardness and poverty'. Both are phases on the path that leads to 'the creation of a new society of justice and plenty for all', he declares. There are no margins in this struggle, something that often results in death. Guevara furthermore underscores that the oppressed masses, and, more so, fighters of freedom, cannot disregard what happens elsewhere in the world, since a conquest over imperialism by any one country is 'our victory', just as any country's downfall is 'a defeat for all of us'. '*Proletarian internationalism*' 'is not only a duty for the peoples struggling for better future', it is also 'an

inescapable necessity', he says. Guevara argues that, should imperialism proceed in 'its assault' against the underdeveloped peoples and socialist nations, 'elementary logic' validates the necessity to establish a bond between oppressed people and socialist governing structures. If no other unifying cause exists, he reasons, 'the common enemy should be enough'.

In his speech, Guevara concludes that the *true liberation* of people does not merely imply the *gaining of independence or winning an armed victory*; for him *oppressed people really become free, only when 'imperialist economic domination' has been halted with certainty*. Together with this, socialism cannot exist, he says, without a new fraternal attitude towards humanity, both on an individual level and on a world scale (EG 1965/2003v, 340-41).

He concludes his speech by, declaring that Cuba is not the only Latin American country it is simply the only one that is afforded the opportunity of 'speaking before you here today'. 'Other people are shedding their blood to win rights we have', he declares. Cuba's greetings of solidarity, he affirms, will continue to come from anywhere in the world, be it Algeria or any other conference or place globally. Speaking on behalf of the people of Cuba, Guevara proceeds to acknowledge and extend greetings to all oppressed nations of the time, whether they are

the heroic people of Vietnam, Laos, so-called Portuguese Guinea, South Africa, or Palestine,

He proclaims once more the wish to

extend our voice of friendship, our hand and our encouragement, to our fraternal peoples in Venezuela, Guatemala and Colombia, who today . . . are resolutely saying 'No!' to the imperialist enemy.

His final closing words similarly single out the host nation Algeria for special praise and encouragement:

May the magnificent Algerian people – schooled as few others in sufferings for independence . . . serve as an inspiration to us in this fight without quarter against world imperialism (EG 1965/2003v, 349).

In conclusion, in January 1966 the Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa, and Latin America took place in Cuba. Prior to this, in March 1965 Guevara had left Cuba for an internationalist mission in the Congo, after which he set off for Bolivia to help launch the guerrilla struggle there. In the vicinity of Sumaipata, Bolivia, in early October 1967, Guevara was led into an ambush in which he and 17 other guerrilla fighters were trapped by Bolivian troops. After being captured and seriously wounded on October 8th of that year, he and three other detainees were murdered the following day on instructions from the Bolivian Government and Washington (Deutschmann 2003, 14-15).

As a member of the Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL and in his absence, he wrote an address for the 1966 conference to be delivered in his absence. Published in April 1967 by OSPAAAL as 'Create two, three, many Vietnams' (EG 1967/2003w, 352) it is arguably his last significant piece on imperialism and the task facing the oppressed peoples worldwide in bringing about a new world order. The final passages below endeavour to offer further insight into the depth of Guevara's sense of humanism,

Condemning the US-war in Vietnam, a major international conflict that, as with the contemporary war in Iraq, elicited concentrated global denunciation, Guevara pronounces,

The solidarity of the progressive world with the Vietnamese people has something of the bitter irony of the plebeians cheering on the gladiators in the Roman Circus. To wish the victim success is not enough; one must share his or her fate (EG 1967/2003w, 352, emphasis added).

His message continues with his reiterating the need for internationalism as well as the inevitability and boundlessness of *human sacrifice* in the struggle for real social change, values he believed are vital given the depth of suffering experienced by the majority of the world's toiling masses:

Let us develop genuine proletarian internationalism Let the flag under which we fight be the sacred cause of the liberation of humanity, so that to die under the colours of Vietnam, Venezuela, Guatemala, Laos, Guinea, Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil – to mention only the current

scenes of armed struggle – will be equally glorious and desirable for a Latin American, an African and even a European (EG 1967/2003w, 360, emphasis added).

Ernesto 'Che' Guevara de la Serna's last global message ends with the long-established battle cry against imperialism, something he and many others throughout the twentieth century and beyond came to regard as the 'great enemy of the human race' (EG 1967/2003w, 362):

Of what difference are the dangers to a human being or a people, or the sacrifices they make, when what is at stake is the destiny of humanity? Our every action is a battle cry against imperialism and a call for the unity of the people against the great enemy of the human race . . . (ibid., emphasis added).

¹ See also EG 1961/2003h

² The idea of 'political non-interference' has remained a significant consideration in Cuba's social programmes in Third World countries (Kronenberg 2006; González.2004; Othieno 2005).

³ Since 1861 Isla del Cisne (Swan Island) had been regarded as being part of Honduran territory. A US sailor came across it in 1893, claiming it for the US. Using this as authorization, the US administration set up a radio station there, which after 1961 was used by the Central Intelligence Agency for broadcasting purposes. In 1974 Washington recognised Honduran rule over the island, but preserved the right over the radio station (Deutschmann 2003).

⁴ See also EG 1960/2003d.

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUSION:

In certain quarters of the capitalist world, Cuba was, and continues to be, portrayed as ‘a threat to the civilized world’ (McLaren 2001, 113). This notion implies clearly that the country poses a fundamental risk to the ideas and basic principles of the broader humanist tradition. It is clear however, that as a prominent, popular leader of the Cuban revolution, Guevara was not only inspired by the teachings of leading humanist thinkers, but that he embraced and popularised their underlying doctrines as well. During his intellectual maturity, Guevara was drawn to the writings of some of the most acclaimed intellectuals, artists, writers and humanists of our age: Freud, Nehru, Russell, Sartre, etc. (Anderson 1997; Taibo II 1997).¹ It is patent that many of their overarching ideas are to be found in Guevara’s own thinking, writing, and deeds.

Freud’s immense contribution to human development has become part of our everyday thinking about personality. Operating in another era, espousing an entirely different agenda, Guevara similarly showed great interest in human intellect and some of the major root causes of humanity’s varied tribulations. It is interesting to note that Freud’s humanistic endeavours led to his becoming an Honorary Associate of the Rationalist Press Association (RPA), which publishes extensively on humanism and related topics (<http://www.humanism.org.uk/site/cms>). In his *Autobiography*, written in 1967, Russell recorded that his life had been governed by three simple passions: ‘the longing for love’, ‘the search for knowledge’, and, most importantly, ‘unbearable pity for the sufferings of humankind’ (*ibid.*). He was touched by the anguish caused by war, and actively opposed the Great War of 1914-18.

Although he came to renounce pacifism, he, following the Second World War, equally condemned the proliferation of nuclear weapons, becoming one of the earliest supporters of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND). In his later years Russell came to the conclusion that the *interest of humanity* stands above all else, that if this path is followed, a new paradise awaits all. Like Guevara, he grappled with humanity's immense problems wherever they were to be found, and, likewise, he never departed from his conviction that people should practise kind feelings towards each other – compassion, concern, and solidarity - if the human race is to survive and achieve happiness (*ibid.*).

Whilst Saunio concludes that Guevara 'led by example and was an incorruptible internationalist', McLaren sees him as 'an internationalist warrior' (McLaren 2001, 124). At the United Nations Guevara proclaimed, 'I am a patriot of Latin America and of all Latin American countries. Wherever necessary I would be ready to lay down my life for the liberation of any Latin American country, without asking anything from anyone, without demanding anything, without exploiting anyone' (cited in McLaren 2001).

The mutual interest between Sartre and Guevara culminated in the celebrated French philosopher bestowing overwhelming praise upon the Latin American revolutionary. Guevara, said Sartre, is '... the most complete human being of our age' (Anderson 1997, 468). Guevara conceivably found in Sartre's doctrine an atheistic, humanistic, and socialistic approach to existentialism, an approach which moreover generated a cult following amongst a substantial section of the European youth and intelligentsia. Sartre too, outright condemned oppression and tyranny, writing, 'we have not forgotten the huge waste of human lives, the forced labour, the poverty, the rebellion and repression' in his reference to the USSR (Sartre 2000, 152).

After José Martí and Karl Marx, it can reasonably be assumed that Nehru's humanistic thought exerted great impact on Guevara's maturing life. As a humanist, he believed in the practical achievements of *a life lived fully with and for his fellow human beings* (see Nehru 1942). Nehru did not embrace religion to uphold his cause, but advanced the proposition that religion was at the root of the stagnation and lack of progress in his country. He held that the basis of

Indian society at that time was unthinking obedience to the authority of sacred books, old customs, and outdated habits. He felt similarly that these attitudes and taboos were preventing India from going forward and adapting to modern conditions. He contended that no people who are slaves to dogma and dogmatic mentality can progress (*ibid.*). In Guevara's opposition to dogmatism he aspired to build a new society, home to liberated beings and guided by human values. Nehru believed that the old order was severely limited. Filled with values that had the effect of stunting growth, it had to undergo fundamental change. In his leanings towards Marx, Nehru noted, 'I dislike so much that has happened in Russia, and especially the excessive use of violence in normal times. But still I incline more and more toward a communist philosophy. Marx may be wrong in some of his statements, or his theory of value; this I am not competent to judge. But he seems to me to have possessed quite an extraordinary degree of insight into social phenomena' (Nehru 1942, 348-49).

A central feature of one of humanity's greatest thinkers can equally be found in Guevara's canon. Immanuel Kant's enduring humanistic formula, his 'categorical imperative' (see Paton 1947), essentially promotes the principle that human beings should act only in a way that anyone else in the same situation should also act (Paton 1947, 72-73). It is relevant to recall that in his early petition to the Spanish monarchy, José Martí based his appeal on this principle. For Kant it would be wrong to promote untruths, for example, because we could not possibly will that everyone should promote falsehood. For him it was 'categorical' – an absolute duty – to act on this principle of 'universality' (*ibid.*). Accordingly, it becomes a responsibility to treat people as ends in themselves, never as means to an end, that is, people should not be 'used' - in modern terms, 'oppressed', 'exploited', and 'slaughtered' - for others' own self-seeking purposes. This clearly reflects Guevara's underlying thinking as he observed imperialism's rapacious goals and their dire consequences on the Latin American continent and elsewhere.

Guevara's writings, speeches, and conduct reveal a sincere commitment on his part to some of the primary human values espoused by Martí in the nineteenth century. A study of his theoretical thought offers insight into how Martí's ideas transformed into legitimate principles of the revolution. Though drawing on

Martí's moral posturing at times Guevara's ideological viewpoints project a concentrated and uniform anti-imperialist stance something that is particularly perceptible in contemporary Cuban political discourse (Kronenberg 2005a; Castro 1999; Keeble 2000)

Flowing from his devotion to principles of human equality and dignity, Guevara's thinking incorporates aspects of Marxist-humanist thought to inspire and direct the revolutionary action of the Cuban people and society as a whole (Hart Davalos 1997, 2000). His socialist programme, in essence, condemns anti-humanistic thinking as institutionalised under bureaucratic, totalitarian rule. Transcending Martí's ideas, Guevara envisioned and undertook to develop the social and political conditions conducive to the formation of a 'new human being' infused with human values and principles. But as McLaren cautions, for Guevara the new Cuban personality was not 'merely a zombified agent' instilled with critical consciousness through 'indoctrination' and 'the ideologues from Politburo to pulpit' (McLaren 2001, 123). He sought to elevate the significance of the human factor in socialist construction. To recall the theory of Davalos, since the moral dynamic had been absent from Cuban politics – 'a factor which often ends up leading to revolution' – Guevara was convinced that without it the revolution could not succeed (Hart Davalos 1997; 2000)

Guevara's writings and speeches draw attention to, for example, the significance, presence, and nature of (1) the *humanist component* of the Cuban revolution and (2) *human alienation* in Cuban society, and the rationale for overcoming it. It is advanced here that, through his many and varied endeavours, revolutionary Cuban society took on a distinctively humanistic expression, despite efforts from others to imbue it with a dogmatic, cold scholasticism. It is not so much his allegiance to Marx something Castro and other Cuban intellectuals also profess to (Wright 1991, 23) - but more significantly his proclamation of Marxist-humanist ideas that set him apart from both the petit-bourgeois nationalist and Stalinist factions in Castro's regime (see Dominguez 1979; Karol 1970; Part IV). While some political doctrines have altered or disappeared after his

death, many key Marxist tenets as disseminated by him have remained operational on the island up to the present. (see Conclusion to thesis).

As head of the Cuban National Bank Guevara struggled to introduce into the country a new political economy, in part socialist economic strategies which sought to divert from those devised by Stalin and imported from the then USSR and other eastern European socialist states.

Because of his dedication to the struggle against oppression, repression, capitalism, and imperialism, and his commitment to the struggle for socialism, internationalism, and universal solidarity, Guevara, like Martí and others who came before him, became an inspirational figure to the modern Cuban nation.

On the occasion of his memorial service, held in Havana on October 18th, 1967, it was Guevara's human traits that Cuba's leadership, through its spokesperson, Fidel Castro, sought to draw attention to. Addressing some one million Cubans who had gathered in the capital city to bid their farewells, Castro's eulogy (cited in Deutschmann 2003, 2-3) lays particular stress on Guevara's human qualities, rather than his accomplishments in the military domain. Hence Castro announced that

when we remember Che, when we think of Che, we do not think fundamentally of his military virtues. No! Warfare is a means and not an end . . . it is in the field of ideas, in the field of sentiments, in the field of revolutionary virtues, in the field of intelligence that - apart from his military virtues - we feel the tremendous loss that his death means to the revolutionary movement (cited in Deutschmann 2003, 2).

Castro's tribute similarly dwells on Guevara's intellect, which he regards as having exerted a great thrust and value to the Cuban nation:

Che's extraordinary character was made up of virtues that are rarely found together. He stood out as an unsurpassed person of action, but Che was not only that - he was a person of visionary intelligence and broad culture, a profound thinker As a revolutionary . . . he had a boundless faith in moral values. He had a boundless faith in the consciousness of human beings (*ibid.*, 3).

Besides the significance to the well-being of the Cuban nation and the Latin American continent overall of Guevara's ideas, Castro perceived moreover a timelessness and universal meaning therein:

He thought, developed, and wrote many things. And on a day like this it should be stated that Che's writings, Che's political and revolutionary thought, will be of permanent value to the Cuban revolutionary process and to the Latin American revolutionary process. And we do not doubt that his ideas – as a man of action, as a man of thought, as a person of untarnished moral virtues, as a person of unexcelled human sensitivity, as a person of spotless conduct – have and will continue to have universal value (*ibid.*)

As a leading figure in the Cuban revolution, Guevara fully supported the desire for an educated nation, an aspiration that Martí similarly advocated, especially for those living in the countryside. In this respect, Guevara also proclaimed from various world podiums Cuba's enormous successes in the educational domain. Mandel is of the view that Cuba's endeavours in the educational field denote the 'most heroic experiment' in this area, 'the most radical and the most revolutionary in all human history' (Mandel *The proletariat in power: The Marxist theory of the state – Part 3*). Mandel argues that, in drawing lessons from other revolutionary experiences, the Cuban revolution undertook to resolve the problem that the masses often end up surrendering the power they 'so heroically fought for' to the educated few. On a broad scale and in the minimum of time, he notes, the Cuban revolution transformed tens of thousands of illiterate workers and peasants into many teachers, professors, and university students, thereby averting the skilled bourgeoisie from wresting back power from the masses (Mandel, 'The proletariat in power: The Marxist theory of the state – Part 3').

Guevara recognised the enormous role of culture and moral values, and obtaining from it the critical lessons for social transformation, in the history of civilization. (Hart Davalos 2000; see also Hart 1997). Cuban cultural workers believe that one of Guevara's fundamental contributions to Cuban aesthetic thought and artistic practice was the promotion of the scrutiny of the tasks that the artist had to undertake in the new society (Kronenberg 2005a). Guevara

condemned, on the one hand the dogmatic implications of socialist realism and, on the other, the decadence of the cultural products of the twentieth century where the anguish of alienated man is clear (see EG 1965/2003u; Part IV).²

His struggle to construct a new society was fundamentally intertwined with a vision of a new culture for the 21st century.

Taking up the independence struggle of epic figures like Bolívar and Martí, Guevara played a leading role in the quest for national sovereignty that successfully overthrew the Batista dictatorship. In his writings and speeches, Guevara sought to demonstrate that the history of Latin America reveals how closely connected the indigenous capitalist classes of that region are to imperialism, particularly US imperialism. As Waldron substantiates, capitalist rule, whether at the hands of a US-induced régime or a democratically elected national government, ‘inevitably means unrelenting poverty and struggle for the masses’ (Waldron 2004).

¹ Among these are Republican poets, Garcia Lorca, Machado, and Alberti. His chief preferences were the two acclaimed Latin American poets, the Chilean Pablo Neruda and Nicolás Guillén, Cuba’s foremost poet (Anderson 1997, 468), who became the first president of Cuba’s Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC). His affection for the Chilean’s poetry goes back to his teen years when he would recite from *twenty poems of love and a desperate song* to his then beloved, Carmen Cordova Iturburu de la Serna (Anderson 1997, 36). During his marriage this penchant continued with his reciting Neruda to his wife, a habit that ‘thrilled her’ (*ibid.*). At the time of Guevara’s murder in 1967 in Bolivia, the Guevara’s enemy forces recovered from his belongings ‘a green notebook’ in which he had written down poems composed by Neruda and Guillén (Taibo II 1997, 574). Knowing that his life was fraught with risk, Guevara left behind ‘a green notebook’ in which he had written down poems composed by Neruda and Guillén (*ibid.*) as well as a tape recording for his wife of his own voice reciting his favourite love poems, including several by Neruda (Anderson 1997, 634). A paper dealing with Guevara’s personal bond with the arts is being prepared for possible publication.

² See Part IV where Guevara’s stance on socialist realism is discussed.

PART IV

HUMANISM AND THE CULTURAL DIMENSION

University of Cape Town

I

DEVELOPMENT, CONSTITUTION, AND CHARACTER OF CUBAN NATIONAL CULTURE:

I.1 INTRODUCTION

Centuries of colonization and slavery for the purposes of claiming and expropriating Cuba's natural resources brought into the country a range of traditions, peoples, cultures and civilizations: from the North came Andalucians, Portuguese, Galicians, Basques, Catalans, French, English and the Dutch; African slaves came from different tribal and ethnic origins, such as Senegal, Guinea, the Congo, Angola, Mozambique and Yoruba. Added to the European and African strains there also entered discreet elements of Indian (as in Eastern), Chinese and Jewish cultures (Sarduy and Stubbs 1993). If the Amerindian heritage constitutes little role in post-Columbian Cuban culture, then scholars are obliged to look elsewhere for the main roots of modern Cuban culture. Hence, in line with historical norms, Cuban author and historian at the celebrated José Martí National Library, Walterio Carbonell (Sarduy and Stubbs 1993, 288), records that Cuban history and culture were fashioned predominantly by 'two peoples from two different continents: Africa and Europe' (Carbonell 1961/1993, 197). As he further articulates,

Thanks to the feverish heads of thinkers during the bourgeois republic, they were reduced to the history of one people alone: Spain Anything African they could not hide, they classed as barbaric, like black music and religion (*ibid.*).

Despite processes of miscegenation and acculturation (discussed below), by the mid-1800s the Africans were still in confinement, with their African idioms, psychological and cultural characters, and religious beliefs. Owing particularly to their 'rigidly secret' religious organisations, part of their generation's cultural experience was conserved and passed down to new generations (Carbonell 1961/1993, 199; see Jiménez 1983/1993).

Prior to the Cuban revolution, a significant segment of Cuban artists endeavoured for some years to promote African culture, which through historical and political circumstances had largely been neglected. This drive has much of its origin in the philosophies of Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969), Cuba's major researcher and early campaigner of African-derived culture.¹ Most of Ortiz's numerous publications (dating from the first decades of the twentieth century and continuing until the mid-1960s) deal with topics relating to African history, organology, dance, theatre and African-derived religious music (Moore 1994, 32). Ortiz's endeavours resulted in critical academic and documentary work that also influenced the underlying fundamentals for the description of the broader Cuban culture (see Pogolotti 1998). Ortiz devoted his entire career to studying the contribution of the traditions with African origin to Cuban culture and pioneered broader concepts that later became well entrenched under the revolution, such as 'transculturation' (see Sarduy and Stubbs 1993; Morejon 1982/1993; Moore 1994), the term adopted by Cuban Marxist intellectuals to describe and explain the developmental process of the island's national culture (see Morejon 1982/1993; Furé 1979/1993; Carbonell 1961/1993).

In the pre-revolutionary neo-colonial setting, bourgeois perceptions and treatment of the African national cultural tradition led to it being seen as 'backward, barbaric, coarse and crude forms of expressions that must be swept away' (Furé 1979/1993, 110). African folklore for example, was viewed as

exotic, picturesque, a minor form of culture to be exhibited in festivals or spectacles for idle tourists but segregated from the great currents of contemporary civilization a museum "curiosity", recreational complement, "typical" fossil belonging to an infraculture incapable of attaining so-called *universality* of great

manifestations of bourgeois art. The subjugated groups that kept those cultural forms alive were marginalised by class society and victims of all forms of exploitation and blocked from being a part of its technical and scientific progress (Furé 1979/1993, 110).

Martínez Furé - Cuban folklorist and specialist in the history of African civilizations and their influence in the Américas, also an associate of the Cuban National Folklore Group (Sarduy and Stubbs 1993, 293) - furthermore asserts that pre-revolutionary Cuban capitalist relations sought to marginalise these veritable subcultures as

ills that will be wiped off the ethnographic map of those countries once those minority or majority groups disappear, assimilated into the system of exploitation as manual wage labour, stripped of their culture and incapable of contributing anything of value to a modern national culture, because for the oligarchs in power this is only possible within the framework of capitalist Western culture (*ibid.*).

I.2 THE CONCEPT OF TRANSCULTURATION

In 'Race and nation' (Morejon 1982/1993), her uniquely instructive piece on a topic that continues to elicit intense debate in post-Apartheid South Africa (see Philips 2004; Mthombothi 2004; Oliphant 2004; Pillay 2005; Keating 2005; etc.) Nancy Morejon² contends that in the context of the Caribbean, nation can never be understood in its entirety, 'as an integral, dynamic category', unless the process of 'transculturation' which has created it, is taken into consideration (Morejon 1982/1993, 227). Owing to the Cuban revolution she argues, Cuban culture stands out for its national awareness of 'popular roots nurtured on the ancestral wisdom of two basic components: The Hispanic and the African', both of which she asserts, 'determine our social being' (*ibid.*). Morejon affirms that it was Ortiz whose 'multifaceted writing was the very font of inspiration for our anthropological, linguistic, historical, ethnographic and sociological study'; that he 'passed on to us the word transculturation'. Though Ortiz did not invent it, he was the one who with his 'indescribable love for what is Cuban . . . molded it to our requirements, peculiarities, and needs' she writes (*ibid.*, 228).

Morejon describes that the uprooting of large populations and consequent cultural ‘changes or clashes’ - the impact of one civilization on another, was at first given the ‘disadvantageous notion’ of *acculturation* (*Ibid*). Manuel’s (1995) exhaustive study of the development and constitution of Caribbean culture for instance, employs the theoretical concept of ‘acculturation’ (Manuel 1995, 6). In his study Manuel also likens the formation of Caribbean culture to the term, *creolization* (Manuel 1995, 14). According to the scholar *creolization* ‘connotes the development of a distinctive new culture out of the prolonged encounter of two or more other cultures’ (*ibid.*). Cuban intellectual Morejon, perceives however that the term ‘acculturation’ can easily be associated with the concept of ‘assimilation’ which, through ‘clash or change’, suggests one of the components becomes ‘acculturated’ or ‘assimilated’ onto the other. In such a process one remains ‘dependent or inferiorized’ and ‘minimized’, ‘before the strength of the other’ - a process during which, she argues, ‘Someone comes on top’. For Mojeron such a process is basically ‘Eurocentric’, since in that society acculturation is generally directed at the ‘immigrant from overseas’ and assumes a significant degree of ‘barbarity’. Thus, ‘the indigenous savage’ from overseas becomes ‘accultured’, ‘assimilated’, ‘Christianized’, ‘civilized’ (*ibid.*, 228). Hence acculturation signifies ‘becoming the other, casting aside one’s own personality which has been subordinated, through force or persuasion to adopt a set of totally alien, virtuous, superior values – the supposed conversion of savage into a civilised being’ (*ibid.*). Morejon reiterates that Cuban national culture should not be viewed as a process of mere modification:

it is not water from one glass poured into another, that is boiling, to mold it to the drinker’s taste, but rather a process of enormous dimension, rich in alchemy, agent and receiver, conditioned by laws of class struggle’ (*ibid.*, 229).

Offering an exemplar, the writer argues that Europe not only shaped and influenced the Latin American continent, but that the latter also shaped and influenced the former. Its food, music, customs, language, religion, etc., are its own not insofar as what their origin entails, but in the way they were molded and given new shape (*ibid.*) she argues.

Morejon goes on to elucidate that *transculturation* signifies constant interface, a ‘transmutation’ between two or more cultural components whose instinctive purpose is the conception of a third whole – a new and independent culture of which its lineage hinges on past elements. In this process the mutual sway is decisive as no one element is superimposed on the other. Morejon cautions that on the contrary, each one becomes a third entity and no one element remains binding or permanent. All of the elements transform and develop, a ‘give and take’ procedure which brings about a new condition (*ibid.*).

The complete physical evaporation of Cuba’s indigenous component, the Amerindian peoples, also led to its total elimination from the nation’s cultural panorama, especially in contemporary times. Hence, as Carbonell (1961/1993) concludes, modern Cuban culture represents a meeting point of principally the African and European cultural traditions.

Morejon’s theoretical position advances that the historical and social evolution of the Cuban people rests on this ‘give and take’ formula, that it is impossible to distinguish or invent Cuba’s cultural character by discounting or downplaying its essentially miscegenous form. The distinct seminal rudiments of the Cuban nation are merged in a definitive essence, ‘precisely that which seeks a face in legitimate national independence’. In this framework common to the peoples of all the Caribbean islands, Cubans have sought to build a nation that is ‘homogeneous in its heterogeneity’, a nation that is defined by a political objective ‘beyond any cultural or racial controversy’. Thus it is within this broad context that the term *transculturation* applies to the overall Cuban cultural situation:

We have not been assimilated, that is to say, acculturated to Spanish or African culture; with a highly creative spirit, in a constant quest for nationhood, *we have produced a mixed people, who inherit and embody both components, no longer either Spanish or African, but Cuban* (Morejon 1982/1993, 232, emphasis added).

Furé reasons likewise that 19th-century ‘bourgeois divisionist tactics’ sought to set as rivals the nation’s two fundamental roots: ‘they either presented them as

incompatible, or only attributed Cuban-ness to cultural manifestations of Hispanic origin. Those portraying greater African influence were considered to be less than foreign' (Furé 1979/1993, 111). Furé's analysis of the constitution of Cuban national culture is in line with both Morejon and Carbonell's perspectives:

Both traditions as they exist in Cuba today, in their contemporary forms, regardless of the extent of their purity, are the product of an historical process lived by our people and of socio-economic and political relations on our island over 400 years. This has been stated clearly many times by our Revolutionary Government in speeches and assemblies. Our national culture is an Afro-Hispanic Caribbean culture. The African contribution, as maestro Don Fernando Ortiz has said, did not come to be injected into a pre-existing Cuban culture, but, on the contrary, the Cuban was born out of the marriage of Spanish and African, through a long process of transculturation. This process of synthesis is as yet incomplete, but can be accelerated in revolutionary fashion (Furé 1979/1993, 111-12).

According to Cuban scholars one of the foremost achievements of the revolution has been to discourage the racist attitudes that had previously kept the African traditions underground, hence the promotion of African ritual music and dance has been an important part of reclaiming national heritage by integrating them into the new socialist culture (Manuel 1991, 294). As indicated by Brouwer,

The revolution was saving many important things in life. The idea of being Cuban, the rescue of nationality and pride, the rescue of culture, inner culture, the deep analysis on the liberty of creation. In the moment of the revolution everything changed. You can say that this was the time, a way, our identity was reaffirmed. The moment the revolution evolved, this identity was already recovered – *not discovered, but recovered*, and opened, and our world came out in a matter of two to three years. The entire Cuban world that was underground came to see the first light and came outside (Kronenberg 1998 discussion).

Furé argues that bourgeois perceptions were 'gaining momentum until the triumph of the revolution . . . put a brake on that process of disintegration of national values' (Furé 1979/1993, 111). He concludes that it is in this cultural

sphere that the revolution waged one of its decisive campaigns, 'recapturing for the new socialist culture . . . *the valuable, positive traditions* created by our people, whatever their antecedents' (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

1.2.1. Syncretic faiths

Cuban traditional religious cult practices, such as *santería*, *abakuá* and *palo*, are syncretic faiths synthesizing diverse African and Catholic elements (see Bueno 1988/1993; James 1989/1993; Leon 1990/1993; Bolivar 1990/1993). The figures of Yoruban divinities for instance, fused with the hagiography of the Church. Thus the figure of *Babalú Ayé* became associated with St Lazarus, *Aggayú Solá* with St Christopher, *Changó* with St Barbara, *Elegguá* with St Anthony, etc. (Bolivar 1990/1993, 138). French and Iberian Catholicism, with its own features of saint worship and ritual, blended more easily with African religions (Manuel 1995, 11) as the latter incorporate spiritualism, especially relations with departed ancestors, and sacramental rites.³

An initial view shared amongst Cuban Marxists was that the cults' eventual disappearance in Cuba would be inevitable, given the progress made in education, health, and other areas. While some evidence suggests that the cults were regarded with disfavour, and to some extent initially discouraged by revolutionary cultural theorists (see Manuel 1991; Sarduy and Stubbs 1993), revolutionary policy has been to tolerate these rituals, while robustly supporting their music and dance forms as 'vital and cherished parts of national culture' (Manuel 1991, 292-93).

Objectionable aspects such as black magic practices, sacrilege of graves, distasteful and anti-social norms like machismo and religious chauvinism, were however officially discouraged and/or prohibited (see Manuel 1995). Cultural policy has been that the cults may decline with education, that in general all cults are not inherently unpleasant or undesirable and should not be actively suppressed by governmental measures. Rather, their positive values – especially their rich traditions in music and dance – should be actively encouraged and preserved, as indeed they have been since the triumph of the revolution. Hence, since 1959, while student, amateur, and professional folkloric groups

increasingly sprung up and African ritual music and dance became prominent throughout the country (Kronenberg 2005a)⁴ Cuban ethnological scholarship became focussed on the African heritage more so than any time in the country's historical development (see Sarduy and Stubbs 1993). In so doing the Cuban revolution advanced the interest in neo-African culture which commenced in the early part of the century, and was expressed in the works of composers like Roldán and Caturla (see Kronenberg 2000), the poetry of Nicolás Guillén (see Morejon 1982/1993), and above all, the intellectual activity Fernando Ortiz.

I.2.2 Popular traditions

The persistent conflict amongst civilisations, the contributions of certain Asiatic traditions, slave relations, colonial rule, etc., created historical cultural ties, manifested in music and dance tradition, popular art, oral tradition, food, religious beliefs and common superstitions, to the point where a 'Caribbean civilisation' emerges. (Fure 1979/1993, 114).

I.2.3 The Spanish influence

On the one side, Spain presented Cuba with a set of 'negative characteristics' which helps in grasping the 'corruption, dictatorship, disorganisation and irresponsibility' (Duncan 1972, 31) that evolved in Cuban politics during its colonisation period and beyond. These tendencies support the legacy of 'authoritarian-militarist-paternalist' structures (*ibid.*) which procreated a country found unacceptable by many. Established ways of thinking concentrated on differences between people, attaching great meaning to, and endorsing social, economic and political inequality (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, since hundreds of thousands of predominantly Spanish colonists settled in Cuba, Cuban culture came to embody a rich spectrum of European features which play a crucial role in what Morejon and other Cuban intellectuals describe as the country's transculturation.

I.3 CONCLUSION

The course of transculturation, naturally, is an immense global, historical-cultural progression, occurring on countless different human and social levels,

and extending far beyond the Cuban national scene. In his study of the modern African continent, Ahluwalia (2001) points out that portrayals of Africa as ‘the dark continent’ continue unendingly; that while the continent is seen as ‘the repository of disease, war and pestilence’ the global media in effect, adequately connected Africa to the West (Ahluwalia 2001, 125). This, he writes, occurs from ‘the public sphere to the bedrooms’. While African nations have remained isolated from one another, they are ‘united in looking toward Europe and America for the latest news, politics and culture’ (Diawara 1998 cited in Ahluwalia 2001, 125). Ahluwa records that all over East Africa for instance, one comes in contact with a commodity like rubber sandals shaped from disused vehicle tyres. This demonstrates the ‘appropriation, transformation and consumption’ of global commodities which had no previous meaning for local cultures. More importantly, it also shows the prevailing conditions within Africa which require the invention and utilization of what is considered in the West to be rubbish matter (Ahluwalia 2001, 127).

O’Connor’s (2003) critique of García Canclini’s perception of ‘cultural hybridity’, points out the latter’s neglect of ‘Marxist concepts of capitalism, concepts of colonialism or neo-colonialism’ (O’Connor 2003, 109-10). O’Connor argues that Canclini’s latter-day method struggles to portray the Latin American reality in terms of ‘a mix of the pre-modern and the post-modern’ – what Canclini calls, ‘a hybrid culture’ – while issues around capitalism, social class, imperialism, and economic imbalances are ignored. O’Connor’s intuitive study also concludes by reiterating this theoretical standpoint:

Garcia Canclini’s endless search for cultural hybridity is based on the dismissal of any possibility of fundamental conflict between capitalist consumerism and a culture based on quite a different way of life (*ibid.*, 116).

In line with O’Connor’s preferred categories of determination, Cuban cultural theorists in effect go to lengths to evaluate and perceive their cultural realities within the realm of colonialism, slave practices, racism, capitalist exploitation, imperialist domination, *and* resultant revolutionary struggle. As Furé seeks to

explain, Cuban national culture plainly symbolises a protracted and arduous ritual of

struggle against exploitation, symbolised in the settlements founded by Indians, continued by runaway slaves, nationalised by the mambises and now taken up by modern-day revolutionaries (ibid., emphasis added).

It was significant for the Cuban revolution to grasp, embrace, and elevate, Cuba's marginalised people and their rich traditions, not only to correct the wrongs of the past, but also to build the unity and commonality of the dispossessed and oppressed in order better to resist a common enemy. It is useful to recall Martí's pronouncement on this matter:

We can no longer be a people of leaves, living in the air, our foliage heavy with blooms and cradling or humming at the whim of the sun's caress, buffeted and tossed by the storms. The trees must form ranks to keep the giant with seven-league boots from passing! It is the time of mobilization, of marching together, and we must go forward in closed ranks, like silver in the veins of the Andes (JM 1891/1999g, 112; see also Part II).

Martí of course, was particularly concerned with the union of all the people of the Latin American continent. While revolutionary Cuban cultural analyses take account of the pragmatic implications of the Caribbean's cultural-historical development, the continuity of Martí's visions (see Part II, Chapter 4) in the aspirations of the Cuban cultural revolution remain perceptible:

As we come to know one another better, we will be more conscious of the cultural heritage that unites us, and can help us take on our singularity in the context of the Américas. At the same time it will act as a powerful block to imperialist penetration, and a stimulus in the struggle for definitive liberation in those lands still under colonialism or neo-colonialism today. A Caribbean singularity that will not exclude, but on the contrary will strengthen other historical links, of both culture and revolutionary struggle, which unite us and make us an integral part of *Our America* (Furé 1979/1993, 116).

Retamar construes that within the colonial world there exists ‘a case unique to the *entire planet*: a vast zone for which *mestizaje* is not an accident but rather the essence, the central line: ourselves, ‘our mestizo America.’ (Retamar 1989, 5). This term which was used prominently by Martí, denotes a ‘culture of descendents’, both in the ethnic and cultural sense, of ‘aborigines, Africans, and Europeans’ (*ibid.*). Retamar furthermore traces this line of thinking to Simón Bolívar, who once said, ‘we are a small human species: we possess a world encircled by vast seas, new in almost all its arts and sciences’ (cited in Retamar 1989, 5; see also Part II).

A further, though significant consideration of revolutionary Cuban national cultural policy pertains to the manner in which it fundamentally diverges from the Stalinist cultural programme. The multiplicity of Cuba’s national culture – the promotion of cosmopolitan diversity (*yet structured on a single, socially-cohesive, inclusive national framework* – see especially Part III, Chapter 10), modern and traditional art forms, ancient African cult practices, and local, regional, and foreign folk genres - presents a marked contrast with the narrow guidelines of the Soviet Union under Stalinist rule and enforced by restrictive policymakers like Andrei Zhdanov (Norris 1989; Barry 1989; Williams 1989). It profoundly also deviates from the Chinese cultural model fashioned by the Cultural Revolution (see Wang 1988).⁵ Revolutionary Cuba’s official defence and expansion of divergent and apparently non-socialist categories, ranging from conventional, often jocular popular varieties, to primeval religious cults, clearly portrays an alliance with the ethos of ordinary human subjects in contrast to the cultural cleavages and upheavals of Soviet Union and China during key points in their historical developments.

In his conversations and teachings Leo Brouwer frequently communicates his thoughts on what he prefers to call, ‘Cuban national art’ (discussion). His artistic judgement is that ancient African ritual music constitutes in effect one of the primary pillars of broader Cuban culture. For him it is the very basic and rudimentary elements of the lineage of a country that are most noteworthy, which he sees are ‘absolutely abstract’, ‘beautiful and important’ and ‘recognised in the deepest way’ (McKenna 1988, 10-16). This does not seek to elevate

automatically, the shallow, multi-coloured elements which are often intrinsic in national cultures, but rather in his case, Cuban ritual music with melodic elements that ‘trace back to Byzantine or Gregorian chant’. Although he was tremendously influenced since his childhood years by African popular genres, at the time they did not have historical meaning for him (discussion). During those years, he says, there was no official recognition given to African sacramental song; no authority announced ‘this music is gorgeous, historically perfect and it will transcend history’ (*ibid.*).

García Espinosa (1983) poses the question: ‘Must the revolutionary present and the revolutionary future inevitably have “its” artists and “its” intellectuals, just as the bourgeoisie had “theirs”?’ (Espinosa 1983, 30). Espinosa argues that the ‘truly revolutionary position’ is one that plays a role in diminishing superior concepts and practices, rather than eternally pursuing the artistic quality of the work. A more acceptable position on artistic culture should not be one that encourages everyone to ‘share the taste of a few,’ but one that encourages all to be ‘creators of that culture’. Though art has enduringly been a collective necessity, it cannot be a prospect for all while unequal conditions continue to persist. Alongside the high arts, popular art exists concurrently, but ‘independently’. Espinosa emphasises that popular art has ‘absolutely nothing to do with what is called mass art’. Popular art requires, and thus is inclined, to widen the private, individual judgment of a people. Conversely, mass art (or art for the ordinary) ‘requires the people to have no taste’.⁶ Calling up Hauser, Espinosa reiterates that mass art is generated by a few with the aim of gratifying the wants of people diminished to the singular function of observer and consumer. In support of Brouwer’s artistic perceptions, Espinosa writes, ‘Popular art has always been created by the least learned sector of society, yet this ‘uncultured’ sector has managed to conserve profoundly cultured characteristics of art’ (*ibid.*).

In sum, it is interesting to note that revolutionary Cuba’s stance concerning its national cultural situation, finds expression also in Gramsci’s cultural theses (1988). This is how Gramsci pronounced himself on this matter:

It is clear that, in order to achieve the desired end, the spirit of folklore studies should be changed, as well as deepened and extended. Folklore must not be considered an eccentricity, an oddity or a picturesque element, but as something which is very serious and is to be taken seriously. Only in this way will the teaching of folklore be more efficient and really bring about the birth of a new culture among the broad popular masses, so that the separation between the modern culture and popular culture of folklore will disappear. An activity of this kind, thoroughly carried out, would correspond on the intellectual plane to what the Reformation was in Protestant countries (Gramsci 1988, 362)

If, hopefully, these passages have offered some insight into Cuban artists and intellectuals' perceptions of, and responses to, the country's national cultural question, how did they view the role and place of the classical arts in the new society? Of what value were Western bourgeois art forms to the revolution in its endeavour to create a society in which the elemental needs and aspirations of the *poor and oppressed* were paramount?

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II

CULTURAL POLICY, SOCIALIST REALISM, AND EXPRESSIVE FREEDOMS

II.1 INTRODUCTION

Apart from Guevara's multifaceted concern with, and contribution to, the construction of a new Cuban personality (see Part III), since the early stages of the revolution and beyond, this concept is similarly explored by Fidel Castro and addressed in his speeches (see Castro 1961a&b; 1999; Keeble 2002). More patently though, Castro frequently delves into *the role of culture* in creating the new society and citizen. The new Cuban personality would not merely be a creation, as well as, an end product of the revolutionary course, but would possess a heightened consciousness and an all-embracing cultural intellect.

In Castro's speeches from the early 1960s the moral fibre of the 'new man' is counterbalanced against the social conditions and being from the pre-revolutionary era. The 'old Cuban' is classified as 'self-absorbed', in possession of a 'savage mindset' and living in a 'callous world' or 'jungle'. The distinctively new Cuban personality epitomises an existence satisfactory and idyllic both for him- or herself and all others. Thus said Castro,

It is not the man of the jungle that we want to develop; a man of the jungle cannot be of any benefit to human society. It is not that self-centred, savage mentality that cannot in any sense benefit society. The more human society fights against those self-centred savage, and anti-social attitudes, the closer it will come to embodying a way of life that is ideal and good for all. And the old society fostered exactly those sentiments, exactly those attitudes. And if today there are still many who have those attitudes, unquestionably it is because of that heritage . . . (Castro 1961a cited in Fagan 1969, 13).

Castro's speeches moreover, portray his strong faith in culture to act as a persuasive agent for social change. His 1961 Varadero speech (Castro 1961a) which rebukes the attack by mercenaries on Cuban soil, simultaneously distinguishes culture as both a guardian and promoter of innovative national transformation. In this instance he assigns to it the status of a powerful military force:

At the time of the mercenary attack against our nation, what worried us, the threat that bothered us most of all, was that the attack might interrupt the literacy campaign. We knew that each and every invader would be defeated; we were confident that our soldiers would wipe them out within a few hours. What did worry us, though, was that the events might hinder or slow down the movement of this other army - this army that is fighting a much longer and far more difficult battle. For there are two armies in our nation: one armed with rifles and cannons to defend the work of the revolution, and one armed with books to advance the revolution; one army to combat foreign enemies, traitors, and those who would destroy what we have accomplished, and another army to combat lack of culture and illiteracy. The revolution needs both of these armies; one can do nothing without the other (Castro Speech 1961a).

It is visible that the goal of cultural advancement is inexorably fused with aspirations like, literacy, enlightenment or a broad consciousness, and ultimately, the triumph of the revolution itself. Thus, in the early stages of the revolution two key struggles are identified that would lead the Cuban masses to victory: cultural development is designated, occupying the arena alongside military defence against hostile foreign forces - the foremost risk to the fundamental transformation of Cuban society.

The aftermath of the revolution saw many artists and professionals leave the country to settle in Madrid, Mexico, and above all Miami. In the context of deepening class resistance and intensifying threat of US military attack, the partition between followers and opponents of the revolution among Cuban artists and writers also sharpened.

In a subsequent visit to Cuba, during a time of rumours of invasion and war, Sartre and Beauvoir commented that the atmosphere had become 'tense', with a

‘notable air of repressive uniformity seeping into Cuban life’. They observed that in the cultural domain ‘Soviet-style socialist realism’ seemed to have appeared with writers recounting that they had begun to ‘engage in self-censorship’ (Anderson 1997, 483).

In the early 1960s, two controversies in particular dominated the restive mood amongst writers and artists. The one issue concerned the closure of the journal *Lunes de Revolución*, a weekly literary supplement to the daily newspaper *Revolución*. The second issue that particularly raised artists' anxieties involved the film *Pasado Merdiano*, produced in 1961 by two Cuban filmmakers Orlando Jiménez and Sabá Cabrera. It was determined in certain ruling circles that the film should not be shown as it was considered ‘harmful to the interests of the people and their revolution’ (see Taber 1997&1998). Both the magazine and film reflected avant-garde intellectual trends of the US and Europe, with the rulings igniting widespread deliberation among Cuban writers and artists. This development initiated a meeting of several hundred important Cuban writers, artists and intellectuals with Castro and other governmental officials (Cantor 1999b). According to Dominguez (1979) the attempt to institute dogmatic measures in the cultural field came from Stalinist-aligned bureaucrats of Cuba’s old Communist party. Functionaries like Edith Garcia Buchaca he notes, sought to impose a form of ‘socialist realism’ on Cuban artistic and literary work during the 1960s (Dominguez 1979, 393).

At the closing of the meeting of writers, artists and intellectuals, held in the National Library in Havana during June 1961, Castro delivers *Words to Intellectuals* (Castro 1961b), his executive address on cultural policy. The speech represents Castro's earliest official addresses to Cuban writers and artists, incorporating to this day the revolution’s most instructive and definitive doctrine on cultural policy (see Taber 1997,1998; Cantor 1999a&b; Kronenberg 2005a). Castro's pronouncements on this occasion also denote the revolutionary government's official response to Cuban writers and artists who were concerned about their creative freedoms under the revolution (*ibid.*).

Words to Intellectuals covers a range of topics, such as the revolution's new cultural-political orientations and stance on artists' social role and creative liberties. With the speech Castro sought to promote creativity as an integral part of the revolutionary process, with artists having the complete freedom in choosing their medium of expression while taking into account both the national traditions and cultural achievements of other nations (see Castro 1961b). While freedom of artistic form was guaranteed, the exact meaning and implication pertaining to *content* was not very clear. Underpinning Castro's address was the now-famous and enduring decree, '*within the revolution, everything, against, the revolution, nothing*' (Castro 1961b). Central to the speech also, are Castro's observations that the revolution could not by its very nature be an enemy of freedom; it could not therefore suppress the creative character of the artist or intellectual. As Castro perceived the intricate situation, Cuban intellectuals constituted three groups: these were the revolutionaries - those committed to the cause of the revolution who would find no obstacles within the revolution's goals and policies. Second were the counterrevolutionaries or opponents of the revolution. This group could not claim expressive rights since the revolution had *risen out of the needs and aspirations of the people*. Being 'on the side of the people' conferred upon the revolution such rights as the right to exist, develop, and succeed, and hence, it possessed the right also to safeguard itself. Accordingly, for Castro no one could justly claim a right to oppose the revolution. Finally, Castro identified those writers and artists who grasped the grounds for, and fairness of, the revolution but who were not part of it. This cluster in particular, presented the greatest dilemma of the three.

Cuba's culture minister Abel Prieto, rationalises that while the axiom - *within the revolution, everything, against, the revolution, nothing* – can be considered to be reasonable within the context of the dangers posed by US imperialist aggression, it also allows for much flexibility. Prieto contends that certain revolutionary principles must at all cost be defended and safeguarded, hence to encourage an attack on those principles, basically amounts an act of 'suicide'. Prieto points out that from the point of view of someone who is committed to the revolution, *everything* is within, i.e., any issue can be touched on. In the framework of the high levels of misunderstanding *and* anticipation that

characterised Cuban society during the launching of the revolution, confusion arose about the second clause especially: ‘some thought that all critical art could be or was counterrevolutionary’, and that to be revolutionary, ‘art had to praise, to extol’ (Cantor 1999a).

If influential Cuban bureaucrats like Garcia Buchaca and others like Belarmina Castilla, Antonio Perez Herrero and Blas Roca could attempt to sway Cuban cultural policy *towards* repressive forms like socialist realism (see Dominguez 1979), what were the positions of Castro – in his capacity as supreme leader of the revolution – and Guevara - one of the main proponents of building a new, humane society - on such particular matters? Regarding Castro, Dominguez (1979) writes,

As in all spheres the role of Prime Minister Castro is decisive in settling these controversies, but he does not often intervene. Disputes ordinarily go on without his interference both within intellectual associations and institutions and between them and the bureaucracies or the armed forces. Neither side consistently wins or loses. The armed forces, the writers’ and artists’ union, the film institute, and individual artists and writers have all had their occasional victories and defeats, and all continue to disagree. Disputes arise even over what type of music or of television programme is ‘good’ for Cuban radio and television (Dominguez 1979, 394).

Not only did Castro declare that that ‘socialist realism should not monopolise art’ (Dominguez 1979, 392), it was through his support that Cuba’s Film Institute successfully resisted political supervision during the 1960s (see Dominguez 1979; Karol 1970). Karol (1970) records that when Blas Roca, in his official capacity as party secretary, had tried to prohibit the showing of contemporary films of, for example, Fellini, he had been ‘severely and publicly rebuked’ (Karol 1970, 394). Roca’s condemnation of Fellini’s *La dolce vita* met with strong resistance from the Cuban Institute for Cinematographic Arts, an act which, by implication, also portrayed Castro’s support (*ibid.*). In the sphere of painting, Karol notes, ‘freedom had been complete long before Cuba extended her invitation to the *Salon de Mai*’, an undertaking which was affirmed by

Castro: 'Our fight is with the imperialists, not with abstract painters' (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists similarly sought it prudent to enlist Castro's aid to compel Stalinist elements in Cuba's armed forces⁷ to disband their endeavours to 'extirpate' homosexuality in the country through rehabilitation methods (Dominguez 1979, 392-93; see Karol 1970, 395).

Guevara's cultural standpoints are particularly concerned with developments taking shape in the cultural realm, of both Cuba and socialist societies generally. His theoretical stance on prevailing arts doctrines is clearly illustrated in his essay, 'Socialism and man in Cuba' (EG 1965/2003u).⁸ As will be perceived, his views openly condemn measures which sought to curtail citizens' intellectual and expressive liberties.⁹

In the essay Guevara confronts firstly the 'superstructure', as it 'imposes a kind of art' which the artist 'must adhere to'. He argues that those who wish to follow an independent path are 'subdued by the machine', and only 'exceptional talents may create their own work'. Those who do not fit into this category become 'shamefaced hirelings or are crushed'. Guevara considers that though schools of artistic experimentation in socialist society are often demarcated by the 'definition of freedom', this experimentation has its limits, often invisible until conflict arises. According to him those artists who remain within the confines of official dictates gain distinction through the 'honour' conferred upon them by those yielding power. He regards such artists as 'puppets', writing, 'those who play by the rules of the game are showered with honours – such honour as a monkey might get for performing pirouettes' (EG 1965/2003u, 222).

The document goes on to emphasise that in revolutionary countries attempts have been made to combat critical inquiry with 'an exaggerated dogmatism'. In such a setting, Guevara argues, general culture becomes 'practically prohibited' since the peak of cultural expression is regarded as the 'formally exact representation of nature'. He reasons furthermore that this practice converted into 'a mechanical representation of the social reality' - that of 'the ideal society', 'without conflicts or contradictions' (*ibid.*).

Socialism, he writes, 'is young and has its mistakes'. Accordingly he concedes that revolutionaries often lack familiarity and the intellect required to meet the task of building a new society '*with methods different from the conventional ones*'. For him there are no great artists who at the same time are remarkable revolutionaries ¹⁰ (*ibid.*, 223, emphasis added).

Cuba's International Cultural Congress, held during 1968 and organised under the theme 'The intellectual and the struggle for the liberation of the people of the Third World', drew some five hundred intellectuals from seventy countries.¹¹ While the congress itself openly discussed many contentious issues in socialist countries, Castro's address drew wide-spread support from the more critical sectors of the audience. In his departure from 'established communist dogma', he attacked, what he called, 'the dogmatic Marxists', drawing attention to the repercussions of criticism in totalitarian states, and condemning overall, authoritarian thinking:

Certain Marxist sectors have turned themselves into a pseudorevolutionary church. I only hope that by drawing attention to this fact I shall not myself be excommunicated, or delivered over to the Holy Inquisition. Nothing is more anti-Marxist than dogma and petrified thought. No one has a monopoly of ideas, and of revolutionary ideas least of all. No one is a repository of all revolutionary truths (cited in Karol 1970, 403).

II.2 SOCIALIST REALISM

'Socialism and man in Cuba' contains arguably Guevara's clearest denunciation of the mode of artistic expression officially decreed in the Soviet system for some time. His condemnation of *socialist realism* and its dangers to revolutionary Cuba, are most patent:

When true artistic experimentation ends, general culture becomes reduced to assimilating the socialist present and the dead past. Thus socialist realism arises upon the foundations of the art of the last century. Why try to find the only valid prescription for artistic articulation in the frozen forms of socialist realism? We cannot compare freedom with socialist realism, we cannot condemn all art forms since the first half of the nineteenth century, for we would be putting a

straight-jacket on the artistic expression of the people who are being born and are in the process of making themselves. What is needed is the development of an ideological-cultural mechanism that permits both free inquiry and the uprooting of the weeds that multiply so easily in the fertilised soil of state subsidies (ibid., emphasis added)

Guevara critique is multi-fold. For him

- Socialist realism is not only culturally oppressive, but also ‘motionless’, ‘unemotional’, even ‘dead’ perhaps (frozen), and hence, not conducive to the free development of the arts and literature. Accordingly,
- Expressive freedoms cannot flourish under the banner of socialist realism
- A truly inspiring ‘ideological-cultural mechanism’ must come into being wherein freedom of inquiry, and following logically, freedom of expression, are assured
- Acclaimed artistic forms and products from prior epochs should not be ignored or condemned¹²
- The demands (explicit or implicit) ensuing from state funding – the possible loss of independence – similarly have the potential to stifle the growth of artistic analysis and articulation

Guevara however, perceives that in Cuba the error of ‘mechanical realism has not appeared’, but rather ‘its opposite’ which similarly is a matter of contention for him. He reasons that the need for creating a new individual has not been fully realised since the new human being should represent neither the ideas of the 19th century nor those of ‘our own decadent and morbid century’. Guevara proclaims, ultimately, that an entirely new being must come into existence, *the human being of the 21st century*: ‘this is precisely one of the fundamental objectives of our study and our work’, he concludes (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

II.3 CONCLUSION

‘Socialism and man in Cuba’ appears to be the union of Guevara’s maturing doctrines and an instructive, yet candid self-critique. With the work he reaffirms Cuba’s right, and compulsion, to determine its own course, issuing a

disparagement which faces up to the compliant application of Soviet creeds by contemporary socialists.

The work openly illustrates Guevara's denial that socialist construction implies the obliteration of free will and the expression of that will. Guevara quite patently depicts his own reality as it emerged from his own revolutionary experience and ensuing transformation.

Castro's key cultural standpoints of the 1960s appear to be more forthright yet partial in conjectural scope, emphasising (but not explicating) the central role of culture in social transformation. In the context of severe repression which came to characterise other socialist societies, of note is Castro's openness towards, and defence of, contemporary artistic forms and expressions, including open debate, even if this meant coming into conflict with bureaucratic norms both locally and abroad. Guevara, arguably, could not circumvent formulating a cultural analysis, not only because of his deep attachment to the arts (see Anderson 1997, 36, 201, 388, 468, 634, etc.; Taibo II 1997, 44, 67, 134, 266, 316, 574, etc.; Deutschmann 2003, 418), but given the scope of transformation happening in Cuban society and governing framework. According to Deutschmann (2003) it was prudent to reflect on the conception of socialist culture in a country characterised by underdevelopment and a neo-colonial culture imposed by an oppressive class (Deutschmann 2003, 397). The endeavour to eliminate entrenched oppressive beliefs and attitudes impeded the challenge to construct a new human being adept in practicing universal solidarity, equality, and social justice. This unavoidably made the struggle more difficult, not only by the persistence of the past culture but also by influential, dictatorial tendencies of so-called 'socialist realism'. Guevara's solution appears to be a challenge to preserve the 'best and most unique aspects' (*ibid.*) of culture, avoiding excesses, and by trying to construct a culture that would express the nation's sensitivities 'without vulgarity' (*ibid.*) and the loss of liberties.

According to Zeitlin (1970) when Guevara was active in Cuba's revolutionary leadership, legitimate disparities on governmental level were openly contested, 'if in muted tones'. Zeitlin writes that various newspapers clashed openly over issues as diverse as 'the revolutionary responsibility of the artist and the road to revolution in Latin America'. He records furthermore that journals like *Cuba Socialista*, and others such as *Verde Olivo* (founded by Guevara), *Nuestra Industria* and *Timestre* frequently contained articles debating critical matters like, 'the role of a bank under socialism, the relative merits of central versus decentralised planning, and material versus moral incentives' (Zeitlin 1970, xli).

Deutschmann concludes that 'neither neo-liberalism nor globalisation has been able to inhibit Cuba's genuine process of culture' - 'the expression of a truly socialist society' (2003, 397).

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III

DEVELOPMENT, ROLE, AND CHARACTER OF CUBAN ARTS

III. 1 NEW CULTURAL BODIES

With Castro at the helm, from the very beginning the Cuban revolution sought to bring about a profound cultural revolution, where culture in itself was considered as a path to social renewal and human emancipation (see Zeitlin 1970; Dominguez 1979; Wright 1991; Pogolotti 1998). New cultural goals led to the establishment of important national arts organisations, such as the National Ballet Company of Cuba (1959), the *Casa de las Américas* (1959), the Institute of Film Art and Industry (ICAIC) (1959), the National Symphony Orchestra (1960), the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (1961), the National Council for Culture (1961), and a National Art School (1962). In 1960 the Amateur Arts Movement was formed with subsidiary *Houses of Culture* established in communities, to enable the active participation of the population in creative practices (Kronenberg 2005a; Eli 1986). Alongside these measures arts organisations sponsored free ballets, plays, recitals, theatre productions, etc., offering also scholarships to talented youths to pursue studies abroad at specialist art institutions (Kronenberg 2005a). Given its historically-dominant place in Cuban culture, (see Sarduy and Stubbs 1993; White 1992), many styles of music were promoted, from the traditional Spanish habanera to all forms of classical music - from full symphony to solo players. Music became developed in all its diverse forms and came to have a profound new meaning for all Cubans. Official merit was assigned to a capella choruses, cabaret bands, dance music, as well as music for theatre, opera, television and cinema. Music would similarly play a major role in uniting the Cuban nation and would often be heard in the many outdoors commemorative festivals (White 1992).

Notwithstanding Castro's somewhat ambiguous decree (see Castro 1961b; above), new cultural endeavours provided artists and writers with prospects to keep in line with, and support, the profound social changes taking place and express reality from a different perspective (see Alea 1988; Rose 1995; Manuel 1995). Cuban intellectuals devised programmes that sought to spell out the nature of their commitment to, and role in, the country's transformation. Among these was the pledge towards

1. the recovery and growth of their Cuban traditions which was 'wrested away by colonialists and imperialists'
2. the safeguarding and employment of Cuban popular traditions ¹³
3. frank and sincere evaluation of the works produced by artists and intellectuals
4. an exchange and cooperation with other Latin American writers, intellectuals, and artists ¹⁴
5. an acknowledgment that Cuban national culture forms part of world culture ¹⁵
(Del Duca 1972, 94).

III.1.1 Literacy & publication

Dominating Cuba's cultural developmental programme was the Literacy Campaign for the mass of the population. Education is perceived as an important aspect of Cuban culture, accordingly the education of the population became an integral part of the development the new society (Kronenberg 2005a; Pogolotti 1998; see also Part II). From the late 1960s to the close of 1961 the Cuban government organised a flourishing crusade to instruct one million Cubans to read and write. Crucial to this endeavour was the mustering of more than 200,000 youths to go to the rural areas where they also lived with the rural poor they were educating (see Deutschmann 2003; Mesa-Lago 1974; Zeitlin 1970). An outcome of this drive was that Cuba effectively eradicated the bondages of ignorance and illiteracy.¹⁶ Being exposed to reading and knowledge was viewed in itself as an act of emancipation (see Part III Chapter 12). This intense strategy was merged with designs to foster the development of book publishing.

The revolutionary government's enlargement of the media, publishing houses and magazines led to a four- to five-fold growth in the output of published books and journals. Literary competitions, national, continental and international, were charitably supported, and most writers and artists were well rewarded or subsidised (Mesa-Lago 1974, 97). The expansion of the national publishing industry provided Cuban writers the opportunity of publishing and circulating their own work - a prospect they had not benefited from in the past. It also led to the publishing of writers from across the globe, including the famous classic novelists from the US, England and Europe, but also writers from Latin America, Africa and other parts of the Third World. These measures presented for Cubans further insight into the world that deepened and infused their existing culture (Pogolotti 1998).

While revolutionary leaders solicited the help of intellectuals to advance the revolution's course, intellectuals too, were searching for ways to realise their own goals with their work. During the decade of the sixties Cuban writers and intellectuals did much to fashion a representation of their country that gave optimism and potency to the poor and oppressed peoples of the world (Del Duca 1972, 104)

A range of literary genres arose, seeking to express the emotive, mystical, and mental reaction of the people to this emotional period of Cuban history. Del Duca (1972) records that besides Alejo Carpentier, one of Cuba's most famous novelists and short story writers, of the many outstanding works of this period were Arocha's *Los muertos andan solos*, Edmindo Desnoes's *No hay problemas*, and José Soler Puig's *Bertillon 166*, *En el año de enargo*, *El derrumbleI*, seeking to portray life in pre-revolutionary times or during the triumph of the revolution. In Cuban theatrical circles artists like Antón Arrufat, José R. Brene, Abelardo Estorino, Manuel Reguera Saumell, José Triana and Nicolas Dorr were gaining prominence, often leaving behind with their productions subject matter and styles from the oppressive past (Del Duca 1972, 105).

On the whole, in a systematic and profound way, new cultural directions endeavoured to overcome the legacies of past inequalities and injustices. Accordingly artists, writers and intellectuals played a decisive role in the revolution's aspiration to eradicate the educational backlog, illiteracy, cultural underdevelopment, and as indicated before, cultural partition. All of these measures set the foundations for developing both a modern, universal Cuban culture, and new nation.

III.1.2 Houses of culture

Cuba's *Houses of Culture* render an authentic portrayal of the revolution's devotion to the development of artistic awareness, perception, including and especially creativity, on national scale. Since the early 1960s the *Houses* were constituted as community art centers where expert arts instructors could offer tuition to citizens from society at large. Attendees were not required to be specialists in their field or to become experts, but were offered a broad-based schooling in specific art forms, such as dance, literature, theatre, crafts, music, and painting. The *Houses* became established throughout the country, continuing to offer in recent times, arts tuition at professional levels at no charge. They also present opportunities for community exhibition and performance. A considerable goal of the *Houses of Culture* is to cultivate in the communities, interested, knowledgeable, and critical audiences. Accordingly attendees not only engage technically with specialists in their fields, but also discuss, dissect, review, and critique various and specific art forms and works, a collective endeavour that has come to enhance Cuba's high educational levels *and* standards (Kronenberg 2005A).

III.1.3 Film

From the initial stages of the revolution the development of the Film Industry received special prominence, winning international praise soon after its humble beginnings. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, arguably Cuba's most accomplished film director, sums up as follows Cuban filmmakers' response to the triumph of the revolution:

. . . our shaken land offered an image, an unusual and one-time-only image

. . . the vertigo of all the transformations, the exodus of the traitors and timorous ones, the henchmen's trials, and the enemy's immediate response and, as for us, we experienced the nationalisations, the daily radicalisation of the revolutionary process followed by the armed confrontations, the sabotages, the counterrevolution, the Bay of Pigs invasion and the October Missile Crisis. Those events in themselves evidently revealed the profound changes occurring at a pace nobody could have foreseen. For cinema, it was almost sufficient just to record events, to capture directly some fragment of reality, and simply reflect the goings-on in the streets. These images projected on the screen turned out to be interesting, revealing and spectacular (Alea 1988, 16).

Besides endeavouring to reflect important aspects of the country's transformation, Cuban cinema also became an important component of the broader New Latin American Cinema, which started with the Argentinean Documentary Film School in the late 1950s, and with the Brazilian *Cinema Novo*, initiated in the early 1960s. Cuba became the first country in Latin America where it was possible to visualize a new film ethic on national level, both fashionable and analytical. One of the revolution's first decrees in the arts domain was to establish the ICAIC to oversee the workings of the arts and media industries. Hence the country's cultural diffusion, something previously denied cultural workers, was placed under the guidance of artists and intellectuals (Chanan 1983, 3-4).

Before the revolution the country had no cinematographic infrastructure and filmmakers attempted to generate products as they went along. A few low standard features were financed by speculators, and in the Batista era especially, amateur efforts produced biased newsreels and pornography mainly for private use (*ibid.*). The development of Cuban cinematographic arts also stimulated the import of classic films from Europe, the United States and Eastern European countries, providing opportunities for the nation to open itself to the world, which in turn pervaded the existing Cuban culture (Pogolotti 1998).

The ICAIC provided a forum for emerging filmmakers but also for visual artists and writers. Artists were employed to produce film posters which transformed

Cuba's graphic art tradition. Through this process Cuban cinema established the basis for the spread of the avant-garde (Kronenberg 2005A). Composer Leo Brouwer wrote music scores for many of the new types of films which, by the late 1960s, established Cuban cinema as perhaps the most inventive and the most radical anywhere at that moment. Productions like Alea's well-known *Memorias de subdesarrollo* (Memories of Underdevelopment) is an expansion on a novel by Edmundo Desnoes, in essence a study in the alienation of the bourgeois intellectuals (Chanan 1983, 4). Towards contradicting the 'self-appointed pundits and mysteriously funded 'think-tanks' who are 'proclaiming both the cultural and political failure of the Cuban Revolution', Rose's 1995 review selects for in-depth illustration Humberto Solás' epic *Lucia*. Released in 1968, *Lucia* is crafted as a trilogy on life in Cuba from the late 1800s to the 1960s. Rose relates that Solás' achievement is perhaps nowhere more remarkable than in creating a sense of permanence while transmitting profound transformations in consciousness (Rose 1995, 102). Further on Rose articulates that with his work, Solás effectively reflects the 'peculiar attraction in our own time of a form which is born of a revolution' (*ibid.*, 110).

As a respected and representative spokesperson for Cuban film (Kronenberg 2005A), Alea saw cinema as having both a definitive social function *and* as the most effective way possible to elevating viewers' consciousness (see Alea 1988). In his 1988 piece Alea projects that cinema should both equip viewers for the ideological struggle against oppressive cultural trends, and it should contribute to people's enjoyment in life (see Alea 1988), advancing one of Martí central arts philosophies (see Part II). Within this framework, Alea argues that Cuban filmmakers should aspire to establish what might be the highest level which film could reach in fulfilling this function. Filmmakers can effectively cause viewers to attain new socio-political attentiveness and consequently develop a reaction to oppressive social structures. He articulates furthermore that the desire of Cuban cinema is not only to raise consciousness, but also for people to engage in a process where spectators cease to be merely spectators and become active participants in plotting their destiny (Alea 1988, 18).

Alea furthermore perceived that capitalist cinema, when reduced to a mere commodity, 'rarely tries to give answers to life's basic questions'. By the same token socialist cinema has not customarily met that requirement. In the context of the revolution, filmmakers endeavour to establish the premise to make cinema 'genuinely and integrally revolutionary, active, mobilising, stimulating, and – consequently – popular'. For Alea ultimately, it is significant to discover in the link that exists between the production and the audience, 'the laws which govern this relation and the possibilities within those laws for developing a socially productive cinema' (Alea 1988, 18-19).

For Cuban scholar and writer Pedro Pérez Sarduy cinema is the most faithful expression of a culture (Del Duca 1972, 108). In Cuba during the 1960s, it was regarded as the expression best suited to capture the incessant growth of a social process in radical transformation. On many occasions the Cuban government has called for more films and documentaries as a means for bringing together the past and the present. The success of Cuban cinema has become recognised on international level with documentaries and fiction films receiving international awards (*ibid.*).

III.1.4 National school of ballet¹⁷

Though the origins of the National School of Ballet date back to 1931, in the early 1950s the now world-renown Alicia Alonso Ballet Academy came into being, forging the pedagogical method that became adopted and promoted nationally by the revolutionary government. Since 1959 the Cuban government has sought to support and concretely elevate this arts genre particularly. In 1962 with the establishment of the Cuban National School of Arts, ballet became its first field of specialization. Admittance to the School became over the years much sought after, amongst both Cuban and international scholars.

The Cuban government also sought it prudent to use what was once an historic palace as training premises for the School of Ballet. The origin of the building dates back to 1904, when it first served as the headquarters of the Havana Trade and Commerce Association. Arturo Amigo its architect, based the design of the palace on features from the Venetian renaissance. These are reflected in the

large number of ornate windows, magnificent floor tiles, sprawling marble stairways and flourishing roof decorations (Kronenberg 2005a), clear indications of the revolutionary government's high regard of this art form.

The School's arts' strategies saw the establishment of a recurring exchange course with ballet schools of other nations. As a result internationally-based teachers have adopted and subsequently become key advocates of the Cuban ballet teaching technique.

Since the mid-1960s the School's instruction program incorporates two fields of specialization, Ballet Dancer Teacher and Ballet Teacher. Besides ballet, students can pursue studies in repertoire, character dance, classical duet, folklore, dance techniques, make-up, and Spanish dancing, all of which are supplemented with academic courses. The Cuban government also set up Elementary Ballet Schools within arts training centers throughout the country from which gifted students pursue further training at the National School.

The National School of Ballet became the seat of two international events which have earned international prestige. The International Ballet Students' Contest is hosted by the School every alternate year, attracting some of the world's foremost students, while the International Meeting of Academies for the Teaching of Ballet constitutes the second major event.

As has become the norm over many years, the Inaugural Gala of the International Meeting of Academies is held at the fashionable Sala Garcia Lorca Gran Teatro. The event has become much-anticipated and well supported, hosting also scores of visitors and celebrities from beyond Cuba's borders. The bulk of the audience customarily includes Cubans from all walks of life, ages, and shades. The dance presentation of the International Meeting of Academies especially, has gained global repute for its stunning beauty and depiction of grace and wonder, made viable by performers' mastery of skill. Over time Cuban ballet has also elevated and given exposure to Cuba's youth orchestras, usually used for dance accompaniment. In addition to ballet, Cuban orchestras

have become a national attraction, especially through their skilled performance of large-scale works.

Perceived on another dimension, Cuban ballet is a fitting model of the country's imaginative merger of diverse artistic modes. This genre, as in others, lends itself to the interaction of the so-called 'high arts' with forms of popular cultures. Instances of art music liaising with traditional and popular musics, and ballet interconnecting with traditional dance forms are often noticeable features of Cuban ballet. Often incorporated are expressive group speech and pictographic images. The diverse composition of participants in Cuban ballet can be seen as a portrayal of the country's cultural affiliation with the Latin American continent (Kronenberg 2005A). In this regard it is valuable looking into the legacy of Haydée Santamaría, Cuba's towering cultural figure who devoted her life to the advancement of the country's cultural relations with the arts international world (see Maclean 2003).

III.2 HAYDÉE SANTAMARÍA AND THE *CASA DE LAS AMÉRICAS*

III.2.1 Introduction

In the early 1970s, a period described by Cubans as the 'black period',¹⁸ the Cuban regime more closely aligned itself with official Soviet doctrines, with the then USSR being its closest economic ally after the North American administration effectively severed all Cuban fiscal ties with the international world. From the beginning of the 1970s until the mid-1970s the Soviet Union played an influential role in Cuban domestic and foreign policies, which impacted also on the island's doctrines pertaining to expression. Though instances exist where members of the Cuban government collided with artists' creative freedoms, it must be stressed that Cuba did not emulate the extreme levels of repression enforced by the Stalinist regimes of the Soviet Union and China.

The experience during the early 1970s of the critical Cuban writer Herberto Padilla is well documented and received condemnation from hosts of international artists and organisations.¹⁹ For some time Cuban officials also regarded rock music with misgiving. In the early 1970s long-haired musicians

and devotees of rock music were regularly under pressure from police and sometimes detained. On another level, forces in Cuba's arts establishment afforded slight awareness to the cultural experience brought about by the Beatles' phenomenon at the time. This was in part due to the official criticism of matters that could be associated with colonialism or imperialism (Wald 2001). In later years some unease would be sparked again when writers and artists were admonished as being 'too moderate and infected to effectively defend the principles of the revolution' (Whitefield and Tomayo 1996). In this instance Cuba's current minister of culture Abel Prieto, then president of UNEAC, together with other Cuban artists, challenged Fidel Castro himself with a reminder that 'creativity has always been part of the revolution' (*ibid.*; see Tomayo 1997; Knapton 1995). It is perceived that some governmental officials became troubled about Cuba's preservation of 'ideological purity' in light of the fact that the country became more accessible to and influenced by the world at large (*ibid.*). In defending Cuba's current position, Prieto accepts that mistakes were made in the past, arguing that in contemporary times intellectuals and artists are not deprived of their legitimacy; that it is an attribute of Cuban artists to question the world and the existing order (Cantor 1999a and 1999b).

Against this background (the negative parts of which are perhaps mostly prominently or sometimes exclusively espoused in the Western capitalist world) the following passages explore a divergent, humanistic cultural trend, launched in Cuba during the early 1960s which furthermore developed into a feature of Latin American cultural expression. An important goal here is to present an exemplar of a cultural activity that aspires to the development of human alliance and commonality – visions central in both Cuba's historical legacy (e.g., Bolivar and Martí, see Part II) and revolutionary doctrine (see Guevara's standpoints in Part III, Chapter 11 especially; see Castro's standpoints in Conclusion to thesis).

III.2.2 Cultural internationalism and solidarity

Awareness in the English-speaking world of the legendary *Casa de las Américas* and its globally-obscure founding member is much boosted by *Haydée Santamaría* (Maclean 2003), an anthology of writings, interviews, and

poetry that sheds light on one of Cuba's less-prominent, yet highly respected cultural practitioners.²⁰ The passages following, endeavour to present a brief overview of Santamaría's labours and philosophies, as well as some of the more significant goals, principles, and achievements of the island's and arguably Latin America's foremost international arts institution.

Haydée Santamaría (1922-1980) recognized what she believed was the one fissure in the political/economic blockade of her country – culture, a realization that gave birth in Havana in 1959 to the *Casa de las Américas*. When the US economic, and as a result, cultural barricade, attempted to isolate Cuba from other nations (see Part III, Guevara's twin pronouncements on imperialism and internationalism) Santamaría perceived the *Casa* could successfully create links with writers and artists as individuals and representatives of their respective communities, rather than with countries officially (Benedetti 2003, 98).

With an internationalist vision, Santamaría evolved from a social activist and freedom fighter into a cultural ambassador, electing to employ art and culture to forge meaningful relations, understanding, and support, amongst artists, writers and intellectuals internationally. Many artists of high standing, Mariano, Galich, Retamar, Lesbia, Peña, Benedetti, Benitez, etc., became exposed to the Cuban people, forging also meaningful contact with emerging and established artists and writers. Under her guidance the *Casa de las Américas* set before itself the mission of 'affirming, defending and promoting' the conception of a United America, a principle goal of epic anti-colonial revolutionaries José Martí and Simon Bolívar (see Part II; Shnookal and Muñiz 1999). Her passion for justice and truth, derived from her deep humanitarian awareness, molded the institution into a kind of 'home away from home', a sanctuary for artists of all genres and from all countries, many of whom were fleeing persecution in their countries.

After gaining prominence throughout the continent, the institution would receive some 600 to 700 artistic works at a time as entries for competitions. In addition to hosting international arts competitions, the *Casa* also aspired to collect works from around the continent for archiving and exhibition. Santamaría's judgment was that within the context of Cuba's new national social programme, Cuban citizens offered the 'most appropriate conditions' for

bringing together and conserving the art of ‘the people’ (Sarunsky 2003, 64). She regarded Latin American crafts for instance as a clear example of an ‘eminently popular art’ that should be distinguished from what is ‘populist’.²¹ For her ‘popular’ represented that which is created with *authenticity* and is part of people’s living experiences, while ‘The populists are those who want to commercialise art’ (*ibid.*, 65). Santamaría furthermore sought to advance the preservation of the popular Latin American traditions perceiving them as a form of expression in danger of becoming extinct.

Operating initially in an era of military dictatorship, the institution published numerous books by critical Latin American writers. Many of these works may have remained otherwise unpublished in the ethos of artistic tyranny sweeping the continent in the 1960s and beyond. As a result the institution hosted and published Latin American cultural greats, from Gabriel García Márquez, Pablo Neruda and Marta Conti, to José Saramago, Alicia Alonso and Eduardo Galeano. The *Casa* also printed its own literary magazine under the editorship of one of Cuba’s renowned scholars, Roberto Fernández Retamar.

Under Santamaría’s direction *Casa* consistently introduced into Cuba some of the world’s most celebrated dancers, musicians, painters and theatre groups. These measures sustained aspirations of the broader Cuban cultural establishment to mend decades of cultural snobbery and introduce art to ordinary Cubans, particularly those living in remote rural areas (see Kronenberg 2004b). Quarters to one of Latin America’s most extensive art anthologies *Casa* also accumulated in its library some of Latin America’s most significant literary works.

III.2.3 *Nueva Trova* Movement

Haydée Santamaría was a champion of, as well as, dedicated actor in the Cuban revolution. Like Guevara (see EG 1965/20003u) and many other Cuban artists, she was not predisposed towards the dictates of socialist realism, the totalitarian diktat that infiltrated the cultural programmes of many Socialist states at the time.²² It was within the Cuban revolution – and not as its adversary - that Santamaría continued to challenge creative limitations and boundaries, both

national and international. During a time of ideological apprehension and misunderstanding she supported the works and challenges of socially-committed artists pursued for harassment by doctrinaire bureaucrats. She particularly shielded and defended young, gifted, unconventional, critical artists whose creative home was the *Nueva Trova* (New Song) Movement and in the process rebuked political intransigence. Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, known internationally as Silvio Rodríguez - a founding member of the *Nueva Trova* and one of the most respected popular singers of Latin America – notes his experience as follows:

At that time we were usually preceded by the epithet ‘*conflictos*’ (troublemakers), a word used as a synonym for ‘watch out for them’ . . . We fused everyday events with transcendental ones and did not avoid speaking out on the setbacks of the society in revolution. We sang like that because our life was like that, and real life usually puts the best words into song. This wasn’t a conflict for Haydée, who always listened to us respectfully, whatever we sang (Rodríguez 2003, 121-122).

Through her progressive, anti-dogmatic approach the *Nueva Trova* Movement reached heights unparalleled in Latin American popular musical tradition (see Matta 1988). Artists central to its establishment sought to insert music and poetry into the popular traditions at points where the forms and language of folklore had become barred from the ‘cultural industry’²³ (Matta 1988, 447). Since the end of the sixties a wave of committed and innovative singers and songwriters emerged on the continent. The imagination of the song composers was affected by, and as such, sought to reflect social variances, human movements and resettlement, the youth in search for new values, as well as the rise of revolutionary movements inspired by the example of Ernesto Guevara. Matta (1988) elaborates that concepts like *denunciation* and *confrontation* over time became key functions of the Movement. Though the *Nueva Trova* came to embody different creative trends, these all assume the task of denouncing the oppressive conditions created by dominant political systems (Matta 1988, 450). From the aesthetic position, these functions became among the most dangerous in the development and existence of the Movement. Although it did not become mass-based, the Movement’s individual forms of expressions collectively seek

to ‘irritate, disturb, and provoke the hegemonic forces’. The strength of its music Matta (1988) writes, is ‘especially electrifying’ and propels images that reflect the struggles of the ‘neglected masses’. ‘This is why the Movement is fought against and repressed and, inevitably, situated in a zone of confrontation and defiance’: Guitarist-singer Gerardo Vandre was banned from Brazil in 1970, while Mercedes Sosa was forbidden radio and TV space in Argentina under military rule. Many other examples exist that portray the *Nueva Trova* Movement and its followers as a ‘highly dangerous reality’ (see Matta 1988).

III.3 CONCLUSION

Maclean (2003) comments that it was ‘in their internationalism that Che and Haydee met and overlapped’ (Maclean 2003, 7). It is construed that though their paths were markedly different, they both aspired to link the continent with Cuba. Additionally, neither Guevara nor Santamaría purely envisaged a liberated Cuba because their struggle was not directed at ‘one tyrant, but against tyranny’. Maclean proclaims theirs was ‘the struggle for humanity, for justice in its most profound and expansive expression’ (*ibid.*). As Melba Hernandez, another of Cuba’s renown female revolutionaries says, ‘[she] is not dead, she is alive and will live on eternally in all those who know that happiness is only found when we give ourselves to the great work that is on behalf of the peoples, on behalf of humanity’ (cited in Maclean 2003, 10). Juan Almeida –one of the founding members of the *July 26 Movement* – perceives Santamaría as ‘a figure of incalculable international prestige’, whose attributes and work signifies revolutionary Cuba’s ‘heroism, history, spirit of struggle and sentiment of solidarity’. Her life-long toil in the arts field signifies an ‘exceptional contribution to the friendship, solidarity, culture and development of unbreakable ties between Cuba and its sister nations in Latin America, the Caribbean and other parts of the world’ (Almeida 2003, 88). In addition, her example of total dedication to the cause of . . . *internationalism* shall be remembered (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

Accordingly, in many respects Santamaría is credited for creating the *political ambiance* conducive to meaningful artistic creation, perception, performance and exhibition. At arts competitions Santamaría on occasion counseled

international jurists thus: ‘Remember don’t worry too much about awarding works that are politically impeccable; just concern yourself with giving the prize to the best’ (Benedetti 2003, 97). Through her receptive but at the same time, unswerving political frame of mind, she contributed to the invention of illustrious cultural offerings by Cuban artists during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Because of her interminable legacy, today pioneering and powerful art continues to emerge from the impoverished island nation situated on a remote periphery.

Chilean intellectual who gained fame as a novelist, poet, playwright, and critic Ariel Dorfman, expresses in his praise (Dorfman 2003) that after the brutal overthrow of Salvador Allende, he had entered Cuba feeling ‘demoralized’, yet

that woman who had seen so many deaths in the peoples’ causes, as well as some victories and resurrections, opened her arms to welcome me and give me strength . . . [A]t some point in a free and democratic Chile . . . when that day arrives, in the celebrations I will remember the solidarity of my big sister (Dorfman 2003, 112)

Reflecting on her internationalist approach to the spread of the arts, eminent Uruguayan poet Mario Benedetti wrote,

For painters, musicians, writers, singers, theatre people from Argentina or Venezuela, from Chile or Mexico, from Uruguay or Nicaragua, from Jamaica or El Salvador, and of course in her native Cuba, the very mention of Haydée Santamaríasignifies a world, an attitude, a sensibility . . . which she did not conceive of as confined to the land of José Martí, but extended to the future of all people (Benedetti 2003, 96, emphasis added).

Celebrated Costa Rican writer Carmen Naranjo recorded the following in praise of Santamaría’s life and struggles. Her comments, like those of Benedetti’s and many others, succinctly capture both Santamaría and the *Casa de las Américas*’ commitment to internationalism and human solidarity:

Haydée with her work at the *Casa de las Américas* fulfilled in the field of art and literature *the cause of Simón Bolívar and José Martí: Latin American unity. Casa was and is the center for writers and artists, the link between closed borders and permanently isolated countries, the opportunity to know and read of each other*, a stimulus to create an encounter with that boundless Cuban generosity (Naranjo 2003, 114, emphasis added).

The growth of the *Nueva Trova* inspired the Festival de la Nueva Cancion Latinoamericana, which was held in the early 1980s in Nicaragua, hosting acclaimed voices like Silvio Rodriguez, Noel Nicola, and Vicente Feliu of Cuba's *Nueva Trova* Movement; Isabel Parra and Eduardo Carrasco of Chile; Daniel Viglietti from Uruguay; Chico Buarque from Brazil; Mercedes Sosa from Argentina; Aly Primera from Venezuela; and others from Mexico, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Peru, and the US Latin American community. The festival was planned as an act of solidarity with the people of Nicaragua and as an expression of unity in view of repressive conditions then prevailing in Central America. A significant object also was to denounce through music and poetry, the social and political ambiguities prevalent across the continent (Matta 1988, 447).

Returning to Cuba, a number of international singers met in Varadero on November 27th, 1982, during which the *Nueva Trova* Movement's International Permanent Committee was established. Its press release (from Mexico's *El Dia* cited in Matta 1988, 459) in essence defines the artists' commitment to social change structured on a humanistic ethic that embraces world peace, internationalism, and human solidarity:

The artist must not only live and create according to his [or her] times; [they have] a chance to project [themselves] toward the future and to support, through art and life, the continuous clamor for social change demanded by the peoples of all nations. The *Nueva Canción* movement stand side by side with all that which makes [humanity] free and guides [it] along the road toward a better future. It is art without class or country, and its message is that of hope and humanity's highest ideals. We, as participants of the First International *Nueva Canción* Forum, in Varadero, Cuba . . . declare ourselves in favor of nuclear disarmament and world peace, and in favor of the Cuban Revolution, that is building

its future in spite of the yankee imperialist blockade and permanent aggressions . . . in favor of solidarity with the popular struggle for total liberation in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, including the industrially developed capitalist countries.

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IV

UNIVERSAL CULTURE AND THE ARTISTRY OF LEO BROUWER

IV.1 INTRODUCTION

IV.1.1 Essence of Culture Policy: Fusion of the National and Universal

The Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC) was established in 1961 to enhance artists' interests and sponsor conferences and cultural events. In its assessment of the development and character of Cuban arts over the last few decades, UNEAC's leadership rationalizes that Cuban arts are in effect *an expression of the most advanced culture of all humanity; a culture that embraces – and not rejects - the highest cultural conquests of previous historical epochs and other societies* (Pogolotti 1998, emphasis added). Though the two dominant strains of Cuban culture originate from Spain and Africa, the creation of Cuban art and literature it is reasoned, has always been tied up to *the development of universal culture*. Cuba is viewed as a country with open borders, 'a port where many things arrive', of which Cubans assimilate those that fit in with the development of their own culture (*ibid.*). Thus embedded in the perspective on what constitutes universal culture, is the simultaneous awareness of the national element.²⁴

This strategy is a clear reflection of the policy goals promoted since 1959 by Cuba's cultural leadership (see Part I). Armando Hart, the Cuban Minister of Education at the start of the revolution who later became the country's Cultural Minister, states as follows the official Cuban policy on promoting *national cultural elements within a universal framework*. As is entirely patent also, this is

a representation of the artistic goals José Martí endeavoured to promote in earlier times (see Part II):

The cultural policy we have followed since 1959 is one of cultural relations with the whole world, based on a principle stated by Martí. *The fact that we defend national culture and at the same time open ourselves up to the rest of the world* may seem like a contradiction between what is national and universal, and even if it were, that contradiction would be fruitful (in Century 1991, 9, emphasis added).

It is evident that many Cuban artists are entirely committed to this cultural doctrine (see Del Duca 1972, Manuel 1991; White 1992; Sarduy and Stubbs 1993; Kronenberg 2000, 2005a). Leo Brouwer for example, believes that the universal and the particular are never at variance, and unlike some artists who claim national art 'above everything', he strives to promote a universal language with his works (McKenna 1988; Kronenberg 1998, 2000).

The passages that follow endeavour to illustrate the presence of this strategic principle in the works and life of one of Cuba's most valued and illustrative creative artists.

IV.2 GUITAR COMPOSER, LEO BROUWER

IV.2.1 Introduction

Leo Brouwer (1939 -) is widely considered as the most significant living composer for the guitar (see Walters 1984; Suzuki 1988; Rose 1988; Cooper C 1996). In his home country he has gained added distinction as writer, principal conductor, leading advisor to the country's culture ministry, composer of numerous film scores, operas, and large-scale orchestral works, director of national arts festivals, and Emeritus Professor of musical theory (see McKenna 1988; Century 1991; Kronenberg 2000, 2005a;) Internationally his wide accomplishments have been crowned with him being named 'Member of Honour' of UNESCO – an extraordinary praise only bestowed upon a select few global arts figures.

A cursory inspection of his initial guitar works shows the presence of, especially, elements of African sacramental song and ritual music (see Pincirolli 1989; Kronenberg 2000). Notwithstanding the customary presence of popular African elements in his works, Brouwer's artistic goal overall, has been to create universal art forms (Hakes 1982; Century 1991; Kronenberg 2000). This he has sought to achieve by cultivating in-depth awareness and knowledge of advanced compositional techniques, styles and formal structures prevalent in advanced art-music traditions:

One of my questions is, how can I link or connect the historical values, which I respect and adore, part of my Cuban heritage, how can they be connected with the universal (Brouwer cited in Century 1991, 7).

Brouwer came into contact with the philosophies of particularly two established Cuban arts movements, the *Grupo Minorista* (1923) previously founded by Fernando Ortiz, and the *Grupo de Renovación Musical* (1942), operating under the spiritual leadership of José Ardevol, who is largely accredited for the development of modern Cuban art music (see Behague 1979; Slonimsky 1972). These groups feature significantly in twentieth-century Cuban art music and provided the philosophical-technical orientation for many of country's artists (see Century 1991). The philosophy of these groups emphasised the following basic tenets:

1. Cultivation and mastering of the necessary technical skills, procedures and structures inherent in great universal art forms
2. Integration of Cuban nation elements within advanced procedures (Century 1991, 4)

According to Ardevol nationalism was still a necessary stage in Cuba with its rich popular music; the ideal however, was to be able to achieve *a universal expression* without losing the innate qualities of Cuban culture (*ibid.*, 5) previously suppressed.

Among the many African-derived rhythms Ortiz researched, collected, and transcribed throughout his career, two warrant closer inspection. They are (1) a group of three syncopated notes, known as the *tresillo*, and (2) a group of five notes, likewise syncopated and labelled the *cinquillo* (Ortiz 1965, 277). A cursory inspection of Brouwer's guitar literature clearly illustrates the presence of these elements (see Kronenberg 2000).

Brouwer's initial training in the art of composition sees him undertaking in-depth analyses of a diverse selection of music scores of a variety of composers from both different nationalities and historical periods. His attention during this time was captivated mainly by the styles and techniques of historic composers Béla Bartók, Claude Debussy, Igor Stravinsky and Manuel de Falla (Hakes 1982; Kronenberg 2000). It was above all these composers' works that from the outset, impacted on and shaped Brouwer's approach to musical composition (*ibid.*).

In his endeavour to cultivate more accurately his creative skills, as a recipient of a music scholarship offered by the revolutionary government, during 1959-60 Brouwer took up formal studies in composition and conducting at the Julliard School in New York. Here he came into contact with the artistry of Darius Milhaud, Lukas Foss and Paul Hindemith, some of the leading contemporary composers of the era.

Brouwer's broad erudition in contemporary musical arts continued during a visit to the 1961 Polish Warsaw Autumn Festival. At the event he gained awareness of some of the most advanced contemporary works on the European continent. Attracting Brouwer's interest were reputedly revolutionary composers like Tadeusz Baird, Kazimierz Serocki, Ernest Block, Luigi Nono and Hans Werner Henze.²⁵ The premier of Penderecki's orchestral masterpiece *Threnody in Memory the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960), counts among the many events that won Brouwer's interest and admiration. The overall consequence of this visit was that Brouwer gained a deep-rooted awareness of prevailing musical developments such as, serialism²⁶, aleatoric²⁷ and electro-acoustic music.²⁸ Such were their sway that when he returned to Cuba the youthful artist

organised a conference to discuss these ground-breaking trends, otherwise known as the *avant-garde* (Eli 1986; McKenna 1988; Dausend 1990).

Following on these experiences Brouwer created *Sonograma I*, a piece for prepared piano²⁹ that was premiered at the establishment in 1961 of the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists. The piece is pioneering in that it represents Cuba's first aleatoric work and the initiation into the country of this contemporary musical style (Eli 1986, 194).

In addition to many other musical experiences, over the years Brouwer also set out to acquire in-depth knowledge of various influential writers, poets, painters, philosophers, choreographers, mathematicians, astronomers, etc., from different worlds and cultures, many of whom impacted decisively on his own creative imagination (Kronenberg 1998). Hence many of Brouwer's compositions similarly are inspired by a number of diverse persuasions from the 'non-musical' domain. Of special interest and value to the composer, are aspects like,

- the 'Golden Number', a mathematical formula also used by Bartók and other artists in their works
- spiral structures found in star galaxies, seashells, flowers, etc.
- the modern art work of painters like Paul Klee, and
- post-modern literature (*ibid.*).

IV.2.2 Guitar Works

Brouwer's initial works for the guitar incorporate much use of thematic and rhythmic elements typical of those found in traditional African ritual music (Kronenberg 2000; see Ortiz 1965). The melodic material of these works however, routinely is submerged into a more composite harmonic structure. The composer's contemporary harmonic expression, though principally tonal, is determined to large degree by the use of modern techniques like minor second dyads, tri-tone formations, and chromatic colourings. *Pieza sin titulo*³⁰ (1956) and *Preludio* (1956) particularly, employ two distinctive African rhythms - the *tresillo* and *cinquillo* (see Ortiz 1965, 277) - which sometimes are imaginatively concealed. *Fuga No.1* (1957) is a multifaceted contrapuntal work for three

voices that aptly illustrates the young artist's awareness of a formal structure and techniques from the polyphonic tradition. In addition to *Fuga*, the Brouwer's initial guitar works generally reveal instances of developmental material taking on contrapuntal textures (see Kronenberg 2000).

Tres Apuntes (1959)

Brouwer's intellectual growth in the use of advanced techniques perhaps is most clearly illustrated in *Tres Apuntes*, then his most skilled and developed solo guitar work. Set in three parts, it serves as tributes to Stravinsky, Bartók, Falla, and Debussy.³¹ The movements respectively bring into prominence specific techniques and styles closely associated with these historic composers.³² The initial part 'Del el Homenaje a Falla', illustrates the composer's admiration of, not only Falla, but also Debussy. In honouring Falla, Brouwer portrays his deep awareness and reverence of the Spanish guitar by exploring the instrument's multifarious timbral faculties. The piece also draws attention to chant elements set in the Phrygian mode, emblematic of the Moorish cultural influence on Spain. The same piece incorporates the theme of Debussy's piano prelude *La Soirée dans Grenade* (Hakes 1992). Brouwer's tribute has the *Soirée* melody making its first appearance in the bass line of the opening bars, undergoing transformation in later bars. The inception of the B-section of 'Del el Homenaje a Falla' brings back the *Soirée* theme where it is offered periodically and in fragmentary manner, interrupted by altered minor third figurations from earlier in the piece. Of note too, is that Debussy's theme is constructed on the whole tone scale, elements of which similarly characterise Brouwer's homage. Brouwer's perception of Debussy's impressionistic style furthermore is expressed in his fusion of major and minor harmonies, and use of parallel chordal progressions and pedal effects, all of which are perceptible in *Soirée* (see Debussy 1903; Vallas 1929; Austin 1966; Lockspeiser 1965; Schmitz 1966; Kronenberg 2000).

The second part of *Tres Apuntes* 'De un fragmento instrumental' honours Stravinsky (Hakes 1982) through the use and manipulation of an *ostinato* figure.

The compositional device undergoes stringent rhythmic, metrical, and melodic transformations, suggestive of the Russian composer's unique rhythmic and percussive styles (see Alvin 1998; Gilbert 1991; Taruskin 1996; Kronenberg 2000). Written in praise of Bartók (Hakes 1982), the third and final tribute 'Sobre un canto Bulgaria' employs as its structural element a tune symptomatic of Bulgarian folk song (see Hakes 1982; Kronenberg 2000), a distinguishing feature of the Hungarian composer's works (see Agawu 1984; Cooper D 1988; Wilson 1994).

Elogio de la danza (1964)

According to Brouwer his 'mission of structuring a more rigorous work' (Dumond 1988, 8), was realised in 1964 with the masterpiece *Elogio de la Danza* - Brouwer's final, most mature and admired solo guitar piece of his first stylistic phase.

Elogio de la danza employs an extensive range of advanced contemporary techniques yet it preserves some semblance of a tonal system, part of which is determined by the presence of traditional Cuban rhythms and thematic material. Quite prominent is the composer's inventive manipulation of conflicting harmonies, which are often reinforced by non-tonal strands, chromatic embellishments, and clashing major/minor combinations. The work's embryonic ideas are announced from the inception of the 1st movement, spanning a wide compass. Reaching into the high register of the instrument, the opening notes establish the tranquil, spacious mood that pervades throughout. These motivic ideas are consistently developed through prominent use of minor seconds, tri-tones, and chordal structures built on fourths and sevenths. As indicated by the composer, the work strongly alludes to the world of ballet. Accordingly it incorporates a range of delicate expression markings and timbral effects that both initiate and sustain the calming tone of the first movement.

The second movement employs an authoritative rhythmic structure underpinned by fairly brusque and defined guitar sounds. Contrasting markedly from the first movement, it is reminiscent of Stravinsky's customary use of driving off-beat

patterns (see Alvin 1998; Gilbert 1991; Taruskin 1996). The movement's robust aura is buttressed at times by *rasgado* and *golpe* sounds,³³ character features of the *flamenco* guitar (see Kronenberg 2000). Amidst the sounds of conflict, untainted E major chords periodically ring out in frank contrast, a symbolic gesture of what the composer calls, 'the law of contraries at play' (discussion).³⁴

Canticum para guitarra (1968)³⁵

Canticum para guitarra marks Brouwer's 'radical' departure from his initial writing style for the guitar (Kronenberg 1998). Though set in two contrasting movements, the work overall portrays a perpetual atonal language mixed with extensive uses of avant-garde techniques, indicative of Brouwer's recollection of the 1961 Polish Festival. Hence the piece and others of this period, incorporate much use of chromaticism, rampant atonal harmonies, new notational symbols, absolute durations, as well as imprecise rhythmic expressions (see Fritz 1974; Pincirolli 1989; Century 1991). These features characterise the composer's solo guitar works over the next ten years or so, greatly contributing to the growth of twentieth-century guitar literature.

Of his concertos³⁶ Brouwer's *Toronto Concerto* (1990) is written for arguably the most dexterous and skilled guitarist of the modern era, John Williams. Following its applauded premiere in that city with Williams as soloist and Brouwer as conductor, the remarkable encounter between conceivably the two greatest living guitar figures elicited the following report:

The final note was followed by a sustained and unanimous standing ovation lasting several minutes. After ten or twelve curtain calls, during which the artists shook the hands of nearly every member of the orchestra, they were obliged to repeat a substantial part of the middle movement. While this sort of response may have been common in the nineteenth century, it is not the usual reception of a contemporary work (Townsend 1994, 7).

Looking back on his decision to devote his creative energies to the development of Cuban socialist society, rather than relinquishing ties with his country of birth, Leo Brouwer defended his judgement, arguing that he lost the sense of 'being a millionaire in America'. He had opportunities to go there as a unique artist and amass great wealth, but instead he chooses being a musician in Cuba more than being affluent in another country through profitable prospects. In earlier years some western countries advised him to amend some of his performing programmes for commercial purposes, whereas Cuba 'does not obstruct his artistic schedules'. In that sense, Cuba offers more freedom to him than some other self-proclaimed free nations (Breukers 1977: 7-8).

Jesús Ortega is a noted Cuban composer, performer, musicologist, and Professor of Guitar, performing his duties at the celebrated *Instituto Superior de Arte* in Havana. For many years he has been a significant force in his country's musical culture and enjoys particular distinction nationally (Kronenberg 2005A). On occasion Ortega stressed the importance of the artist to be able to make a living from his craft, something his country supports. He considers Cuban artists to be fortunate, as they do not have to struggle constantly just to survive, to eat, and clothe themselves and their families. The artist in the American system he says, has to give his maximum; 'these artists have to be either the finest or of the most excellent, if they are not among the best, they will not survive'. This he feels is a stimulant, but it is an often-vicious battle that can destroy creativeness. Many fine guitarists have to work a great deal in order to maintain a good standard of living but 'in my case, if I wanted to, I could live just playing the guitar. That is why I much prefer our way of life, even though it is much more modest' (Hodel 1988, 11).

In recent times, despite severe economic restrictions, the Cuban government continues to assign special significance to the promotion and development of the arts. Cuban artists and intellectuals describe that in Cuba all areas of teaching are equally important. The official recognition and management of the School of Music at the *Instituto Superior de Arte* is the same as that given to the School of Medicine and the School of Geology. This is inherent in Cuban society and a fundamental component of the socialist conception of humanity.

As culture is nothing more than another aspect of the structure of humankind, for Cubans every aspect of the human being is of value (Hodel 1988; Kronenberg 2005a)

On the controversial subject of some artists leaving their country 'in pursuit of liberty', Cuban artists express that the person who wants to live *from* art as opposed to live *for* art, will select those options which offer an abundance of rewards. This is often the case when artists are not overtly concerned about producing high-quality or poor art. Another general perception is that the concept of liberty itself, is flexible and highly complex to fully comprehend (Kronenberg 2005a). In earlier years Ortega raised some of the questions typically posed today by those defending their homeland: 'What kind of liberty is it when I am hungry? When I have no house? I don't know. What is my liberty when I have to work 16 hours a day in order to eat? Perhaps it is better not to speak of liberty' (Hodel 1988, 10-11).

IV.3 CONCLUSION

It is readily perceptible that the Cuban government heavily subsidised the classical arts since 1959 and that it continues to do so (Kronenberg 2005A). Symphony orchestras, conservatories, dance academies, art schools, and arts education in general have significantly advanced over the course of the revolution. Cuba's world-renown Ballet Company under the direction of Alicia Alonso, and hosts of instrumental virtuosos, writers, painters, and filmmakers, including popular bands and jazz ensembles, achieved international prominence over the years (Kronenberg 2005A). Given the revolutionary government's high priority with the more underprivileged layers of society, of what significance is Western bourgeois art - an art form normally associated with the upper stratum of society - to the more unfortunate sectors of the Cuban population? There are a number of aspects contained in the official Cuban policy on classical arts in general, some of which are as follows (see Manuel 1991):

- Art-music or classical music for example, has a long history in Cuba; Cuban scholars and musicians reason that it represents a fundamental and valuable part of their national culture.

- Bourgeois culture has created much noble art and Cubans reason they should have contact with such art and the knowledge to comprehend it
- Once they grasp some conception of it they will be uninhibited to make their own aesthetic decision about it
- High-quality classical art has no intrinsic bourgeois nature and thus does not come into conflict with socialist beliefs
- Classical art has a dissimilar denotation and role in Cuban society, since it no longer serves a privileged class, but more accurately the whole Cuban nation
- The Cuban people have eradicated acute destitution, extreme disparity in income, and the worst and most explicit forms of racial and sexual prejudice. Only in such a society can the classical arts shed its previous superior standing (Manuel 1991, 225-229)

An evocative portrait of classical music in Cuban society is well exemplified by the following reflective citation:

Only in a society where racism and sexism are under control . . . can a black girl play harpsichord ‘without embarrassment or sense of betrayal,’ and whites can sing like Africans without feeling like thieves or appropriators, or dance ‘down’ without looking stupid (Keil 1987 cited in Manuel 1991, 304 - 305).

In his desire to compose for the guitar, to ‘fill the gaps’ of historical circumstance (Kronenberg 1998), Brouwer in effect creates a contemporary eloquence largely abandoned in the sphere of the instrument. In his desire to create a ‘universal language’, Brouwer, like many other artists, brings to fruition his aspiration to give expression to both his national heritage *and* *fêted* styles from far beyond his regional precincts.

¹ See also Chapter 10, which looks into Cuba’s non-racial policy. Ortiz (1940/1993) elaborates on ‘five stages’ through which Cuba’s race question has evolved.

² Poet, literary critic, and prior Director of the Center for Caribbean Studies in Havana (Sarduy and Stubbs 1993, 293)

³ From his findings Manuel (1995) deduces that since Protestantism did not greatly impact on Cuba during its colonial era, neo-African music and religion are more prevalent in Cuba and subsidiary in the British Caribbean, and why some Protestant missionaries in Haiti, unlike local Cuban Catholic priests, demand that their congregations forsake their traditional, African-influenced cultural features (Manuel 1995, 11). A further argument could be that since Cuban revolutionary measures aim to elevate and embrace African traditional cultural practices, this explains their continued dominance in Cuba in contemporary times.

⁴ Refers to field research conducted in Havana, Cuba during March 2005 as part the author's doctoral studies.

⁵ See Wang (1988), which relates that from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s literary criticism for example, encountered problems brought about by slogans like 'political criteria first, artistic criteria second'. As one of its many consequences, those who advocated these positions refused to recognise that the broad masses in fact have spiritual needs, to which art can respond (Wang 1988, 715).

⁶ See elsewhere, where Haydée Santamaría expresses a similar judgement.

⁷ Certain policies proposed during the 1960s by leaders of Cuba's armed forces, and the pro-Moscow economist Carlos Rafael Rodríguez sought to emulate measures from the Soviet Union, which often amounted to being repressive (see EG 1964/2003; Suchlicki 1972; Wright TC, 1991; Zeitlin 1970; Dominguez 1979; Karol 1970; Anderson 1997; Taibo II 1997).

⁸ Guevara does not name any specific country in his critique. It can logically be deduced that he refers to the Soviet Union, and possibly Cuba which, at irregular intervals during the 1960s also displayed dogmatic tendencies in the arts domain. The timing of his essay strongly suggests his criticism predominantly is directed at the USSR as it was during this period in his life that he came under increasing pressure for his opposition to that socialist model (see Anderson 1997; Taibo II 1997; Zeitlin 1970). In addition, extracts in the text refers outright to 'socialist realism', the cultural doctrine imposed on artists by the Kremlin which came to be condemned in much of the free-thinking world.

⁹ See below, where this aspect of Cuban cultural policy receives some attention.

¹⁰ This standpoint generates some interest and further scrutiny: firstly, in writing this essay Guevara arguably forgot about the substantial role José Martí – as literary artist and simultaneously, anti-colonialist revolutionary – played in the struggle for Cuban independence. Secondly, this particular theory is advanced, in almost the exact words, by Leon Trotsky (see *The age of permanent revolution: a Trotsky anthology*).

¹¹ Karol (1970) records that while Russell, Sartre and Ernst Fisher sent 'warm messages' as they were unable to attend due to health reasons, other intellectuals, artists, and scientists like Michel Leiris, Jorge Semprum, Max-Paul Fouchet, Arnold Wesker, Pierre Lehman, Giovanni Berlinguer, Daniel Amati, Jean-Pierre Vigier, Matta, Lam, Pignon, Miliband, Hobsbawn, Guerin, Axelos and many others, including prominent delegates from the Third World and Latin America, were present (Karol 1970, 398).

¹² As Part III points out, Guevara adopted, and publicly proclaimed Marx's idea that humanity should embrace the entire wealth of its previous development. This standpoint is of maximum importance in Cuba's current cultural policy (see below).

¹³ Discussed above.

¹⁴ See section on Santamaría below.

¹⁵ See section on Brouwer below.

¹⁶ See Part III, Chapter 11, which reflects on Guevara's perceptions of revolutionary Cuba's wide-ranging educational changes.

¹⁷ Statistical data pertaining to the School of Ballet are from the School's *Information Brochure*, obtained from its Director, Madame Ramona Súa Bello (n/d) during my visit there. Additional information is from my interview with the School's Deputy Director for Promotion and Development Maylé Benítez Ortega, as well as from my observations of practical classes and performances (see Kronenberg 2005a).

¹⁸ Also referred to by some as the 'grey period'.

¹⁹ See 'An Open Letter to Fidel Castro', *The New York Review of Books*, May 1971; José Yglesias, 'The Padilla Case', *The New York Review of Books*, July 1971; and MICLA Report 1971.

²⁰ The volume contains a selection of Santamaria's own writings and letters; interviews conducted with her by prominent journalists/writers; as well as writings by a range of significant Cuban and Latin American personalities and artists. Collectively these deal with Santamaria's life and sudden death, her prominent role as one of the revolution's most significant female guerrilla fighters, as well as her contribution to the development and growth of the *Casa de las Américas*. Unless otherwise indicated, this section has as its predominant source the Editor's (Betsy Maclean) own contributions to this book, i.e., the 'Chronology' and 'Introduction'.

²¹ See Espinosa and Brouwer's related positions, discussed elsewhere in Part IV.

²² From my discussions and communications with Jorge Martínez, a writer and scholar of Latin American politics. See also the writings and speeches of Celia Hart, Santamaria's daughter and leading figure in contemporary Cuban politics.

²³ See Theodor Adorno's related writings (Adorno 1989a-d).

²⁴ See particularly Martí's initial pronouncement on this strategy discussed in Part II.

²⁵ It was Henze especially, who enhanced Brouwer's exposure to, as well as, recognition in European art circles. Furthermore, during Henze's visit to Cuba in the late 1960s Brouwer collaborated with him on *El Cimarrón*, a piece for voice, flute, guitar and percussion that honours a figure in Cuban history (Kronenberg 1998; 2000).

²⁶ Serialism in simple terms, involves the use of a *fixed order of notes* which incorporates all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. Although the fixed order forms the basis of a composition, it lends itself to manipulation by the composer.

²⁷ Aleatoric music is a significant twentieth-century trend, also known as 'indeterminate music'. The music either cannot be forecast before performance (as its outcome is unknown beforehand) or, it is composed using chance procedures (Kennedy 1996, 13).

²⁸ Music produced by electronic means. In earlier times sounds were usually recorded on magnetic tape and subsequently exploited to produce desired effects. In contemporary times digital technology is used for sound capturing, storing, editing and manipulation.

²⁹ A piano in which the strings have been 'doctored' in a variety of ways to produce anomalous sounds. It was formulated by Henry Cowell and first demonstrated in San Francisco in 1914 (Kennedy 1996, 575).

³⁰ This is the first of the three-part work, *Tres piezas sin título*.

³¹ Though none of the *titles* of the three parts alludes to Debussy, there nonetheless is a direct reference to Debussy in the *theme* of 'Del el Homenaje a Falla', the first part of *Tres Apuntes*.

³² Credit is given to Hakes (1982) for initiating scrutiny of specific works of Stravinsky, Bartók, Falla and Debussy that greatly influenced Brouwer's choice of techniques and styles employed in his guitar works (see Hakes 1982, 129-131). Kronenberg (2000) analyses comprehensively influential trends from the European art music tradition in Brouwer's early guitar works.

³³ The somewhat peculiar arrangement of these techniques in *Elogio de la danza* has caused some difficulty amongst guitarists both of moderate and advanced standards. In this regard, Kilvington (1989, 14-15) offers helpful advice towards successfully executing this section of the work.

³⁴ A detailed analysis is being prepared for possible future publication. To my knowledge no in-depth technical scrutiny of *Elogio de la danza* has yet been published. Special thanks and recognition go to James May – retired Director of the South African College of Music - who pointed out many intervallic and harmonic relationships submerged in the work.

³⁵ The following paragraphs are adaptations of the section on Brouwer's second period works from Kronenberg 2005, *UNISA Latin American Report*, Vol. 21, No. 2.

³⁶ For more detailed information on Brouwer's guitar concertos see, Bowen 1977; Cooper 1986, 1987, 1988; Townsend 1994; Cobo 1995; Gerrits 1995.

CONCLUSION

Inasmuch as this thesis has endeavoured to illustrate the presence of various humanist values and procedures in revolutionary Cuban history, politics, and culture,¹ the conclusion draws attention to relevant theoretical perspectives on topics previously discussed. Included here also, are representations, provided through the words of Fidel Castro especially, that attest to the continuity of Cuba's humanist tradition.

Race, Racism, Capitalism and Imperialism

While the contemporary era is witnessing a renewed and powerful assault by imperialist powers on the sovereignty of non-western nations, it is of some interest to revisit some of the historical reasons given for such onslaughts. The long and odious history of slavery and the conquest of the South American continent, particularly, provide good examples of such manoeuvres (see also Part IV):

For us, Colocolo, Lautaro, and Caupolican, notwithstanding the noble and civilised garb with which they are adorned by Ercilla, are nothing more than a handful of loathsome Indians. We would have them hanged today were they to reappear in a war of the Araucanos against Chile, a country that has nothing to do with such rabble (Sarmiento cited in Retamar 1989, 24).

For Sarmiento, European colonialism represents civilization. And while Martí opposed racial hatred because he believed there are no races, others held quite opposite viewpoints. Retamar considers Sarmiento and others likeminded as

‘ferocious racists’ because they embodied the exploiting classes; Martí on the other hand is ‘radically antiracist’ because he spoke on behalf of the dominated masses (Retamar 1989, 24).

While Martí did not draw attention to the link between racial discrimination and the class structures enforced by capitalism, Guevara deduced that it is, in effect, the latter that inspire and uphold all bigoted, oppressive, and exploitative human practices. Embracing Martí’s doctrine on human equality (see Parts II & III), the Cuban régime not only condemned *racial discrimination* – a fairly general reaction to racism – but also the notion of *racial distinction*, regarded by many as a hugely progressive and scientifically-sound standpoint (see Part II). It is worth recalling that, more than a century after Martí’s death, the Declaration of the United Nations 2001 Conference Against Racism held in South Africa, ‘irrefutably affirms that Race/racism is scientifically false and morally condemnable’ (Rajasingham-Senanayake 2002, 44).²

While Guevara outwardly recognised capitalism’s role in activating and perpetuating racial oppression, McLaren (2001) argues that Marxist theory requires a thorough understanding of the wider political and economic system in which categories of differences are embedded. He elaborates that, unlike certain narratives which tend to focus on one or another form of oppression, the power of historical materialism resides in its ability to reveal

- (1) how forms of oppression based on categories of difference do not possess relative autonomy from class relations.
- (2) ways in which all oppression ensues from a class-based system.
- (3) how all forms of social oppression function within an overarching capitalist system (McLaren 2001).

Of importance to McLaren is the role performed by the *state* in upholding the status quo. He argues that, since class relations require the state as an instrument of enforcement and control, it is the state, ultimately, that moulds and arranges the

fractures that appear in human ecosystems. Put differently, it is the state apparatus that upholds and institutionalises the repercussions of class structures.³ For its endurance, the latter survives on, among other things, social splits based on ‘race’ and gender. For McLaren there is no real solution to racism as long as class society survives, inasmuch as a racially oppressed society implies the activities of a class-defending state. Nor can gender inequality be enacted away, so long as class society, with its state apparatus, demands the super-exploitation of women’s labour⁴ (cited in McLaren 2001). Since Marxist theory seeks to examine how social contradictions and fractures are (1) elevated through relations of power and privilege and (2) linked to relations of production, Marxist theory cannot ignore categories of difference.

Hence, a radical political economy framework is crucial, since various ‘culturalist’ perspectives seem to diminish the role of political economy and class forces in conceptions of ‘difference’. None of the differences manifested in cultural narratives alone, and certainly not ‘race’ by itself, can explain the massive transformation of the structure of capitalism in recent years. As McLaren argues,

The category of race – the conceptual framework that the oppressed often employ to interpret their experiences of inequality, often clouds the concrete reality of class, and blurs the actual structure of power and privilege. In this regard, ‘race’ is all too often a barrier to understanding the central role of class in shaping personal and collective outcomes (McLaren 2001).

In the South African context, Alexander N (1986) deduces that racism and racial ideology are integral to the system of racial capitalism. The latter, he writes, ‘rests upon and reinforces class exploitation’ – the source of surplus value and capital accumulation. Hence, correspondingly for him, the fight against racial discrimination cannot be detached from the struggle against capitalist exploitation. (Alexander 1986, 71). Whereas Alexander’s thesis was constructed in opposition to ‘white’ domination, institutionalised under Apartheid-capitalist rule, in the post-

Apartheid era, characterised by 'black' rule, his thesis has remained vitally relevant. It is quite perceptible that in post-Apartheid South Africa *racial stratification has remained enforced* under 'black' democratic rule, since the latter is controlled by, operates within, and perpetuates, the capitalist economic system.⁵

Alexander (1983) concludes that, since the middle classes are tied to the capitalist system, only the toiling classes can complete the democratisation process. This can only come about by doing away with the entire capitalist system. He argues that, '*a non-racial capitalism is impossible . . .*' Put conversely, non-racialism under capitalism is therefore unattainable. Alexander furthermore asserts that the struggle against racialism becomes one struggle under the general command of the working class fighting against class formations under capitalist rule. In accordance, then, with McLaren's standpoints, for Alexander struggles centred on 'class, colour and nation' converge in the overall liberation movement fighting for a classless society (Alexander 1983, 11). As it transpires, the pre-eminence of class analysis is paramount for 'understanding the structural determinants of race, gender, and class oppression'. While '*oppression is multiple and intersecting*', '*its causes are not*' (McLaren and Scatamburlo D'Annibale 2004, emphasis added).

Zeitlin (1970) concludes that human divisions based on factors like ethnicity and race have been among the most significant sources of internal political cleavage within the working classes of a number of countries (Zeitlin 1970, 66). According to him, the heterogeneous ethnic composition of the working classes of Europe, for example, often made class politics difficult and posed a major obstacle to the development of class consciousness. Not only are there simple obstacles to organisation along class lines, such as the variety of languages spoken, but such differences are often exploited 'to create or heighten ethnic and racial antagonisms, thereby splitting the working class into warring factions'. Zeitlin recalls furthermore that in his analysis of the 1848 German revolution, Marx held that the ethnic division of Germany into German and Slavonic populations constituted 'a blow against revolutionary solidarity' (*ibid.*). Engels likewise viewed the ethnic

heterogeneity of the American working class as one of the 'very great and peculiar difficulties for a steady development of a workers' party'. As Engels pointed out, 'The bourgeois need only wait passively and the dissimilar elements of the working class fall apart again' (Engels cited in Zeitlin 1970, 66).

In recent times Cuba's leader, Castro, continues to draw attention to the issue of race and racism, contending that while people used to talk about apartheid in South Africa, today 'we could talk about apartheid throughout the world, where over four billion people are deprived of the most basic rights of all human beings: the right to life, health, education, clean drinking water' (Castro 2000a, 12). Reiterating what has been deduced by Martí, and elaborated upon by Guevara, Castro pronounces that the 'wealthy world' attempts to dismiss the fact that the root causes of underdevelopment and poverty are 'slavery, colonialism and brutal exploitation' (*ibid.*). The leaders of the developing world 'look upon us as inferior nations', attributing poverty to the failure of Africans, Asians, Caribbeans, and Latin Americans, 'in other words, of black-skinned, yellow-skinned, indigenous and mixed peoples, to achieve any degree of development, or even to govern ourselves' (*ibid.*). Castro furthermore reasons that the current economic order 'imposed by the wealthy countries' is not only 'cruel, unfair, inhuman, and contrary to the inevitable course of history' but is also 'inherently racist' (*ibid.*). For him it reflects racist conceptions similar to those that once generated the Nazi holocaust and concentration camps in Europe. These, he says, are 'mirrored today in the Third World's so-called refugee camps, which actually serve to concentrate the effects of poverty, hunger, and violence. These are the same racist conceptions that inspired the hateful system of apartheid in Africa (*ibid.*).

In his 1953 Cape Town lecture BM Kies analysed in detail similar cultural questions to those Guevara would address in his 1964 piece, 'Socialism and man in Cuba'. Whereas the latter work cautions about the decline of cultural value and the subsequent growth of 'anguish' and 'alienation' in society, BM Kies offers a

detailed theoretical treatise, dealing with, among other topics, ruling classes' 'corrupt moral and cultural standards', which have come to serve as models for the whole of society (BM Kies 1953, 39). Drawing on the theories of Brian H Kirman, Kies argues that, in a social system based on 'privilege and exploitation', the resultant 'parasitism' generates in the ruling class 'a morbid psychology' (Kirman cited in Kies 1953, 39) with dire cultural consequences. For him the American cinema of his time, for instance, offers a good example of the 'depths of degradation' to which art has sunk in 20th-century capitalist society:

Pornography, sadism, greed, and violence are the basis of 90% of the films produced in the US. There arises, moreover, a whole class of secondary parasites who make no contribution to the wealth or culture of society, but exist as flunkeys and sycophants to do the bidding of the well-to-do. Gamekeepers and deer-park attendants are less in fashion today, but night-club proprietors, owners of brothels and gaming-houses, drug-peddlers and a multitude of other dependants of the rich fulfil a similar role. The warped and perverted psychology of the ruling class is reflected in the art forms which it demands; these range from straightforward obscenity to escapism and obscurantism in its most sophisticated forms (*ibid.*)

For Kies, this phenomenon is directly connected with imposed capitalist standards, a concept that represents for him the 'diseased heart of the leadership of so-called 'Western' and 'Christian' civilisation'. As he puts it,

This is the leprous psyche of the people who declare that without them Africa and India and China would relapse into barbarism. This is the measuring-rod of the people who declare that because the Russian workers and peasants took control out of the hands of the capitalists in 1918 they had thereby cut themselves off from 'Western' or 'European' or Christian civilisation and had become 'Asiatic', 'barbarous', and 'god-less' (Kies 1953, 38-39).

Kies argues furthermore that the development of 19th-century capitalism-imperialism witnessed the birth and ascendancy of the 'myth of race', which, in

turn, was used as a rationalisation for colonial plunder. Accordingly imperialist conquest was offered as ‘claim and proof’ of the inherent ‘racial superiority’ of the conquerors and the ‘inherent racial inferiority’ of the conquered, a conception that reached ‘its crudest and most bestial’ expression with the advent of Nazism’ (Kies 1943, 7).

The notion that imperialism had served ‘civilization’ by ‘clearing inferior races off the earth’, Mamdani (2002) contends, found widespread expression in 19th century European thought (Mamdani 2002). Mamdani argues that, for instance, when British prime minister Lord Salisbury claimed in his well-known 1898 Albert Hall speech that ‘one can roughly divide the nations of the world into the living and dying’, Europe was ‘soaked in the conviction that imperialism is a biologically necessary process, which, according to the laws of nature, leads to the inevitable destruction of the lower races’ (*ibid.*).

Sovereignty and Unity

Martí’s ascendancy saw the struggle for national sovereignty and continental unity and freedom being taken up with renewed fervour. Following in this tradition, Guevara conducted his struggle against neo-colonialism and the pre-eminence of capitalist relations, expressed more concretely and visibly through entrenched US imperialism. He came to realise that there can be no planning in the interests of the masses on the basis of capitalism. He saw national-capitalist economies as being closely tied to the world market, which, in turn, sought purely to dominate the continent. Guevara realised that no country which remains on the basis of capitalism can escape the law of the capitalist system, a law rooted in ‘the philosophy of plunder’.⁶ He not only understood this law and its varied implications, he fervently and actively opposed it, calling for internationalism and universal solidarity in order for oppressed nations to confront it co-operatively. The wretched conditions of the continent’s people, he maintained, ‘*have also unified us, creating a unity that must be held sacred and must be defended and strengthened.*’

The conclusion of Rose's latter-day study of Guevara's historic Punta del Este speech (Rose 2001) affirms the accuracy of his far-reaching perceptions:

Twenty-five years after the destruction of Salvador Allende and his government, after many years of brutal, violent, U.S.-backed repression in Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua – to name only a few – I submit that Che's analysis of imperialism . . . was far more clear-eyed and realistic than that of the distinguished technicians, entrenched oligarchs and liberal idealists who were gathered at that time in Punte [sic] del Este (Rose 2001).

Resistance

In his writings, Peter McLaren undertakes, among other things, to justify, and hence to endorse, Guevara's programme of armed resistance (McLaren 2001, 110). McLaren argues that Guevara was convinced that recovery of one's land from 'imperialist settlers by violent means' was a form of 'self-defense'; that, for Guevara and others, non-peaceful uprising was 'the only way to overcome human tyranny and 'Yankee imperialism' (*ibid.*). Fanon (1967) believed that the 'intuition of the colonised masses' makes them believe that their liberation must, and can only, 'be achieved by force'. Hence, he writes, 'by what spiritual aberration do these men, without technique, starving and enfeebled, confronted with the military and economic might of the occupation, come to believe that violence alone will free them? How can they hope to triumph? (Fanon 1967, 57). The answer, for Fanon, lies in the reality that there is no colonial power today which is capable of adopting the only form of contest which has a chance of succeeding, namely, 'the prolonged establishment of large forces of occupation' (*ibid.*). 'The underdeveloped peoples try to break their chains, and the extraordinary thing is that they succeed' (*ibid.*), Fanon says. For McLaren, by opposing the forces of colonisation and imperialism, Guevara also showed the masses 'that the colonial god has feet of clay' (Peter McLaren, 2001, 110; see especially also Chomsky and Clark 2005). In his reference to Fanon's acclaimed *Wretched of the Earth*, Mamdani (2002) writes that it is in Fanon

that one finds the premonition of the native turned perpetrator, of the native who kills not just to exterminate the humanity of the other, but to defend his or her own, and of the moral ambivalence this must provoke in other human beings . . .

For Mamdani (2002), Fanon sought to insist that native violence was ‘the violence of yesterday’s victims, the violence of those who had cast aside their victimhood to become masters of their lives’. Mamdani reasons, furthermore, that, when Hegel reflected on the French revolution, he (Hegel) came to the conclusion that human beings, unlike animals, were ‘willing to die for a cause higher than life’. Mamdani counsels that Hegel should have added that the human being ‘is also willing to kill for a cause higher than life’. This is how Sartre publicized Fanon’s doctrine:

Let us not waste time on sterile litanies or on nauseating mimicry. Let us quit this Europe which talks incessantly about Man while massacring him wherever it meets him, on every corner of its own streets, in every corner of the world. For centuries . . . in the name of a supposed spiritual adventure, it has been suffocating almost the whole of humanity (Sartre 1964, 136).

In the Latin American context, as we may recall, it was in the early 1880s that José Martí came to denounce preconceived concepts of ‘civilization’, which he called the ‘vulgar name’, and ‘barbarism’, which for him was but a label given by European colonial powers to the non-European way of life (see Part II).

Universal Culture

For contemporary Cuban artists, a condemnation of colonialism, imperialism, and theories of racial superiority does not automatically translate into a rejection of *the scientific, technological, and cultural advances made by all cultures and civilisations*. A vital finding of this thesis is that modern Cuban cultural theorists endeavour to promote the import and employment of meaningful cultural conquests of all nations and civilisations from across all timelines. This conception and its

practical implications were examined in Part IV. This is how Morejón (1982/1993) expresses the Cuban viewpoint on this matter:

When we mention Eurocentricism, we simply refer to a key phenomenon *in the most sadly celebrated theory, spread like a stigma and outrage, of what in reality is far removed from the great western culture* (Morejón 1982/1993, 229, emphasis added).

In his desire to create a ‘universal language’, Brouwer, like many other artists, brings to fruition his aspiration to give expression to both his national heritage *and* fêted styles from far beyond his regional precincts. Certain schools of Marxism (see Schafer 1963) argue that artists should not ignore the technical side of art, as the best art can only be created by those who have the greatest technical grasp over all its resources (Bush in conversation with Schafer 1963, 57). This idea is relatively conventional as it corresponds with historical developments in the arts. It is clear that throughout history great artists achieved their successes from drawing from previously celebrated techniques and forms. Earlier approaches to art and art works themselves become practical sources of ideas and models for succeeding artists and art movements (Meyer 1967/1994, 191-92). There are, quite observably, countless examples of artists who have drawn their inspiration and designs from past achievements. As Meyer indicates:

- Picasso’s lithograph (1949) is based on Cranach’s paintings, whereas his 1950 panel is derived from Courbet’s *Les Demoiselles des Bords de la Seine*
- Stravinsky’s *Pulcinella’s Suite* draws on the music of Pergolesi, while his *Mass* is imitative of styles from the late Middle Ages. Correspondingly *The Rake’s Progress* is derived from eighteenth-century opera styles
- Henze’s opera *The Bassarids* combines styles of Rameau, Smetana, Wagner, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Puccini, Offenbach, *and* Gilbert and Sullivan (*ibid.*, 194-204).

On occasion Cuban filmmaker Solás commented on the presence of Luchino Visconti, Pier Paolo Pasolini, the 'Cine Novo' of Brazil, and the novelist Gustave Flaubert in his creative endeavours (Del Duca 1972, 109). In a similar vein, Maclean (2003) records that Chilean painter and draughtsman, Roberto Matta, can be considered as one of the few Surrealist artists who directly took on political, social, and spiritual themes in his works. In his youth Matta travelled to Europe where he came into contact with the artistry of famous architects, Le Corbusier and Alvar Aalto, the poet, Federico García Lorca, and artists, Salvador Dalí, André Breton, and Marcel Duchamp. As a consequence, during his stay in Cuba, Matta played a role in bringing about a new artistic awareness amongst Cuban arts students (Maclean 2003, 117).

Whereas Leo Brouwer argues that, 'the universal and the particular are never at variance' (McKenna 1988), Wang (1988) employs the notion of 'typification' or 'typicality' in relation to the development from 'essence' to manifestations with 'concrete, vivid, and sensible images' (Wang 1988, 718). Wang draws on Marx, who passed judgement on works lacking any 'particular' descriptions of characters. Engels expressed a similar viewpoint: 'As for the characters in those two situations, I think you created them with your usual vivid characteristic description; each is typical and individual . . . and it should be so (Engels cited in Wang 1988, 718). Of note, however, is that both Marx and Engels underscored the dialectical relation between the total and the unique. As Wang (1988) also puts it, 'general is implied in the individual while the typical individual is the centralised expression of the general' (Wang 1988, 718).

It is relevant to note also that Cuban cultural practitioners' open-minded approach to, and espousal of, twentieth-century art music trends greatly deviates from Soviet art policies during its repressive phase. In his discussion of Zhdanov's arts theories Barry (1989) records that he

dismissed contemporary bourgeois music (presumably represented by Schoenberg and Stravinsky) as being in a state of decay and degradation, and argued that *true* internationalism would only be possible on the basis of a true understanding of national musical culture. He then cited programme music as being a characteristic of Russian classical music: the contemporary neglect of this was a matter for sharp rebuke. He poured scorn on experimentalism, whether in music or in education, believing that true innovation depended on surpassing the classics, but not by 'breaking away from laws and standards of music' (Barry 1989, 177).

In his 1942 Yanan Forum Speech, Mao Zedong advanced the view that all class societies invariably put the political criterion first and the artistic second (Wang 1988, 715). Later developments, however, illustrate that attempts to determine these priorities can result in a misinterpretation of art and severe problems for criticism. The Chinese leader furthermore opposed both works of art with an 'incorrect political view-point', and the tendency toward 'poster and slogan' which project a 'correct' political view but lack creative power (*ibid.*).

As has become the norm in the Western arts world today, already some thirty years ago, Ballantine (1974) revealed his 'growing fatigue' while searching for confirmation – 'in the musical and musicological journals, the newly published books, the lists of forth-coming books, including abstracts in many languages' – of any *new, meaningful* attempts to situate the arts, and music in particular, in relation to larger social contexts (Ballantine 1974, 10-11). Cuban artist, Ortega, expresses the conviction that in Cuba every aspect of the human being is deemed important. What then does the 'category of totality' entail? Ballantine perceives it as a view of human activity as belonging to a greater whole, which broadens both in space and time, and which thus encircles the totality of humans' social, physical, economic, historical, and cultural world. It is a resolve that no part of human interest can be perceived by extracting it out of the sum that produces its meaning, and trying to understand it in seclusion:

The part belongs inseparably to the whole: to understand either the part, or the whole, one has therefore to meet two essential conditions: one has to consider both the part and the whole together; and one has to realise that these are not static entities, but rather aspects of a social system in a process of historical change. It is impossible to divorce the spiritual side of life – including music and the arts – from the material side, or to divorce either of these from their history (Ballantine 1974, 16-17).

Ballantine cautions that we need this ‘dynamic’, and more so, ‘critical concept’ of the whole, in order to rescue ourselves from the ‘scourges of error, ignorance, and ideology’ (*ibid.*, 17). Directly related to this is the Cuban concept of a universal art, which finds expression in Lukács in the following way:

The goal of all great art is to provide a picture of reality in which the contradiction between appearance and reality, the particular and the general, the immediate and the constant, etc., is so resolved that the two converge into a spontaneous integrity in the direct impression of the work of art and provide a sense of an inseparable integrity (Lukács 1970, 34-5).

Wang (1988) contends that, while ‘typification’ is a ‘whole’, consisting of general and special features of time, society, and humankind, it is also a shift of focus from the large to the small, from the general to the particular (Wang 1988, 718): ‘[T]ypification weaves the social, moral, intellectual, and spiritual contradictions into a vivid body’, says Lukacs (cited in Wang 1988, 718).

Williams (1989) cautions that any dialogue about the connection between music and politics must be vigilant of not simply ‘mapping a political interpretation onto musical experience’ or regarding music as an ‘autonomous domain separate from other spheres of life’ (Williams 1989, 187). There remains little doubt that the Western art music tradition can easily become fouled by elitist norms, which in class societies often disregard or eliminate the underprivileged. Contemporary

Cuban arts show that the classical arts cannot be shelved on these grounds, for to do so would be to discard one of the profoundest elements of Western culture.

Cultural theorists have delved into the kinship between rational-critical and musical thought (see Adorno) and, hence, music's capacity to challenge reactionary thinking which, effectively, symbolises the effects of political oppression. The Spanish invaded Cuba for several hundred years, inflicting upon the people a long and arduous legacy of struggle. Yet, Cuban arts and culture proudly and explicitly embrace, and meaningfully portray, innate features of this convention. It is deemed appropriate to revisit a category of thinking from the anti-Stalinist, classical Marxist tradition that seeks to rationalize this manifestation.

Trotsky's vision

In the subsection 'Culture and Socialism' from *The age of permanent revolution* Leon Trotsky⁷ writes that culture, first of all, consists of 'everything that has been created, built, learnt, and conquered by man in the course of his entire history' (in distinction from what nature has given).⁸ He goes on to argue that the formation and growth of culture commenced with humanity separating itself from the animal kingdom, initiating all kinds of knowledge and talents in its struggle with nature. Though culture includes such forms as tools, machinery, buildings, monuments, the most valued part of culture is its deposit in the consciousness of humankind. Slave, feudal, serf-owning, as well as, and especially, bourgeois society, each forged a corresponding culture, different during distinct epochs and in numerous forms.

Culture served the class organization of the dominant classes of every past and present society. As such, capitalist society too has given rise to exploitative, manipulative cultural forms. For Trotsky, this does not imply that all the cultures of the past should be opposed or disregarded. Trotsky argues that culture is, in effect, *everything that has been conquered, created, built by man's efforts and which serves to enhance man's power*. But since it is not 'a matter of the individual human but of the social human, culture is a social-historical phenomenon in its very

essence, and historical society has been and continues to be class society'. Though culture manifests itself as the basis of class oppression, the working class should master all the culture of the past in order to construct socialism. 'How is this to be understood?' asks Trotsky. Technique, he writes, is not only an apparatus of class domination but also a fundamental achievement of humankind. Although it can serve as an instrument of exploitation, *it is at the same time the fundamental condition for the emancipation of the exploited*. The masses need to master the sum total of the knowledge and skill of humanity during the course of history, in order to 'raise itself up and rebuild life on *principles of solidarity*'. Mastery of past art is an essential prerequisite not only for the formation of *new art*, but also for constructing a new society, for the latter needs 'people with highly developed minds'. Hence, if the art of the past were summarily or illogically renounced, human consciousness becomes constricted.

'Culture was the main instrument of class oppression. But it also, and only it, can become the instrument of socialist emancipation' proclaims Trotsky. Trotsky reasons that, however noteworthy the accomplishment of individual proletarian artists may be, so-called 'proletarian art'⁹ 'is only passing through an apprenticeship'. This will not endure, or prove to be profoundly meaningful, because the '*proletarian regime is temporary and transient*'. For Trotsky, socialism upholds *complete freedom of self-determination in the field of art*, but after putting before the people the unqualified standard of *being for or against the revolution*.¹⁰ Finally, Trotsky predicts that on this basis

[humanity] will become immeasurably stronger, wiser, and subtler, [human bodies] will become more harmonious . . . movements more rhythmical . . . voice[s] more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above these heights new peaks will rise (Trotsky 1964, 326).

In review, it is significant also to point out Lenin's stance on this matter. Lenin's views, likewise, directly collide with the Stalinist practice of stringent control and

manipulation of the arts. In his draft resolution submitted on October 8th, 1920, entitled, 'On Proletarian Culture', Lenin expressly states

Marxism has won its historic significance as the ideology of the revolutionary proletariat because, far from rejecting the most valuable achievements of the bourgeois epoch, it has, on the contrary, assimilated and refashioned everything of value in the more than two thousand years of the development of human thought and culture (Lenin 1966, 317)

Moreover, Lenin opposed 'in most resolute manner, as theoretically unsound and practically harmful' efforts to initiate a 'prolecult' movement (*ibid.*). In support of Trotsky's thesis, Lenin rigorously advanced the belief that in the new society, culture will not be 'an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture'. He proclaimed, 'That is all nonsense'; it must be 'the logical development of the store of knowledge [human]kind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner and bureaucratic society' (Lenin 1983, 263).

Culture and freedom

Closely intertwined with cultural expression is, of course, the concept of 'freedom of expression'.¹¹ In his reply to those who condemn revolutionary Cuba's understanding and employment of this concept, Castro defends his position as follows:

I wonder if it is fair to discuss 'freedom of expression' and thought [when] the immense majority of the people are either totally or functionally illiterate. It sounds like a cruel joke, but it is much worse. Many people in the world not only lack freedom of thought but also the capacity to think, it has been destroyed . . . José Martí [said] 'To be educated in order to be free'; We would have to add a dictum: *freedom is impossible without culture* (Castro 2000a, 15).

Culture minister Prieto argues (Cantor 1999a&b) that contrary to widespread western perceptions, the country's 'lack of censorship and the excess of freedom of expression' have had the opposite effect and caused some damage: 'there's clearly an excess of characters like prostitutes, the corrupt official, the person who sells medicine on the black market'. In this light the literature could 'reach higher, obtain a much higher poetic level'. While other socialist countries did 'engender internal dissidence and heretical intellectual thought', in Cuba he states, there's been an 'officially promoted discussion', 'an artistic heresy' not prevalent in any other socialist country: 'Its an original and absolutely unrepeatable characteristic of this revolution'. In response to the assertion that Cuban art is not 'spontaneous' as that of the US for example, Prieto reasons that a regulated market exists in the US which effectively acts as a mechanism of censorship. In this process an intellectual of world standing (like Chomsky) would become 'restricted to intellectual circles', while popular icons like Madonna and Jackson become 'great fetishes'. For him and in effect the Cuban leadership, this is an 'implacable censorship operation' (Cantor 1999a&b; see Wald 2001).

Castro points out that the revolution has offered education and culture in abundance to the Cuban people, more so than in large numbers of the developed countries.¹² In this respect Cuban cultural workers and officials at the Ministry of Culture are particularly pleased with the island's past cultural achievements as well as ongoing programmes (Kronenberg 2005a). Its recent policy document (Cuban Cultural Policy Document 2004), a revision and enlargement of previous ones, highlights the contention that, in the Cuban social model, culture represents an 'indispensable instrument for the transmission of ethical values that play an important role in human development', thus confirming the revolution's initial belief in the power of culture to perform a significant social role (see Part IV). Cultural officials justify its cultural programme on the following basis:

The turn of the new millennium has been diminished by a fierce neoliberal globalization that aims, among other things, at monopolizing information and communications . . . In view of this

situation, the main form of fighting against [this] is to foster and respect national and local cultural values, based on humanistic ethics (Cuban Cultural Policy Document 2004, 6).

It is apt to recall that it was José Martí who, through his literary works, drew attention to what he perceived as the *power of ideas* to bring about change and combat all wrongs. As he proclaimed in 1891,

Barricades of ideas are worth more than barricades of stones. There is no prow that can cut through a cloudbank of ideas. A powerful idea, waved before the world at the proper time, can stop a squadron of iron-clad ships (JM 1891/1999g, 111).

In the present context, Castro expresses this belief as follows:

Does nature and the human species with it, have much time left to survive in the absence of . . . change? Very little. Who will be the builders of that new world? The men and women who inhabit our planet. Which will be their basic weapons? Ideas will be, and consciousness (Castro 1999, 61-62).

Internationalism and universal solidarity

In her comparative analysis of Guevara's internationalist stance and Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, contemporary Cuban Marxist, Celia Hart (2005), deduces that, though the socialist revolution begins on national foundations, it cannot be fully accomplished on this basis alone. She contends that the continuance of the proletarian revolution on a national base 'can only be a provisional state of affairs, even though, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows, one of long duration' (*ibid.*). In her analysis she goes on to argue that

In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably along with the successes achieved. If it remains isolated, the proletarian state must finally fall victim to these contradictions (*ibid.*).

She contends that Guevara believed that revolutionaries' enthusiasm will subside when proletarian internationalism is abandoned. In such a setting, he said

the revolution ceases to be a driving force, falling into a gentle somnolence, of which our irreconcilable enemy, imperialism, takes advantage to gain ground . . . Internationalism is a duty, but also a revolutionary necessity (cited in Hart, C 2005).

Celia Hart reiterates furthermore that, for Guevara, the revolution had nothing to do with 'national idiosyncrasy', that true socialism rules out exclusivist terms like 'our' or 'your', that he saw revolutionary theory, like the laws of physics, as a 'universal language' (Hart C 2005). When he was asked by his interrogators shortly before his execution, whether he was a Cuban or Argentine, he answered, 'I am Cuban, Argentine, Bolivian, Peruvian, Ecuadorian . . .' (cited in Anderson 1997, 735).

It is worthwhile recalling Marx's own standpoints on this topic. In his tribute, on the occasion of Marx's funeral, Engels (1961) reflected on Marx's labours in organizations not only in his country of birth, Germany, but also in Paris, Brussels, and London, and his role in the formation of 'the great International Working Men's Association' (Engels 1961, 260). Better known as the First Internationale, it was founded on 28 September 1864 at a meeting in Saint Martin's Hall, London (*ibid.*, 261). Through the workings of the Internationale, Marx and others aspired to establish the unity and common destiny – the overthrow of global capitalism and the institution of world socialism – of the workers of the world. Lafargue (1961) records that Marx did not restrict his pursuits to the country he was born in, that he considered himself '*a citizen of the world*'. He writes, 'no matter what country events and political persecutions drove him to – France, Belgium, England – *he took a prominent part in the revolutionary movements which developed there*' (Lafargue 1961, 222, emphasis added). Though these are accurate, albeit brief, *descriptions* of Marx's internationalist outlook, Marx himself *explained* this

approach in economic terms. Marx (1961) held that the ‘universal development of productive forces’ – the global economy – in itself establishes a ‘universal intercourse’ between all workers, the ‘propertyless mass’. Therefore, Marx reasoned, each nation becomes dependent on the revolutions of other nations, putting ‘world-historical, empirically universal individuals in place of local ones’, (Marx 1961, 208-9). Thus, Marx deduced that the proletariat should exist ‘world-historically’, that is as individuals whose existence is directly tied up with the creation of world history (*ibid.*, 210). Marx furthermore argued that ‘civil society’ incorporates the whole ‘*material intercourse*’ of individuals within a specific stage of the maturity of productive forces. ‘It embraces the whole commercial and industrial life of this stage and, in so far [sic], transcends the State and the nation . . .’ (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

Revolutionary Cuba’s expression of internationalism and universal solidarity today continues to receive praise and admiration from friend and foe alike (see González 2004; Othieno 2005).¹³ Underpinning this goal are deep-seated humanist beliefs and values, found also in some of the world’s major religions and conveyed in recent years as follows:

Those who do not believe in humankind, in its potential for noble sentiments, in its capacity for goodness and altruism, will never understand that we do not only hurt just for every Cuban child who suffers or dies but also for every child in Haiti, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Africa and every country in the world. It cannot be claimed that the human species has attained a maximum of consciousness while it is incapable of feeling the suffering of others. Humanity will attain its greatest consciousness and potential qualities when people feel the same sorrow for the death of any family’s child as they would for their own child or other close relative. I know that many of you . . . are Christians, and we are gathered together in a church. Well then, this is exactly what Christ preached. This is what ‘Love thy neighbour’ means to us. This explains the efforts that Cuba has made for other countries, to the extent of its capabilities (Castro 2000c, 41).

Lessons

In his paper, Rose (2001) cites Jorge Casteñeda's denunciation of Guevara, wherein he states

Relevance cannot be separated from context. Che's ideas, his life and opus, even his example, belong to the past. As such, they will never be current again . . . the main theoretical and political doctrines associated with Che – the armed struggle, the *foco* guerrilla movement, the creation of a new man and the primacy of moral incentives, the struggle for militant international solidarity – are virtually meaningless today (Casteñeda cited in Rose 2001).

'Che Guevara: the man, his struggles, his ideas' (Trotskyist International Vol. 22) however, presents an entirely different perspective:

The violent and persistent struggle to overthrow oppressive and exploiting régimes and the system of imperialist alliances that underpin such régimes is as relevant as ever. Che may have had a false strategy for seizing power but there was hardly ever, if at all, a better non-Trotskyist at pinpointing the crimes of imperialism. He told us never to make our peace with imperialism since it will strike back at us until we consign it to the grave (Trotskyist International 1997).

This thesis similarly contends that Guevara's ideas, as a whole, do *not* belong to the past. One of its aims, precisely, was to show that significant aspects of his thinking have remained current in Cuba (with a population of some 11 million), Latin America (with a combined population of over 400 million), and in revolutionary circles.¹⁴

In post-Apartheid South Africa, after more than ten years of democratic rule, citizens continue to grapple with the legacy of Apartheid ideology.¹⁵ Recent years have witnessed the rebirth of institutionalised forms of racial stratification, including national, cultural, ethnic, and tribal categories, formally established and entrenched under Apartheid rule.¹⁶ Revolutionary Cuban discourses and practices

pertaining to, for example, the creation of a 'new personality' and 'new consciousness', the significance of ethical values in both the human and social domains, non-racialism, and human equality, are considered relevant to the development of a socially cohesive, united, and genuinely non-racial South African nation (see Kronenberg 2004b, 2005b). For post-Apartheid South Africa, revolutionary Cuba's national cultural policy, in particular, presents many pertinent lessons, a topic that calls for further exploration.

Recognition

On more than one occasion Ernesto Guevara fervidly denounced the Apartheid régime. A few years after his death South Africa's road to human dignity, fraught as it still is with sustained struggle, was supported also, and most concretely, by the Cuban nation. It is with a sense of esteem that this thesis acknowledges what is often unknown to ordinary citizens and disregarded or downplayed or simply ignored by the island's adversaries:

During the 15 long years we were in southern Africa, mounting the guard against the forces of apartheid or actively fighting them, the major capitalist countries had large investments in South Africa and their trade with this racist regime amounted to billions of U.S. dollars every year When our forces left Africa, they took nothing with them but the remains of their comrades who had fallen in combat. We did not own a single square meter of land there . . . or a single screw in a factory. No Western country had shed a single drop of blood there. Only one country had done this, a small and faraway country, located 10,000 kilometers from Africa: Cuba (Castro 2001c, 92).

¹ Cuban scholars resident in Cape Town, have recently indicated to me the publication of Hart Davalos (2005) 'Marxism and Humanism: A Latin American perspective', a prospectively interesting and relevant book, which unfortunately could not be obtained in time for the writing of this thesis.

² See especially the standpoints of the Unity Movement of South Africa on non-racialism as reflected in its mouthpiece, *The Bulletin*, vol. 12, No.2, pp. 1-10; vol. 13, No.1, pp. 18-27.

³ For detailed technical discussion see also Wright 1978; Althusser 1974.

⁴ This theory corroborates perceptions that true non-racialism cannot exist in a capitalist society (see source material above). In post-Apartheid South African capitalist society, though the concept of non-racialism is enshrined in the Constitution, no official measures, especially on educational level, have been undertaken to reverse the racist beliefs and categories enforced over many years by the Apartheid establishment. In direct contrast, though, over the last five years or so, much attention has been given to the restructuring of *gender relations* insofar as there exists – arguably across all spheres of South African society – a much greater *perception* of gender equality today than in Apartheid society.

⁵ In recent years South African media have given exposure to both an increase in perceptions of concepts of race and racialism, and increased levels of poverty, crime and lowering of health and educational standards. See for example Pillay 2005; Philip 2004; Tsedu 2003; Keating 2005; Oliphant 2004; Adams 2004; Mthombothi 2004; Xundu 2006; Mbhele 2006; Xundu and Ntuli 2006; Kunnie 2005; etc.

⁶ Of note is that spokespersons of the South African ruling class often defend the growth of capitalist relations on the basis that it can bring about national poverty relief, an increase in education levels, improved social programmes, etc. In direct contrast, South African socialists, unionists, and social movements argue that the wealth generated in the country (through foreign investment for instance) has not benefited the majority of its citizens (see for example, *The Bulletin*, Vol. 13, No.2; Vol. 14, No. 3).

⁷ The passages listed below have their source on pp.305-326; all emphases are placed by this writer.

⁸ The selection of Trotsky's thesis on the arts and culture is inspired, firstly, by the fact that he represents arguably the only scholar from the classical Marxist tradition to have formulated an extensive thesis on the Marxist vision of the arts and culture in socialist society. Secondly, a resemblance seems to exist between Trotsky's cultural doctrine and that proclaimed by revolutionary Cuba's cultural leadership, including and especially, Armando Hart (revolutionary Cuba's first minister of education, who also directed the country's cultural desk since the triumph of the revolution until the 1990s) and Haydée Santamaría (Armando Hart's wife and former director of the Casa de las Americas). Though scholars like Alexander R (1973) have researched the rise and especially the decline of Trotskyism in Cuba, there appears to be a close relation between the promotion of a 'universal culture', represented for example in Leo Brouwer's mode of artistic expression, on the one hand, and, on the other, Trotsky's embrace of the cultural conquests of previous civilisations; (see also the pronouncements of UNEAC, made by Graziella Pogolotti [Koppel and Waters 1998]). Note that Santamaría denounced dogmatic, bureaucratic tendencies in the arts domain, (discussed above), which is suggestive of Trotsky's open-minded approach to artistic forms, both new and those from the past. Of special interest is the fact that Hart and Santamaría's daughter, Celia Hart, has become a regular contributor to Trotskyist-aligned socialist movements. In her speeches and writings, she mentions her coming into contact with Trotsky's writings through her father, whom, she also notes, was an admirer of Trotsky. Additionally, Celia Hart openly declares her opposition to 'socialism in one country' (a doctrine advanced by Stalin – see Deutscher 1964), promoting instead, the building of socialism internationally and the theory of permanent revolution, ideas she links also to Guevara's revolutionary endeavours (see Hart C 2003;2004a-d; 2005; see Part III). Last, it is most interesting that Castro's arts' decree – *within the revolution everything, against the revolution nothing* – is present in Trotsky's thesis as well. As was pointed out in Part III, on the occasion of his death in Bolivia, Guevara's enemy forces recovered from his belongings some books of Trotsky. In sum, all of the above factors inspire further research into prospects that revolutionary Cuban cultural policy may in essence be motivated by the ideas and theories of Leon Trotsky.

⁹ In reference to the 'prolecult movement' of the Soviet Union.

¹⁰ Note the parallel in Fidel Castro's decree in *Words to Intellectuals*.

¹¹ See Dalton (1993) which discusses aspects pertaining to revolutionary Cuba's concept of human rights. During my discussions with various Cubans (from governmental, official to ordinary workers, including Cubans currently working in Cape Town), general replies go like this: (1) an acknowledgement that excesses occurred in the past, especially during the period, 1971-1975; (2) a stress on the fact that a whole range of human rights do exist, which are all of fundamental importance to the nation. Hence, it is generally noted that rights pertaining to for example, education, health, housing, economic equality, human equality, etc., receive more attention in Cuba than in most other western countries, and (3). Cubans generally view the US blockade itself, as an infringement on some of the nation's most basic rights to survival.

¹² See Robinson (1999) for an extensive report on the effects of the US blockade and the island's many social successes despite this.

¹³ Cuba's protracted involvement in various social programmes in Africa, especially, was a main topic of discussion at the Friends of Cuba Society (FOCUS) meeting held on 27 January 2006 in Cape Town, South Africa. On this occasion the Cuban Minister of Foreign Relations and the South African Ambassador to Cuba also presented speeches, detailing Cuba's ongoing solidarity programmes with poor and developing nations (see Kronenberg 2006).

¹⁴ See Hart Davalos 1997 & 2000; Sanchez 1997; Salazar, Zuazo and Pellon 1997; Pereira 1997; Tchamlesso 1997; Dreke-Cruz 1997; Villegas 1997; Rumbaut 1997.

¹⁵ As can be expected, from many quarters it is argued that centuries of racial oppression make the elimination of racism in the country particularly difficult. While this is granted, it is a clear perception that no formal measures have been instituted to overcome the national racial consciousness brought about under Apartheid rule; further, the official revival of racial and tribal categories – in their original forms - it is argued, strengthens historically implanted bigoted ideas and practices. The Cuban model shows that, since the triumph of the revolution, various official measures were taken towards the institution of one cohesive nation, devoid of racial labelling. It was upon the establishment first of this broad, common national basis that the country promoted the development of various traditional cultural categories.

¹⁶ See *The Bulletin* Vols 12, No2; 13, No. 1; 13, No. 2; 13, No. 3; 14, No. 1; 14, No.3; New Unity Movement 21st Annual Conference Paper 2006.

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