



*Text vs Text.
The Materiality of the Archive or the
Questioning of Capitalism and Violence in
Hugo García Manríquez's
Documentary Poetry¹*

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ABSTRACT: Within the recent “archival” and “documentary” turns experienced in the arts, this essay examines the interaction of documents and poetry in Hugo García Manríquez’s documentary work. Focusing on *Anti-Humboldt. Una lectura del Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte* (2014), a bilingual artifact composed entirely of selectively extracted NAFTA passages, the poem reveals the treaty’s contradictions: historically, Mexico’s full immersion into neoliberalism; socially, the intensification of its diasporic condition. By resemanticizing the document, the work exposes these violent tensions, enacting a social and political resistance that repoliticizes poetic language while confronting readers with a textual battlefield that mirrors the rift between society, capital, and language.

KEY WORDS: Mexican contemporary poetry; documentary poetry; archive as materiality; Hugo García Manríquez; *Anti-Humboldt*

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When the psychohistory of a people is marked by ongoing loss, when entire histories are denied,
hidden, erased, documentation can become an obsession.
(hooks 59)

DOCUMENTARY POETRY: A QUESTIONING OF REALITY THROUGH REALITY

In the first decade of the 21st century, American art critics Hal Foster and Mark Nash respectively affirmed the importance of the “archival turn” and the “documentary turn” in 21st-century visual culture. Since then, various studies have begun to explore the use of the document as an artistic resource, adopting transdisciplinary approaches that have extended to literature, including theater and film. In this context, the “documentary turn” continues to manifest as a massive return of archival documents and other types of documents—chronicles, ethnographic reports, oral testimonies, audiovisual content, and materials from social media activism—into the text through techniques such as quotation, collage, or juxtaposition, among others. This kind of writing has become part of a broad and renewed debate on the aesthetic implications of the relationship between reality and its representation, prompted by the decline of postmodernism and the new challenges of the digital age (Shields; Goldsmith).

Most analyses of this aesthetic phenomenon have favored an interpretation that emphasizes a renewed attachment to realism (Shields; Ferraris *Manifesto*). However, within the European context this attachment has also been questioned in favour of a reconsideration of literature as a form of social practice (Benvenuti; Cercas). In the specific field of Latin American literature, the works that explicitly engage with documents are countless, spanning narrative, poetry, theater, and cinema. However, only in recent years have the first systemic studies on the phenomenon of the documentary begun to appear, which have mostly remained within the scope of national literatures (Segade; Klein; Quintana and Coudassout-Ramírez; Dorfman). Only in the last few years there has been a first approach that proposes a Latin American reading of the documentary phenomenon—rather than a strictly national one (Areco *et al.*; Estrada and Alicino). From a systemic perspective, debates on documentary writing in Latin America emerged in the late 20th century. Mabel Moraña (113) highlights the “documentalist” turn in testimonial literature, which channels denunciations of major events through subaltern voices, either directly or mediated by writers. Julio Rodríguez-Luis classifies 20th-century narratives by their relation to documents and narrative voice. By the early 21st century, Karl Kohut (9-21) explores the philosophical contradictions of “new realisms,” contrasting them with the “boom” and “post-boom,” and framing them not as naïve realism but as a response to heterogeneous realities. Cristina Rivera Garza extends this discussion with her notion of “realismo problema” (*Los*



muertos 49), which questions classical realism and seeks to narrate the real through uncertainty, focusing less on events than on what vanishes behind the lens.

Although the relationship with documents and archives has always been a prerogative of literature, the novelty of the documentary writing that has developed in the 21st century lies in the way literary texts do not merely incorporate the information contained in the documents (Rivera Garza *Los muertos*). The document is not just an external support from which a story is extracted and then reworked into lyrical, fictional, or nonfictional forms—it interacts within the text as a materiality, as a site of enunciation. Cristina Rivera Garza's proposals help shift the focus of the discussion about documentary writing from the purely factual to a questioning of the concept of authorship—and therefore authority—aligning with Josefina Ludmer's category of "literaturas postautónomas", and reading the documentary as a form of disappropriation of the author's control over the voice of the other, as the possibility of a communal form of writing (Rivera Garza, *Los muertos* 114). Despite the wide range of definitional possibilities, perhaps all these perspectives are related to the extent to which fiction proves permeable to concrete social issues, through which fiction manages to question and surpass a merely mimetic pact, as Mabel Moraña already suggested (119).

This opens up not only aesthetic questions—about how documents are used to create a work of art—but also ethical and political ones. The aim is no longer simply to question the document as a bearer of verisimilitude, or to engage in taxonomic discussions about how closely the text aligns with reality. Rather, it is about problematizing the writer's relationship with the other forms of authorship that emerge from the document itself (Rivera Garza, *Los muertos* 119). This particularity of documentary writing also marks the distinction between testimonial and documentary forms. As Cristina Rivera Garza explains in *Escrituras geológicas*, by working with material supports mediated by multiple imaginative agents—who preserve, select, manipulate them, authors included—documentary writing aims to move beyond stories told solely from a testimonial "I" for which the writer takes responsibility (185-187). In this sense, building on Rivera Garza's theories, Roberto Cruz Arzabal has recently argued that, rather than focusing solely on the textual traces of texts within other texts—what is commonly called intertextuality—the poetics of documentality should be understood as the artistic formalization of social memory, materialized in inscriptions and preserved in archives ("Escritura", 33).

If we move the attention to poetry, especially testimonial and political poetry, in its complex relationship with testimony, memory, and fiction, it has always played an intriguing role, moving constantly between the testimonial "I" and its poetic figuration. We could refer, for example, to the poetry of Raúl Zurita, Nicanor Parra, Ernesto Perlongher, Ernesto Cardenal as well as César Vallejo, among others. In 21st-century Latin American poetry, there is a widespread tendency to incorporate into the text not only the testimonial "I", but also the contradictory materiality from which it originates (document) or the mediated place where it ends (archive). This isn't entirely new—literature often works this way—but rather a phenomenon we can already see in certain



20th-century poetic works. An important example is *Purgatorio* by Raúl Zurita, where the poet not only verbalizes the pain of a body under dictatorship but inscribes it materially by inserting his electrocardiogram. Here poetic language and document merge into a poem-document, a bodily memory of pain.

In poetry, debates on the documentary are intensifying across inter- and transnational contexts. Platforms such as the *Poetry Foundation* and *Jacket2* have hosted discussions by Juliana Spahr, Mark Nowak, Kenneth Goldsmith, and Charles Bernstein, in indirect dialogue with Raúl Zurita, Cristina Rivera Garza, and Sara Uribe. The document's role is also reconsidered amid technological and virtual challenges to authorship and authority. Documentary poetry now emerges as a key site for probing the reconstruction of traumatic memories, individual or collective, within contexts of violence. The interaction of document and poetic text produces an aesthetic short circuit that complicates poetry's social and political agency. Despite its growing significance, documentary poetry still raises theoretical questions about its ontological status and the risk of reality's saturation. To address this, we must ask: what is poetry? Traditionally seen as intimate and non-mimetic, poetry has nonetheless long had a documentary function, as Joseph Harrington argues in his essay "Docupoetry and Archive Desire". From Pope to Dryden, poetry has documented collective experience, though Romanticism shifted emphasis to individual emotion. Attempts to merge both aims still face resistance, as shown by the recurring question posed to Mark Nowak: "Your work is political, but what about the art of poetry?" (Harrington).

The tension between individual and collective has become central to an international debate on new forms of collectivity. In 2022, Italian poets Lorenzo Mari and Gianluca Rizzo launched "Poesia, prima persona plurale" on the blog *Le parole e le cose*, engaging with international poets like Charles Bernstein, Paul Vangelisti, Nathalie Quintane, and Rachel Lamoureux on poetry's social value beyond lyricism. Mari and Rizzo argue that identifying poetry solely with lyricism renders it elitist or inaccessible, reflecting a reality of atomization, isolation, and failed social structures. Bernstein describes contemporary poetry as existing in "constellations" of voices. Similarly, in an interview with Daniel Borzutzky, Raúl Zurita asserts that poetry reveals the collective acts against individuals, giving voice to what statistics and history conceal. Documentary poetry thus emerges as a constellation of autonomous voices, whose agency continues beyond the page.

As an echo to Zurita's point of view, in 2018 Mexican poet Hugo García Manríquez published *LCMN* (read *Lo Común*), an experimental poem fitting the documentary aesthetic. It explores colonial and geopolitical violence in Mexico City and its literary institutions, combining landscape and artwork descriptions with data on the "war on drugs" (2006-2019) and the ruins of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, a key cultural site in terms of intellectual institution. On the back cover and within the poem itself, the author writes laconically:



UN POEMA ES

P A R T E

DOCUMENTAL

P A R T E

INFIERNO

Fig. 1. Hugo García Manríquez, LCMN, back cover

In line with Zurita, at least in intention if not in textual form, Hugo García Manríquez highlights the relationship between aesthetics and documentality, always situated within the strong tradition that binds poetry to society.

While the use of documents in Latin American poetry is not new, 21st-century documentary poetry innovates by engaging documents metafictionally, treating them in their full materiality rather than merely as sources of information. It uses documents to interrogate the relationship between poetry and society. Adorno's essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society" helps clarify this: lyric poetry, though expressing individual voice, gains its social relevance through aesthetic form. Social content must be mediated through subjectivity, and the most personal elements of lyric poetry are what make it social. This mediation occurs through language, which is both a social product and a vehicle for concepts, so that lyric work always expresses subjective responses to social antagonism. (Adorno 45). If lyric poetry already contains within itself the measure of its indissoluble relationship with society, it is pivotal to ask what happens when poetic expression is not only the language of individuality in opposition to collectivity, but the language of many individualities that together form a collectivity. And what does the language of these individualities signify when it enters the text through a materiality that is itself mediated, such as that of the document?

Within this framework, this essay examines the material use of the document in García Manríquez's *Anti-Humboldt. Una lectura del Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte* (2014), a bilingual "artifact" built entirely from selectively extracted passages of NAFTA. Interpreted through erasure (Ballester and Higashi), oppositional documentation (Padilla), and the afterimage (Victor), the poem turns the treaty into artistic material to contest neoliberal capitalism and its links to social violence. Although documentary poetry shares formal strategies with conceptual poetry, the latter often relies on a depoliticized gesture of writing, whereas *Anti-Humboldt* re-politicizes that gesture through erasure (Huerta; Padilla). This paper explores what contemporary documentary poets reveal, not only through the poem's unavoidable aesthetic shaping,



but also in how they engage others' voices, the ethics of appropriating documents or testimonies, and the possibility of the poem itself becoming a document.

ANTI-HUMBOLDT: DOCUMENT MATERIALITY OR THE POETICAL QUESTIONING OF CAPITAL AND SOCIAL VIOLENCE

Hugo García Manríquez's *Anti-Humboldt* addresses the link between politics and violence in Mexico, focusing on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, 1994), later replaced by USMCA.² The poem highlights its harmful social effects, as NAFTA marked both Mexico's immersion in neoliberalism and the intensification of its diasporic condition (García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 73). This paper does not adopt a nihilistic view of Free Trade Agreements, since such extremes risk masking institutional responsibility.³ Rather, following researchers at the Carnegie Endowment, we argue NAFTA was neither the disaster critics feared nor the cure supporters promised. For rural families, however, it accelerated liberalization without adequate protections, leaving the most vulnerable to face severe economic, social, and environmental pressures (Papademetriou *et al.*). NAFTA's impact must also be read alongside the 1994-peso crisis and the Zapatista uprising, an indigenous protest from Chiapas.⁴ One of its most troubling outcomes was the deepening of regional inequalities between north and south, despite early hopes that market forces would reduce them (Rouquié).

The documentary work of the Mexican poet Hugo García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt. Una lectura del Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte*, highlights the contradictions that this document has represented. The author published the work in 2014, at a particularly difficult moment in Mexico's history, twenty years after the Treaty came into force and two months after the terrible tragedy of the 43 Ayotzinapa students. As already pointed out, it is an "artifact", as the author himself defines it (García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 73), constructed solely from the text of NAFTA, whose entirety remains visible in a spectral background, while highlighting in bold certain parts (Fig. 2), which constitute its counter-text (Cruz Arzabal, "Writing" 251).

² Between 2017 and 2019, NAFTA was renegotiated, leading to the USMCA in June 2020. The process occurred amid controversial migration policies promoted by the Trump administration, which repeatedly threatened Mexico with NAFTA's abandonment over migration, drug trafficking, and smuggling. This renegotiation reflected a broader international shift toward nationalism, exemplified by Brexit (Puyana 2020).

³ Mexico has long crafted a narrative around narco-trafficking, casting the State as victim of a parallel power while concealing its own complicity. Many accept this view, yet after the disappearance and murder of the 43 Ayotzinapa students by the army, it can no longer be sustained (Zavala 2018).

⁴ On January 1, 1994, as NAFTA took effect, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), with a strong Maya presence, rose in arms, occupying cities and blocking key routes, including those to Palenque. Their uprising exposed a long-ignored social reality in Mexico and demanded land rights and anti-poverty policies for rural communities (<https://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/1994/03/01/al-pueblo-de-mexico-las-demandas-del-ezln/>). Accessed 02 Mar. 2026.



SEGUNDA PARTE
COMERCIO DE BIENES
Capítulo III

Trato nacional y acceso de bienes al mercado

Artículo 300. Ámbito de aplicación

Este capítulo se aplicará al comercio de bienes de una Parte, incluyendo:

- (a) los bienes comprendidos en el Anexo 300-A, "Comercio e inversión en el sector automotriz";
- (b) los bienes comprendidos en el Anexo 300-B, "Bienes textiles y del vestido"; y
- (c) los bienes comprendidos en otro capítulo de esta Parte; salvo lo previsto en tales anexos o capítulos.

Fig. 2. Hugo García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 17

Additionally, the book is published simultaneously in Mexico and the USA through the collaboration of independent publishing houses Matadero and Litmus the same day.

In this peculiar form of poetry, the document becomes the literary text itself. The use García Manríquez does of its spatial-temporal ambiguity in the reading of reality, is suited to questioning the exhausted categories of original creative genius or exclusive authorial creation as already discussed in the frame of Josefina Ludmer's "postautonomous literatures", Marjorie Perloff's "unoriginal genius", Kenneth Goldsmith's "uncreative writing", as well as Cristina Rivera Garza's "disappropriative writing". The questions we pose are thus: what is the document in relational terms? Can it speak? And if it can, what voice or rather, what voices does it contain? How is it possible to free and reveal them? How can we address the danger that appropriating a document, especially to account for someone else's pain, might itself constitute an act of power over the other? Who or what gives me the right to speak on behalf of the other? Documentary poetry arises to answer these questions and to re-establish a strong bond with society.

Before delving into the thematic aspects that leads us toward the analysis of how the materiality of an institutional document is violated through poetry, it is important to emphasize that the political-social value of a work is measured not only from the text itself but also, and above all, from what surrounds it, from all that is paratext (Genette), which is its field of action and relates not to what the text is, but to what the text can do.

The field of action of this book is the border space, the space of the diaspora, materially constructed through its bilingual nature, that is, a text in Spanish and English, and to move from one language to the other, one must materially cross the border between the two countries (Fig. 3).

The photograph appears both on the cover of the book and inside the text as a visual border we have to cross moving from the Spanish to the English text and vice versa. As various critics have already pointed out (Huerta; Cruz Arzabal, "Writing"; Guillén), the whole poem, including its paratext, operates within the category of spectropolitics, that is what Jacques Derrida, in *Specters of Marx*, called "hauntology". According to the French philosopher, the category of the specter is the result of



unresolved mourning that pertains not only to an individual but also to an ideology and the type of collective narrative associated with it. An example is postmodernity, which, according to Derrida, is governed not by ontology but by hauntology (Derrida 31), where the effort to exorcise ghosts fuels conspiratorial narratives. Spectropolitics or spectropoetics thus emerges as a counter-discourse that lets the dead haunt us in their invisibility. In this light, the photograph—and the poem—play on what is shown, a simple highway junction, and what is hidden yet always present: the tide of “indocumentados” who by night fill these spaces in their desperate attempt to cross the border.

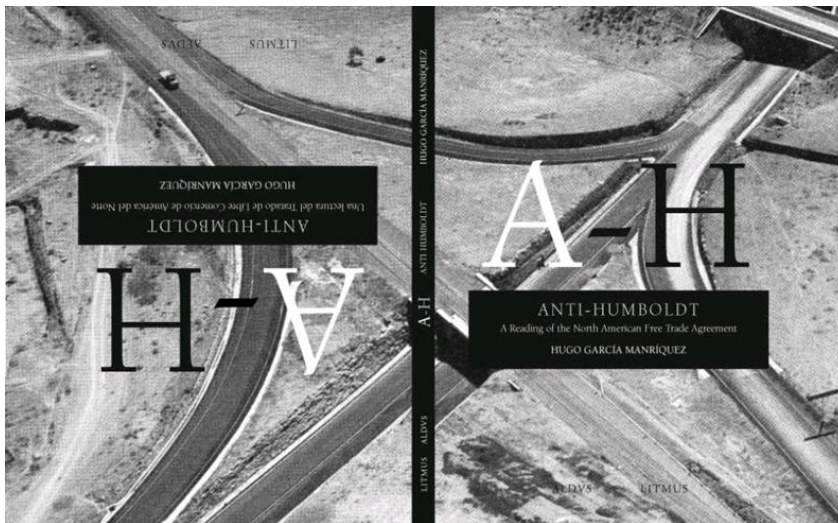


Fig. 3. Cover picture: *Memoria de Labores*, 1964-1970. Secretaría de Obras Públicas (1970)

As the author himself explains, the book in its materiality is conceived as a contact zone between Mexico and the United States, “un acto de escucha al interior de un acto de escritura” (García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 75). This act of listening incorporates the voices of migrants who otherwise have none, both within the document and in lived reality. For this reason, the author describes the interventions into the materiality of the institutional document as *imantaciones*, something that can be perceived as present yet ghostly (Guillén 4). Various critics have already highlighted how the category of spectropolitics works in *Anti-Humboldt* as a political agent in activating the reader’s attention on the bodies that have disappeared from the legal document (Padilla; Huerta; Cruz Arzabal, *Writing*; Magaña GCantón; Guillén). Building on what has already been said, my aim in this paper is to examine the role of the specter not only in terms of what it recalls or reveals in the present, but also in terms of its function in relation to the future.

Once we cross the threshold of the book and delve into its content to answer those questions, the peculiar form of the poetic text immediately confronts us with one of the targets of poetic resistance, the concept of the “Harmonized System”, an international model for the designation and codification of goods (about 5,000



categories of products organized in a hierarchical structure), developed by the World Customs Organization) (Fig. 4).

CAPÍTULO II DEFINICIONES GENERALES

Artículo 201. Definiciones de aplicación general¹

1. Para los efectos de este Tratado, salvo que se especifique otra cosa:
 - bienes de una Parte significa los productos nacionales como se entienden en el Acuerdo General sobre Aranceles Aduaneros y Comercio, o aquellos bienes que las Partes convengan e incluye los bienes originario de esa Parte;
 - Código de Valoración Aduanera significa el Acuerdo relativo a la Aplicación del Artículo VII del Acuerdo General sobre Aranceles Aduaneros y Comercio, incluidas sus notas interpretativas;
 - Comisión significa la Comisión de Libre Comercio establecida de conformidad con el Artículo 2001(1), "La Comisión de Libre Comercio";
 - días significa días naturales, incluidos el sábado, el domingo y los días festivos;
 - empresa significa cualquier entidad constituida u organizada conforme al derecho aplicable, tenga o no fines de lucro y sea de propiedad privada o gubernamental, incluidas cualesquiera sociedades, fideicomiso asociaciones ("partnerships"), empresas de propietario único, coinversiones u otras asociaciones;
 - empresa de una Parte significa una empresa constituida u organizada conforme a la legislación de una Parte; empresa del Estado significa una empresa propiedad de una Parte o bajo el control de la misma, mediante derechos de dominio;
 - existente significa en vigor a la fecha de entrada en vigor de este Tratado;
 - medida incluye cualquier ley, reglamento, procedimiento, requisito o práctica;
 - nacional significa una persona física que es ciudadana o residente permanente de una Parte y cualquier otra persona física a que se refiera el Anexo 201.1;
 - originario significa que cumple con las reglas de origen establecidas en el Capítulo IV, "Reglas de origen";
 - persona significa una persona física o una empresa;
 - persona de una Parte significa un nacional o una empresa de una Parte;
 - principios de contabilidad generalmente aceptados significa las normas generalmente reconocidas o a las que se reconozca obligatoriedad en territorio de una Parte en relación al registro de ingresos, gastos, costo activos y pasivos, divulgación de información y preparación de estados financieros. Pueden incluir lineamientos amplios de aplicación general, así como criterios, prácticas y procedimientos detallados;
 - Secretariado significa el Secretariado establecido de conformidad con el Artículo 2002(1), "E Secretariado";
 - Sistema Armonizado (SA) significa el Sistema Armonizado de Designación y Codificación de Mercancías, y sus notas y reglas interpretativas, en la forma en que las Partes lo hayan adoptado y aplicado en su respectivas leyes de impuestos al comercio exterior;
 - territorio significa, para cada Parte, el territorio de esa Parte según se define en el Anexo 201.1;
 2. Para efectos de este Tratado, toda referencia a estados o provincias incluye a los gobiernos locales de esos estados o provincias, salvo que se especifique otra cosa.
- Anexo 201.1
Definiciones específicas por país
Salvo que se disponga otra cosa, para efectos de este Tratado: nacional también incluye:
 - (a) respecto a México, a los nacionales o ciudadanos conforme a los Artículos 30 y 34 de la Constitución Política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, respectivamente; y
 - (b) respecto a Estados Unidos, a los "nacionales de Estados Unidos", según se define en las disposiciones existente de la Immigration and Nationality Act de Estados Unidos;

Fig. 4. Hugo García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 15



From a semantic perspective, the quoted lines hinge on the repeated use of the verb “significa”: “Días significa días naturales / significa / tenga o no fines / Una parte significa / Estado significa / [...] persona significa una persona / significa” (*Anti-Humboldt* 15). This repetition is not merely lexical but structurally generative: the poem is built almost entirely on anaphoric recurrence, which produces an insistent, circular syntax. The effect is obsessive, ritualized, and cumulative, recalling the formal logic of religious litany or prayer—an analogy already noted by critics (Magaña Gcanton 213). At the level of poetic form, anaphora here functions as a mechanism of semantic pressure rather than clarification. Each reiteration of “significa” promises definition but instead exposes the tautological emptiness of legal language, in which words refer only to themselves. The counter-text produced by the poem thus stages an almost hysterical attempt to extract intelligible meaning from institutional discourse. Through repetition, the poem dramatizes the failure of the law to articulate a meaningful relationship between abstract juridical categories, the utilitarian logic governing commodities, and their concrete effects on embodied subjects within a political space—the *Estado*—that ostensibly exists to protect their dignity. In this sense, the violence the literary text inflicts on the document is formal as much as semantic: by isolating, repeating, and rhythmically overexposing legal language, the poem reveals a kind of linguistic madness internal to the law itself. Meaning is not destroyed but unmoored, returning to the reader as a series of words set loose from their normative function. Just a few lines later, the poem itself conveys the very impact of the law upon the territory (Fig. 5):

Cada una de las Partes autorizará la importación libre de arancel aduanero a muestras comerciales de val insignificante y a materiales de publicidad impresos, sea cual fuere su origen, si se importan de territorio de o Parte, pero podrá requerir que:
(a) tales muestras comerciales se importen sólo para efectos de levantamiento de pedidos de bienes de otra Parte de otro país que no sea Parte, o que los servicios suministrados desde territorio de otra Parte o desde un país que sea Parte; o
(b) tales materiales de publicidad impresos se importen en paquetes que no contengan más de un ejemplar de impreso, y que ni los materiales ni los paquetes formen parte de una remesa mayor.

Fig. 5. Hugo García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 20

The semantic vacuity of legal language in García Manríquez’s work precipitates a symbolic disintegration not only of the state but of material reality itself, where even commodities are stripped of specificity and reduced to abstract, self-referential units: “insignificante / territorio de otra Parte o desde un país que sea Parte; / materiales / que no contengan más / materiales ni / una remesa mayor” (20). The fragmentation of these lines—through enjambment, syntactic thinning, and the scattering of legal terms—mirrors this process of dematerialization, formally enacting the law’s inability to apprehend lived reality. What is at stake is not merely a critique of the documentary authority of legal texts, but a sustained interrogation of their language as such: a language that gestures toward the world while ultimately failing to name it. Positioned against the historical backdrop of escalating violence in Mexico during Felipe Calderón Hinojosa’s presidency (2006–2012), García Manríquez’s poem emerges in the wake of a 2010 United Nations report highlighting the insufficiency of international legal



categories to account for specific forms of violence. The poem inhabits this lexical and conceptual void—not by offering new definitions, but by dwelling in the interstices of a language that renders violence both omnipresent and unnameable. In doing so, it exposes the structural limits of juridical discourse while performing a poetics of absence and formal fragmentation. As one scrolls through the many pages of the document and its manipulations—which return to us an alienated text—the reader ultimately confronts its central paradox: that what they are reading spectrally invokes the great absence of history, upon which everything depends—human capital, the bodies of workers on both sides of the border. Yet the manipulated text does more than simply reveal human capital as a specter. While the background text lingers in ghostly form, the highlighted passages return to us disintegrated bodies (Fig. 6).

8452.21.99 Las demás (máquinas de coser, automáticas)

8452.29.05 Máquinas o cabezales de uso industrial, de costura recta, de aguja recta y un dispositivo de enlace de hilos rotativos y oscilante, doble respunte, cama plana, y transporte únicamente

8452.29.06 Máquinas industriales, aparte de aquellas comprendidas en las fracciones

8452.29.99 Las demás (máquinas de coser, no automáticas)

8452.90.99 Las demás (partes para máquinas de coser)

8471.10.01 Máquinas automáticas para procesamiento de datos, analógicas o híbridas

8471.20.01 Máquinas automáticas para procesamiento de datos, numéricas o digitales, que lleven en un gabinete común, por lo menos, una unidad central de procesamiento, una unidad de entrada y una de salida

8471.91.01 Unidades de procesamiento, numéricas o digitales, aunque se presenten con el resto de un sistema, incluso con uno o dos de los siguientes tipos de unidades: en un mismo gabinete: unidades de memoria, unidades de entrada y unidades de salida

8471.92.99 Las demás (unidades de entrada o salida que lleven unidades de memoria en un mismo gabinete, incluso presentadas con el resto del sistema)

8471.93.01 Unidades de memoria, incluso presentadas con el resto del sistema

8474.20.01 Quebrantadores y trituradores de dos o más cilindros

8474.20.02 Quebrantadores de mandíbulas y trituradores de muelas

Fig. 6. Hugo García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 25

A few pages later, the disintegration of bodies mirrors the disintegration of Mexico as a nation, as well as of the United States across the border: “Estados Unidos / un país que no es” (41). Here, the alienated interplay between poetic work and document unfolds not merely in content but through form: line breaks, spatial fragmentation, and typographical disruptions enact the instability the poem describes. This aligns with Christian Marazzi’s concept of the semio-capital category, in which language operates as both medium and force within economic systems. Financial markets, Marazzi argues, rely on language not only to transmit data but as a performative engine shaping reality (24). Similarly, the poem enacts one of the deepest paradoxes of human existence: the body—our body—is constituted “in language” and in relation to others (29). The lineation, spacing, and fragmentary syntax give material weight to this paradox, revealing how the union of life and language becomes a domain appropriated by economic and financial logics (29). In this context, the private is rendered public, and the public is recoded as economic (41). As Roberto Cruz Arzabal observes, neoliberal capitalism functions as a semiotic operator across multiple levels of reality (“Escritura”



43), suggesting that cultural production cannot always claim autonomy from these forces. *Anti-Humboldt*, then, positions itself in the tension between form and politics: its poetic structure, through embodied textuality, becomes a site of potential critique and activation (Cruz Arzabal, "Escritura" 43).

In this context, the materiality of the document becomes central. As Maurizio Ferraris notes, every document is ambiguous: it not only represents facts but also inscribes social acts that shift across space and time (Ferraris, *Documentalità* 301). Some documents are performative, producing political effects, especially institutional ones like NAFTA. The poetic intervention in the Treaty restores what is absent, such as human capital, while engaging with the document's temporal and spatial ambiguity. Literary use of the document's materiality does not simply reproduce referentiality but enacts the "document effect" (Klein 5), prompting reflection on the specter's function in relation to the future. This leads us to the ultimate questions: What does the specter tell us about our responsibility toward the future? With what voice does it speak in a poem that seems to adopt a language that is almost hysterically impersonal?

Some years ago, Ignacio Padilla pointed out that if there is a voice in *Anti-Humboldt*, this should be an external voice, something that comes from outside the body, not from its very inside (55). However, if we delve into the poem, we can see that the "I" speaks out, very loud and clear (Fig. 7):

7. No obstante lo dispuesto en el párrafo 6, México permitirá que una empresa de la industria terminal que fabrique vehículos automotores en México antes del año modelo 1992 utilice como porcentaje, para efectos del párrafo 5 cociente del valor agregado nacional de proveedores (VANp) entre el valor agregado nacional total (VANt), que la empresa alcanzó en el año modelo 1992. La empresa podrá utilizar tal cociente en tanto sea menor que porcentaje aplicable que se especifica en el párrafo 6. Con el fin de calcular el cociente para el año modelo 1992 deberán incluirse en el cálculo del valor agregado nacional de proveedores (VANp) las compras realizadas por la empresa de la industria terminal a las maquiladoras independientes que hubiesen llenado los requisitos para ser consideradas como proveedor nacional, si los párrafos 2, 3 y 4 de este apéndice hubiesen estado en vigor, en los mismos términos que las autopartes adquiridas de cualquier otro proveedor nacional o empresa de la industria autopartes.

8. El valor de referencia anual de una empresa de la industria terminal será:

(a) para cada uno de los años de 1994 a 1997, el valor base correspondiente a tal empresa de la industria terminal más un porcentaje no mayor de 65 por ciento de la diferencia entre sus ventas totales en México en el año correspondiente y su valor base;

(b) para cada uno de los años de 1998 a 2000, el valor base correspondiente a tal empresa de la industria terminal más un porcentaje no mayor de 60 por ciento de la diferencia entre sus ventas totales en México en el año correspondiente y su valor base; y

(c) para cada uno de los años de 2001 a 2003, el valor base correspondiente a tal empresa de la industria terminal más un porcentaje no mayor a 50 por ciento de la diferencia entre sus

Fig. 7. Hugo García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 28

The "I" that suddenly erupts in the poem emerges from the very body of the spectral text. As David Colón has explained, this voice seeks to communicate with us from the other side, like in a séance (52). In this sense, the use of the "I" resonating from within the specter itself assumes a specific semiotic function. Drawing on the theories of the Italian semiologist Cristina Demaria, the primary effect of representation is not only to restore reality through various expressive means, but also to reveal the potential of "making present" what is absent by selecting forms and forces capable of generating



new frameworks of meaning (157). In this regard, the staging of the clash between the reality of the document and its literary manipulation becomes a textualization of the pervasiveness of language in contemporary modes of producing and selling goods, which opens an essential rift between commodities and human capital (Marazzi 41). It semiotizes social and productive relations, where workers' private lives have become public and economic, thus increasingly exposed to the risk of social exclusion (41).

This is the linguistic gap that poetry intercepts through the “usos del espectro” (García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 52), which intervene not only in the spatiality of the text but also in its temporality. The spectral bodies of migrants that appear within the poem—suddenly also speaking through the “I” released from the document itself—acquire a specific political and social function, not only in relation to the social damage produced by NAFTA, but also in articulating a collective imagination of a better future. To clarify this point, I turn to the category of “haunting” as theorized by the U.S. sociologist Avery Gordon. Her essay *Ghostly Matters*, first published in 1997 and recently reissued with a new introduction in Italy in 2022, addresses the complex question of racial capitalism, whose very nature lies in what it continually seeks to negate: war, enclosures, disappearances, new forms of social control, and so on—a reality closely tied to the conditions shaped by NAFTA. Within this framework, the function of the ghost, especially when it emerges from a literary text, is that of a real presence: a presence that refuses to vanish because it demands what is owed to it, our attention (Gordon 20). In this sense, what *Anti-Humboldt* ultimately does is teach us how to live with the specter, continually enacting a transformative recognition—one that, in this case, is performed through the artistic reworking of the referentiality of the institutional document (Fig. 8):

10. Cuando la legislación de una de las Partes permita el uso de la materia objeto de una patente, distinto permitido conforme al párrafo 6, sin la autorización del titular del derecho, incluido el uso por el gobierno o otras personas que el gobierno autorice, la Parte respetará las siguientes disposiciones:

(a) la autorización de tal uso se considerará en función del fondo del asunto particular del que se trate;

(b) sólo podrá permitirse tal uso si, con anterioridad al mismo, el usuario potencial hubiera hecho esfuerzo por obtener la autorización del titular del derecho en términos y condiciones comerciales sensatas y tales esfuerzos hubiesen tenido éxito en un plazo razonable. Cada una de las Partes podrá soslayar este requisito en casos de emergencia nacional, en circunstancias de extrema urgencia o en casos de uso público sin fines comerciales. obstante, en situaciones de emergencia nacional o en circunstancias de extrema urgencia, se notificará al titular derecho tan pronto como sea razonable. En el caso de uso público sin fines comerciales, cuando el gobierno o contratista, sin hacer una búsqueda de patentes, sepa o tenga bases comprobables para saber que una patente v es o será utilizada por o para el gobierno, se informará con prontitud al titular del derecho;

(c) el ámbito y duración de dicho uso se limitarán a los fines para el que haya sido autorizado; (d) dicho uso será no exclusivo;

(e) dicho uso no podrá cederse, excepto junto con la parte de la empresa o del avío que goce ese uso.

Fig. 8. Hugo García Manríquez, *Anti-Humboldt* 61

Beyond the effect of trauma, the specter emerging from the text does not only represent something irretrievably lost, something obscured, but also something that



remains to be done (Gordon 11). To activate this social act oriented toward the future, Hugo García Manríquez undertakes a kind of de-territorialization of the referent. In doing so, he places responsibility on the reader, who must decide which portions of the text to attend to, and to what extent violence against the other can be perpetuated or resisted.

CONCLUSIONS: A POEM IS A POEM IS A POEM IS A POEM

As Roberto Cruz Arzabal (“Olvido” 337-365) notes in his discussion of the materiality of the archive in Latin American literatures, *Anti-Humboldt* operates within the category of “inespecificidad del arte”, following Florencia Garramuño’s theories. Unlike US conceptualism, artistic practices that intervene in the archive from a Latin American perspective can function as political processes. This means that, beyond mere hybridisms, they question the very category of property (Cruz Arzabal, “Olvido” 341). When these artistic forms engage with the materiality of the archive, they must take into account that the archive is simultaneously a site for the construction of memory and for its erasure. In this way, they work to dissolve the boundary between memory as an inner space and memory as an external one—that is, the archive itself (339–346). Thus, the *inespecificidad* of the archive in Hugo García Manríquez’s work is not simply tied to the use of the document’s materiality but to a problematization of its constitutive elements (346). In other words, the power to de-territorialize the original document, to “bastardize” its referent, re-signifies it, producing a text that paradoxically illuminates and denounces its violent contradictions through its very language. The new document we encounter—comprising at least three distinct layers: the Treaty in its entirety, Hugo García Manríquez’s text, and the contorted repetition of the Treaty embedded within itself (Padilla 3)—also reactivates the reader’s responsibility. As previously noted, the reader is directly implicated in their capacity to choose which portion of the text, and therefore which referent, to engage with. What we face here is the verbalization of an act of violence upon the text—an act that metaphorically gestures toward the linguistic violence embedded in the Treaty itself.

In the resistance of social action that this work enacts, both poetry and the materiality of the document—in its legal and political dimensions—mutually disrupt one another. This opens the possibility for a re-politicization of poetic language, while simultaneously leaving us exposed within a textual battleground that underscores the violent divide that continues to persist between society, capital, and language. Within this social act, we might finally envision a collective readiness: a willingness to listen to the absent, and to transform life’s shadows into a life not amputated (Gordon 261), a voice capable at the very least of imagining how to “evadir los límites de capital / una noche” (García Manríquez *Anti-Humboldt* 72).



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