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**Article:**

García Manríquez, H., Eltringham, D. and Carter, F. (2023) Militant translationality and the language of the barricades: Sean Bonney in Mexican Spanish. *Green Letters*, 27 (1). pp. 109-128. ISSN: 1468-8417

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14688417.2023.2250806>

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## Green Letters

### Studies in Ecocriticism

ISSN: 1468-8417 (Print) 2168-1414 (Online) Journal homepage: [www.tandfonline.com/journals/rgl20](http://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rgl20)

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**To cite this article:** Hugo García Manríquez, Daniel Eltringham & Fred Carter (2023) Militant Translationality and the Language of the Barricades: Sean Bonney in Mexican Spanish, Green Letters, 27:1, 109-128, DOI: [10.1080/14688417.2023.2250806](https://doi.org/10.1080/14688417.2023.2250806)

**To link to this article:** <https://doi.org/10.1080/14688417.2023.2250806>



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## Militant Translationality and the Language of the Barricades: Sean Bonney in Mexican Spanish

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### ABSTRACT

This hybrid, creative-critical, polyvocal work presents a short selection of the late British poet Sean Bonney's discursive prose-poetry and theory that thinks through the terms of militant poetics, in English and in the Mexican poet and translator Hugo García Manríquez's Spanish translation, *El lenguaje de las barricadas* [*The Language of the Barricades*]. These texts are prefaced by an English-language translation of García Manríquez's introduction to his translations. A critical postface by Militant Ecologies special issue editors Daniel Eltringham and Fred Carter contextualises these translations in terms of the twenty-first century emergence of militant 'translationality', suggesting that Bonney's theorisation of both the riot-form and the counterinsurgent microclimate of sensory derangement provoked by teargas is bound up with his reluctance to consider his own versions of nineteenth-century French poets Arthur Rimbaud and Charles Baudelaire as creative translations. Yet translating Bonney's work into Latin American scenarios of struggle including Mexico, Chile and Peru allows the translational thread leading from Rimbaud and the Paris Commune – through Bonney's work – to be woven with García Manríquez's own recent poetry, which inflects Bonney's riotous joy with deeper temporalities of anticolonial and indigenous revolt.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 18 July 2023

Accepted 17 August 2023

### KEYWORDS

translation; poetics; militant translationality; atmospheric; decolonial struggle; counterinsurgency

This hybrid, creative-critical, polyvocal work presents a short selection of the late British poet Sean Bonney's discursive prose-poetry and theory that thinks through the terms of militant poetics, in English and in the Mexican poet and translator Hugo García Manríquez's Spanish translation. A critical postface by editors Daniel Eltringham and Fred Carter contextualises these translations in terms of militant 'translationality', riotous joy, and counterinsurgent microclimates. Both are preceded by an English-language translation of García Manríquez's introduction to his translations of Bonney, *El lenguaje de las barricadas* [*The Language of the Barricades*], which follows immediately below.

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## On Translating Sean Bonney<sup>1</sup>

I think it was in 2016, during a visit by William Rowe to San Francisco, when we spoke about the need to translate the English poet Sean Bonney, who was – and continues to be – nearly unknown in Spanish. Bonney's unexpected death in November 2019 made it clear that we shouldn't postpone this project any further.

Hardly two months after his passing, the events of 2020 appeared to faithfully recreate certain moments in Bonney's writing as though they were following a script. I quote at random one of his letters, 'The first signs of plague hit Moscow in late 1770, as in a sudden system of forced quarantine and destruction of contaminated houses':

September 15th they invaded the Kremlin, smashed up the monastery there. The following day they murdered the Archbishop, that wormfucker, Ambrosius, they killed him, and then torched the quarantined zones. Much burning, yeh, much gunshot and vacuum. And no antidote, no serum. Around 200,000 people died, not including those who were executed. It's a grisly map. Disease as interpretation and anonymity. The plague itself as injection into certain subsets of opinion. Rich people. Plague sores, each basilica split open to various popular songs, calendars folded within them, recorded crackles through forcibly locked houses, through LEDs and meth.

His prose – and this applies to all his work – doesn't seek to move the reader with pious images of deaths and victims, but rather to create a poetics in which 'illness' is 'interpretation', and where perception is sharpened in moments of rupture, at the point of conceiving of 'hunger as beginning of thought'.

Bonney traces a particular phrasing and prosody in the riot. In this, he remains within the orbit of Martin Luther King when in 1968 he proposed that 'the language of the unheard' could be detected in popular disturbances. But the reader will recognise a difference in these pages: for Bonney, this riot-language goes beyond the mere articulation of demands and social reforms: it must seek vengeance.

His writings are informed as much by the joy of the streets, by the speculation of audacious associative leaps, or by the lucidity that the sensorial system achieves when assaulted by teargas. Memorably, the poet captures this synthesis between fracture and revelation as 'the anti-Rimbaud':

You come to a very real understanding of the nature of things, both visible and invisible, by having your sensory system hijacked and turned against you by a meaningful dose of teargas. It is the anti-Rimbaud. The absolute regulation and administration of all the senses. (Bonney 2019, 73)

Revolt is the event that illuminates and gives form to language in Sean Bonney's poetry. The force of this illumination produces a poetics opposed to the violent material and ontological division between the living and the disposable.

It is impossible to fully grasp Rimbaud's work, and especially *Une Saison en Enfer*, if you have not studied through and understood the whole of Marx's *Capital*. (Bonney 2015, 119)

In English we know that the word 'riot' describes a 'disturbance', a spontaneous popular mobilisation in its most antagonistic aspect. It also suggests at least one other dimension, evoking the emotional state of jubilant anima. The exalted voice that longs to multiply itself is added to the tumult, amongst spectres of past struggles. In order to effectively 'be numerous', as in the poetry of George Oppen.

At one extreme, Bonney's poetics is carried along by an acute state of alert; at the other, it unfurls itself, delirious, even paranoid. It is a search for a language distinct to that which makes up – and justifies – what the same poet calls 'police realism' as a military, predatory reality principle that ossifies and impoverishes our material and subjective existence.

The constant reference to death in his writings obliges us to think about it as capital's absolute exteriority. One from which to generate, paradoxically, the possible reconstruction of a language for the living.

Perhaps some of you object to the lack of contextualising notes for each of the texts collected here. It seems to me, all the same, that the mobilisations of 2020 by themselves lend them legibility. On the contrary, it might seem that it is we who need these texts in order to understand our present dominated by racism, militarised existence, the return of fascism and, above all, the role played by the police in keeping these violences alive and unchanged.

Once I read that a translator is a kind of literary worker; it's true, in part: although the traces of their labour cover the totality of the final product, they remain anonymous. I think, despite everything, that notions such as this paralyse; as with that which sees the translator only as a traitor. In the end, the horizon of the possible is reduced to the spectralised translator or to the guilty party. Bonney insists on distancing himself from the idea of translation as melancholy labour. This slippage animates his *Baudelaire in English*, where translation is more of a complex historical transpollination. In this text, the pillars that feature in the famous poem 'Correspondences' have become the eyes of capital: 'they WatCH uS/like satellites, cameras && Eyes' (Bonney 2011 [2008], 50). But it is necessary to say that through his translations winds, equally, a joyful current that – as the poet Jack Spicer did with Lorca – proffers its alchemical secrets to the conversation between the living and the dead.

## Carta sobre poética<sup>2</sup>

Veo que ya eres maestro de nuevo. El 10 de noviembre fue un fiasco, nos tomaron por sorpresa. Y ese 'nosotros' es el mismo 'nosotros' de estos poemas: tan opuesto al 'ellos' y quizá tan opuesto al 'tú', en tanto que colectivizar la subjetividad implica inmediatamente portones atrancados, barricadas, autodefinición vía el antagonismo etc. Si no estuviste ahí, simplemente no lo entenderás. Pero en fin, meses después, o antes, ya no recuerdo, me senté a escribir un ensayo sobre Rimbaud. Fui a oír una charla a la Marx House y me quedé atónito porque la gente solo puede hablar empleando los mismos mitos: que si Verlaine etc., que si era un huevón bueno para nada etc., que si el tráfico de armas etc., que si el colonialismo etc. Poco menos sobre el último punto. Como si nada hubiera que decir sobre lo que está presente en la obra de Rimbaud (o la poesía de vanguardia, en general) que no pueda ser leído en correspondencia con las convulsiones objetivas de todo momento revolucionario. De qué manera aquello que experimentábamos podía, me preguntaba, ser delineado de forma tal que nosotros mismos pudiéramos reconocernos ahí. La forma sería monstruosa. Eso está en la *Estética de la resistencia*, en alguna parte. O sea, obviamente despotricar contra el gobierno, vía un ladrillo por la ventana, está lejos de ser suficiente. Me puse a pensar que la razón por la que el movimiento estudiantil fracasó tuvo que ver directamente con los pinches eslóganes. Eran espantosos. Flojos como poemas. Es cierto, yo también fui a leer poemas a las ocupaciones estudiantiles y, francamente, me la hubiera pasado mejor

bebiendo. Me sentía como un imbécil parado ahí, después de que otro hablara sobre qué hacer si te asaltan, y cosas por el estilo, pararse ahí y leer poesía. No puedo engañarme. No me hago ilusiones pensando que mi poesía de alguna manera había ‘pasado la prueba’, solo porque les gustó a algunos. Tú lo sabes bien, al alcanzar un entendimiento de la política, nuestro odio se hizo más intenso, empezamos a luchar guiados por un frío repudio homicida, y pocas veces pudimos encontrar esa sensación articulada en el arte, en la literatura. Ese es Peter Weiss de nuevo. Me preguntaba, somos capaces, de alguna manera, somos capaces de escribir un poema que (1) identifique el preciso momento en la presente coyuntura, (2) nombre la tarea específica del momento, *i.e.* un poema que nos haga capaces de nombrar ese momento decisivo y (3) ejerza su fuerza hasta el punto como si hubiéramos condensado y encarnado el análisis concreto de la situación concreta. No me refiero al poema como pensamiento mágico, nada de eso, sino como análisis y como claridad. No he visto a nadie hacer eso. Pero, aun así, es imposible comprender plenamente la obra de Rimbaud, y sobre todo *Una temporada en el infierno*, sin estudiar y entender cabalmente la totalidad de *El capital* de Marx. Y es por esta razón que ningún poeta que escriba en inglés ha entendido jamás a Rimbaud. La poesía es estúpida, pero, de nuevo, la estupidez no es la ausencia de capacidad intelectual sino la cicatriz de su mutilación. Rimbaud fraguó su programa poético en mayo de 1871, una semana antes de que los miembros de la Comuna de París fueran masacrados. Él quería estar ahí, lo dijo muchas veces. En su ‘largo y sistemático desarreglo de los sentidos’, su ‘Yo es otro’, está hablando de la destrucción de la subjetividad burguesa, ¿no? Eso es claro, ¿no? Así es como plantea a la imaginación poética, esa es su noción de lo que constituye la labor poética. Obviamente puedes leer esto como una mera receta para excesos personales, pero solo desde la perspectiva de la realidad policiaca. Como, acabo de tomar anfetaminas, fumar mota, y ahora me voy a tomar una pepsi, pero no es por eso que escribo esto, y no se trata de eso. El ‘sistemático desarreglo de los sentidos’ son los sentidos sociales, ok, y el ‘Yo es otro’, como en la transformación del individuo en colectividad, cuando todo da inicio. Es sólo en el mundo de habla inglesa, donde lo único que sabemos es cómo matar, donde tienes que señalar chingaderas tan simples como esas. En la lengua enemiga es necesario mentir y ver cómo el lenguaje es probablemente el principal de los sentidos sociales, eso debe ser desorganizado. Pero cómo lo logramos sin convertirnos en uno de esos incompetentes poetas conceptuales que andan de calenturientos con sus estudiantes. Tú sabes quién y qué. Para la mayoría de las personas, incluida la clase trabajadora, los trabajadores y estudiantes politizados son simplemente incomprensibles. Acuérdate de esto cuando hables del nauseabundo lenguaje vanguardista. O esto: la simple anticomunicación tomada hoy del Dadaísmo, a manos de los más reaccionarios defensores de las farsas que han sido establecidas, carece de valor en una época en que la tarea más urgente es crear una comunicación nueva, en todos los niveles de práctica, desde la más simple a la más compleja. O esto: en las luchas de liberación, los pueblos que fueron relegados al reino de la imaginación, víctimas de terrores indescriptibles, pero felices de entregarse a sueños alucinantes, son lanzados al desorden, reforma, y entre sangre y lágrimas dan luz a las cuestiones más reales y urgentes. Es simple, el ser social determina al contenido, el contenido desarregla la forma, etc. Lee los últimos poemas de Rimbaud. Son vehementemente alucinatorios, tan frágiles, el sonido de la mente cuando no puede más y está en proceso de desintegración, el sonido del retorno al *business-as-usual* tras la intensa insurrección, el sonido del yo colectivo al ser empujado de regreso

hacia su individualidad, el sonido de quien se ha congelado hasta morir. Hielo polar, es de todo lo que él habla. Ok, ya sé, eso solo nos lleva de vuelta al romanticismo del fracaso, y al poeta maldito, ese conformismo más bien jodido. En todo caso, está lejos de ser nuestra coyuntura. Nunca hemos tomado el control de una ciudad. Pero, no sé, todavía podemos entender el pensamiento poético, tal como yo, y como tú, espero, nos dedicamos a esa tarea: como algo que se desplaza en sentido contrario a la anticomunicación burguesa. Como todo eso. La totalidad de lo dicho. Podemos conversar con ideas que han sido borradas de la versión oficial. Si te resulta incomprensible, bueno, lee lo anterior. Piensa en una época donde no solo es, digamos, imposible la revolución, sino incluso pensar en la revolución. Pienso específicamente en occidente, claro. Pero recuerda que la mayor parte de la poesía es la mimesis de aquello que un reaccionario percibirá como incomprensible, en vez de un diálogo con eso. Ahí la frase fue más allá del contenido, aquí el contenido va más allá de la frase. No sé, me gustaría escribir una poesía que acelere una continuidad dialéctica en la discontinuidad & que torne visible entonces todo lo que el realismo policiaco condena a la invisibilidad, donde el yo lírico, sí, esa cosa, pueda ser (1) un interruptor y (2) un colectivo, donde el habla directa y la incomprensibilidad son solo posibles como la síntesis que curve a las ideas por adentro y por afuera de los límites del insurreccionalismo y el ilegalismo. El único riesgo evidente sería que las ideas desaparecidas broten 'muertas', o reanimadas como zombis: terroristas como utopistas dañados para quienes todos los elementos, incluso aquellos eclipsados por el pensamiento burgués, continúan siendo absolutamente dominados por esa misma burguesía. Sé que esto poco tiene que ver con la 'poesía', hasta donde esa palabra ha sido entendida, pero bueno, ni yo lo logro, no de esa manera. Mira, no creas que te estoy mintiendo. Así están las cosas. A mí se me acabó la 'vida normal' hace unos veinte años. Desde entonces he permanecido encerrado en esta ciudad ridícula, me he mantenido al margen, inmerso por completo en mi trabajo. A cada pregunta he respondido con silencio. He mantenido un perfil bajo, tal como hay que hacer en posiciones contralegales como la mía. Pero hoy, los millonarios lanzan su ataque sorpresa. Todo asciende a la superficie. Ya no me siento como yo mismo. Estoy hecho pedazos. Apenas puedo respirar. Mi cuerpo se ha convertido en algo distinto, se ha fugado a su dimensión más diminuta, diseminada hasta ser nada. Pero después de eso, respiré profundo, por fin pudo hacerlo, había llegado al otro lado, pudo observar sus funciones indeterminadas al interior de la totalidad. ¿No? Eso no es Rimbaud es Brecht, pero tú me entiendes. Como cuando el 24 de noviembre, estábamos afuera de la estación Charing Cross, recargados contra la pared, etc., cuando de la nada unos 300 adolescentes pasaron corriendo frente a nosotros irrumpiendo por Strand, todos gritaban: 'DE QUIÉN SON LAS CALLES, SON NUESTRAS'. Nos hizo reír a carcajadas. Sólo un pinche policía sería incapaz de responder.

### Letter on Poetics<sup>3</sup>

So I see you're a teacher again. November 10th was ridiculous, we were all caught unawares. And that 'we' is the same as the 'we' in these poems, as against 'them', and maybe against 'you', in that a rapid collectivising of subjectivity equally rapidly involves locked doors, barricades, self-definition through antagonism etc. If you weren't there, you just won't get it. But anyway, a few months later, or was it before, I can't remember anymore, I sat down to write an essay on Rimbaud. I'd been to a talk at Marx House and

was amazed that people could still only talk through all the myths: Verlaine etc nasty-assed punk bitch etc gun running, colonialism, etc. Slightly less about that last one. As if there was nothing to say about what it was in Rimbaud's work – or in avant-garde poetry in general – that could be read as the subjective counterpart to the objective upheavals of any revolutionary moment. How could what we were experiencing, I asked myself, be delineated in such a way that we could recognise ourselves in it. The form would be monstrous. That kinda romanticism doesn't help much either. I mean, obviously a rant against the government, even delivered via a brick through the window, is not nearly enough. I started thinking the reason the student movement failed was down to the fucking slogans. They were awful. As feeble as poems. Yeh, I turned up and did readings in the student occupations and, frankly, I'd have been better off just drinking. It felt stupid to stand up, after someone had been doing a talk on what to do if you got nicked, or whatever, to stand up and read poetry. I can't kid myself otherwise. I can't delude myself that my poetry had somehow been 'tested' because they kinda liked it. Because, you know, after we achieved political understanding our hatred grew more intense, we began fighting, we were guided by a cold, homicidal repulsion, and very seldom did we find that sensation articulated in art, in literature. That last is from Peter Weiss. I wondered could we, somehow, could we write a poem that (1) could identify the precise moment in the present conjuncture, (2) name the task specific to that moment, ie a poem that would enable us to name that decisive moment and (3) exert force inasmuch as we would have condensed and embodied the concrete analysis of the concrete situation. I'm not talking about the poem as magical thinking, not at all, but as analysis and clarity. I haven't seen anyone do that. But, still, it is impossible to fully grasp Rimbaud's work, and especially *Une Saison en Enfer*, if you have not studied through and understood the whole of Marx's *Capital*. And this is why no English speaking poet has ever understood Rimbaud. Poetry is stupid, but then again, stupidity is not the absence of intellectual ability but rather the scar of its mutilation. Rimbaud hammered out his poetic programme in May 1871, the week before the Paris Communards were slaughtered. He wanted to be there, he kept saying it. The 'long systematic derangement of the senses', the 'I is an other', he's talking about the destruction of bourgeois subjectivity, yeh? That's clear, yeh? That's his claim for the poetic imagination, that's his idea of what poetic labour is. Obviously you could read that as a simple recipe for personal excess, but only from the perspective of police reality. Like, I just took some speed, then smoked a joint and now I'm gonna have a pepsi, but that's not why I writing this and its not what its about. The 'systematic derangement of the senses' is the social senses, ok, and the 'I' becomes an 'other' as in the transformation of the individual into the collective when it all kicks off. Its only in the English speaking world, where none of us know anything except how to kill, that you have to point simple shit like that out. In the enemy language it is necessary to lie. & seeing as language is probably the chief of the social senses, we have to derange that. But how do we get to that without turning into lame-assed conceptualists trying to get jiggy with their students. You know what, and who, I mean. For the vast majority of people, including the working class, the politicised workers and students are simply incomprehensible. Think about that when you're going on about rebarbative avant-garde language. Or this: simple anticommunication, borrowed today from Dadaism by the most reactionary champions of the established lies, is worthless in an era when the most urgent question is to create a new communication on all levels of practice, from the most simple to the most complex. Or this: in the

liberation struggles, these people who were once relegated to the realm of the imagination, victims of unspeakable terrors, but content to lose themselves in hallucinatory dreams, are thrown into disarray, re-form, and amid blood and tears give birth to very real and urgent issues. Its simple, social being determines content, content deranges form etc. Read Rimbaud's last poems. They're so intensely hallucinatory, so fragile, the sound of a mind at the end of its tether and in the process of falling apart, the sound of the return to capitalist business-as-usual after the intensity of insurrection, the sound of the collective I being pushed back into its individuality, the sound of being frozen to fucking death. Polar ice, it's all he talks about. OK, I know, that just drags us right back to the romanticism of failure, and the , that kinda gross conformity. And in any case, its hardly our conjuncture. We've never seized control of a city. But, I dunno, we can still understand poetic thought, in the way I, and I hope you, work at it, as something that moves counter-clockwise to bourgeois anti-communication. Like all of it. Everything it says. We can engage with ideas that have been erased from the official account. If its incomprehensible, well, see above. Think of an era where not only is, say, revolution impossible, but even the thought of revolution. I'm thinking specifically of the west, of course. But remember, most poetry is mimetic of what some square thinks is incomprehensible, rather than an engagement with it. There the phrase went beyond the content, here the content goes beyond the phrase. I dunno, I'd like to write a poetry that could speed up a dialectical continuity in discontinuity & thus make visible whatever is forced into invisibility by police realism, where the lyric I – yeh, that thing – can be (1) an interrupter and (2) a collective, where direct speech and incomprehensibility are only possible as a synthesis that can bend ideas into and out of the limits of insurrectionism and illegalism. The obvious danger being that disappeared ideas will only turn up 'dead', or reanimated as zombies: the terrorist as a damaged utopian where all of the elements, including those eclipsed by bourgeois thought are still absolutely occupied by that same bourgeoisie. I know this doesn't have much to do with 'poetry', as far as that word is understood, but then again, neither do I, not in that way. Listen, don't think I'm shitting you. This is the situation. I ran out on 'normal life' around twenty years ago. Ever since then I've been shut up in this ridiculous city, keeping to myself, completely involved in my work. I've answered every enquiry with silence. I've kept my head down, as you have to do in a contra-legal position like mine. But now, surprise attack by a government of millionaires. Everything forced to the surface. I don't feel I'm myself anymore. I've fallen to pieces, I can hardly breathe. My body has become something else, has fled into its smallest dimensions, has scattered into zero. And yet, as soon as it got to that, it took a deep breath, it could suddenly do it, it had passed across, it could see its indeterminable function within the whole. Yeh? That wasn't Rimbaud, that was Brecht, but you get the idea. Like on the 24th November we were standing around, outside Charing Cross, just leaning against the wall etc, when out of nowhere around 300 teenagers ran past us, tearing up the Strand, all yelling 'WHOSE STREETS OUR STREETS'. Well it cracked us up. You'd be a pig not to answer.

## 6/Para qué sirve el gas lacrimógeno<sup>4</sup>

Los policías, como no son humanos ni animales, no sueñan. No lo necesitan: tienen gas lacrimógeno. No me pidas que justifique esto. O sea, sabes perfectamente que los policías

tienen acceso al contenido de todos nuestros sueños. Y quizá también sabes que buena parte del gas lacrimógeno del planeta es suministrada por Westminster Group. Su presidente no ejecutivo, sea lo que eso sea, es un miembro de la casa de, ejem, Charles Windsor. Él quizá cree que el gas lacrimógeno está relacionado de alguna manera con la Nube del Desconocimiento y, en cierto sentido, tiene razón. Logras una comprensión muy real de la naturaleza de las cosas, visibles e invisibles, cuando tienes el sistema sensorial secuestrado y vuelto en contra tuya por una fuerte dosis de gas lacrimógeno. Es el anti-Rimbaud. La absoluta regulación y administración de todos los sentidos. En serio, inténtalo. La próxima vez que las cosas se pongan calientes, sal a la calle y lánzate al centro de la nube más grande de gas lacrimógeno que puedas encontrar. Explosión. Visión. Gusto. Olfato. Todos los demás. Todo se convirtió en confusión, pérdida de certeza geográfica y, lo más importante, dolor. No te asustes. En el centro de ese dolor hay un pequeño y silencioso punto de absoluto Desconocimiento. Es ese Desconocimiento lo que la policía, y por extensión Charles Windsor, llaman conocimiento. Lo quieren. Tienen bisturís en caso necesario, pero el gas lacrimógeno es más limpio. No está claro para qué lo quieren, pero cualquier epiléptico, vidente o drogadicto podría decirte qué es. Está ahí en Blake. Dios mío, está ahí en las notas en la portada de *Metal Machine Music*. ¿Qué significa? A quién le importa. No responde ninguna pregunta. ¿Qué quiere Charles Windsor de nosotros? La policía no nos dirá lo que no sabe ni lo que cree que sabemos.

## 6/What Teargas is For<sup>5</sup>

Cops, being neither human nor animal, do not dream. They don't need to, they've got teargas. Don't expect me to justify that. I mean, you know as well as I do that cops have got access to the content of all of our dreams. And you probably also know that a fair amount of the planet's teargas is supplied by the Westminster Group. Their nonexecutive chairman, whatever that is, is a member of the household of, ahem, Charles Windsor. He probably thinks of teargas as being somehow related to the Cloud of Unknowing, and, in a sense, he's kind of right. You come to a very real understanding of the nature of things, both visible and invisible, by having your sensory system hijacked and turned against you by a meaningful dose of teargas. It is the anti-Rimbaud. The absolute regulation and administration of all the senses. I mean try it. Next time things are starting to kick off a little bit just go out on the street and run straight into the middle of the biggest cloud of teargas you can find. Bang. Sight. Taste. Smell. All the rest of them. All turned into confusion, loss of geographical certainty and, most importantly, pain. Don't freak out. In the centre of that pain is a small and silent point of absolute Unknowing. It is that Unknowing that the cops – and by extension Charles Windsor – call knowledge. They want it. They've got scalpels if necessary but teargas is cleaner. It's not clear what they want it for but any epileptic or voyant or drug addict could tell you what it is. It's there in Blake. Christ, it's there in the sleeve-notes to *Metal Machine Music*. What's it mean? Who cares. It answers no questions. What does Charles Windsor want with us. The cops will not tell us what they don't know and what they think we know.

### Notas sobre poética militante (1/3)<sup>6</sup>

*Hay una zona de no-ser, una región extraordinariamente estéril y árida, una cuesta esencialmente despojada, desde la que puede nacer un auténtico surgimiento... (un) descenso a los verdaderos Infiernos.*

Fanon

*El contenido de verdad se vuelve negativo. [Los poemas] imitan un lenguaje por debajo del lenguaje desamparado de los seres humanos: el de los muertos hablando de piedras y estrellas.*

Adorno

Los situacionistas llamaban a la poesía la ‘antimateria de la sociedad de consumo’, una afirmación cuestionable, pero que al menos expresa el abismo que opera entre las definiciones de poesía de la realidad oficial y lo que aún queda de la vanguardia revolucionaria. La poesía *mainstream* es irrelevante: los situos sabían que la verdadera poesía del capital era la publicidad. La publicidad, la vanguardia empresarial, es la antimateria de la vida cotidiana. La poesía, mientras tanto, se ha vuelto totalmente invisible, o más bien, solo existe en estados extraños de alta y necesaria intensidad, en zonas de absoluta negación. Y así quedaría, si no fuera cierto que la publicidad misma está adquiriendo perfeccionando aquello que siempre fue la especialidad esotérica de la poesía, es decir: el lenguaje de los muertos. Los anuncios publicitarios vacíos que se están volviendo cada vez más comunes en todo el este de Londres (y en todas partes) nos hablan con más elocuencia sobre cómo el capital ha sido reducido a zonas estériles y áridas de su propia creación, y menos sobre la poesía. La publicidad, y la utopía que expresa, es ahora la antimateria de sí misma. De todos modos, tal vez deberíamos callarnos sobre los situacionistas, como dice el refrán, OLVIDA EL MAYO DEL 68, LUCHA AHORA, aunque está claro que la publicidad, como la poesía, tiene su origen en la maldición, el encanto y el hechizo. Los bardos galeses, todas esas combinaciones secretas de palabras con el poder de matar reyes; esas fantasías se han vuelto demasiado reales transformadas en la combinación secreta de palabras con el poder de hacerte desear matar a los pobres. Mientras el mundo se va al carajo, solo un imbécil es incapaz de ver que el contenido de verdad en los hechizos de la poesía publicitaria está en las oraciones pronunciadas por los jueces. La publicidad fue sólo el glamour arrojado sobre la verdadera poesía del capital, las desoladoras realidades de la sentencia y la bala policiaca.

### Notes on Militant Poetics (1/3)<sup>7</sup>

*There is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and arid region, an utterly naked declivity when an authentic upheaval can be born . . . (a) descent into a real hell.*

Fanon

*Truth content becomes negative. [Poems] imitate a language beneath the helpless language of human beings: it is that of the dead speaking of stones and stars.*

Adorno

The Situationists called poetry the ‘anti-matter of consumer society’, a fairly questionable claim, but one that is at least expressive of the chasm that operates between official reality’s definitions of poetry and those of whatever still remains of the revolutionary avant-garde.

'Mainstream' poetry is irrelevant: the Situs knew the real poetry of capital was advertising. Advertising, the corporate avant-garde, is the anti-matter of everyday life. Poetry, meanwhile, has become entirely invisible – or rather, it only exists in weird states of high and necessary intensity, in zones of absolute negation. And so it would stay, if it were not true that advertising is itself becoming fluent in what was always poetry's esoteric speciality, i.e. the language of the dead. The empty billboards that are becoming more and more common throughout East London (and everywhere else) speak more eloquently about the collapse of capital into sterile and arid zones of its own making than any poetry. Advertising, and the utopia it expresses, is now the anti-matter of itself. Anyway, perhaps we should shut up about the Situationists – as the saying goes, FORGET MAY 68, FIGHT NOW. Though it's clear that advertising, like poetry, has its origins in the curse, the charm, and the spell. The supposed spells of the Welsh bards, all those secret combinations of words that had the power to kill kings – those fantasies have become all too real in their transformation into the secret combination of words that have the power to make you want to kill the poor. And as the whole shit-house goes up in flames, only an idiot would fail to see that the truth content of the spells of advertising's poetry are the sentences spoken by judges. Advertising was only ever the glamour cast over the real poetry of capital, the arid realities of the prison sentence and the police bullet.

### Riotous translation, counterinsurgent climates: a critical postface<sup>8</sup>

In a recent exchange with the scholar, editor and translator Whitney DeVos, the Mexican poet and translator Hugo García Manríquez calls the practice of translation 'an exercise in autonomy': an act of *poesis* that does not require institutional permission or ratification, but which necessarily entails entering into relation and reciprocity with living or dead interlocutors. Because of its autonomous nature, it is also 'an exercise in joy' (DeVos and García Manríquez 2022). Introducing García Manríquez's political and poetic work, we find it useful to stay with these two words – *autonomy* and *joy* – as possible coordinates in the larger latticework that thinking around the ever-elusive practice of translation affords. In particular, they offer one way to triangulate translation between a 'militant poetics' (Bonney 2022a [2013]) and an insurgent ecology that carla bergman and Nick Montgomery's *Joyful Militancy* describes as 'a fierce commitment to emergent forms of life in the cracks of Empire' (bergman and Montgomery 2017, 32–33). Written in concert with his own introductory remarks translated above, this critical postface to García Manríquez's translations of the late British poet Sean Bonney (1969–2019), *El lenguaje de las barricadas* [*The Language of the Barricades*], puts García Manríquez's notion of autonomous translation into conversation with both Bonney's expression of poetic militancy and the racialised atmospherics of counterinsurgency that shape the sensory experience of 'the riot form' (Bonney 2015, 8).

As a translator, García Manríquez has dedicated himself to bringing Anglophone late modernism into Spanish, making space for William Carlos Williams (2015), George Oppen (2017), Sean Bonney (2021) and Jack Spicer (2022) in a Mexican literary context that has, in recent years, been equivocal about such exchanges. 'What's crucial to me about Sean Bonney's work', he tells DeVos, 'is that it rejects a certain tendency in contemporary poetry, in both the US and in Mexico, whose politics one could call "pietistic" – that is, having at its core the representation of grievance and suffering, aimed primarily at eliciting empathy from readers' (DeVos and García Manríquez 2022). In the introductory notes above, García

Manríquez implies that Bonney's own practice as a resistant 'translator' of French poets (Baudelaire, Rimbaud) similarly rejects translational pieties that either see the practice as a kind of 'melancholy' and 'spectralised' labour or cast the translator as the proletarianised 'guilty party', producing literary goods under conditions of alienation while being made to feel complicit for their participation in uneven processes of cultural hegemony.

And yet such an emphasis on guilt, complicity, and counterhegemonic practices has been central to twenty-first century attempts to elaborate what we might call a 'militant translationality' in the Anglosphere, above all in the United States, where consciousness of global hegemony leads to self-critique. Situated within a broader cross-cultural and multilingual turn, the shift towards 'translational' poetics set out by Apter (2005) and Perloff (2010) positions translation as a radical yet suspect linguistic act. As in the 'Transnational/Translational' issue of the journal *Tripwire* (Buuck 2015), any salvageable translational poetics resists the homogenising, racialised violence of neoliberal globalisation by refusing to accept either the ideal of universal exchange understood as 'connectivity' or its deadly obverse, the militarised divisions of border regimes.

These conflictive territories of translation, migration, and exploitation have been theorised by the Mexican poet Heriberto Yépez as a site of colonial extraction (Yépez 2014 [2007]) and a transnational battlefield (2017); by Joyelle McSweeney and Johannes Göransson as a 'deformation zone' (McSweeney 2012); by Göransson as contagiously proliferative circulation (Göransson 2018); and by Don Mee Choi as an anti-neocolonial war zone (Choi 2020). Conventional celebrations of literary translation as a transcultural 'bridge', meanwhile, are subject to critique as an extractive infrastructure built on the backs of racialised, 'slavish' bridge translators (Calleja and Collins 2022; Tachtiris 2022). Taken together, these critiques identify translation as an extractive technology that marks out an ambivalent dialectic of preservation and erasure, particularly in terms of the equivocal connections it forges between Indigenous language diversity, biodiversity, and extinction. In doing so, they call into question the easy subscription of a celebratory 'translationality' to decolonial and ecological practices of autonomy and resistance, and Anglophone literary culture's vexed relationship with alterity. Indeed, Yépez's militant scepticism about the possibility of translation as an aesthetic practice that remains even theoretically detachable from regimes of transfer and extraction is premised on the concern that writing itself 'is counter-/insurgent' (Yépez 2017, 116).

For his part, Bonney shares in Yépez's suspicion of translation as a discursive subfield of 'the enemy language' in which 'it is necessary to lie' (Bonney 2011, 64). His 2010 collection *Happiness*, where his seminal 'Letter on Poetics' – translated above – first appeared in print, is closely engaged with Rimbaud, sardonically echoing the nineteenth-century French poet's most well-known poem, 'Voyelles' [Vowels], with a series of vocalic lists and the recognition that 'the alphabet was, ultimately, not ours' (13). Language is 'probably the chief of the social senses' that Rimbaud sought to derange, but the 'rebarbative' linguistic tactics of the historical avant-gardes, including the 'simple anti-communication' of reheated Dada-ism, are liable to be captured 'by the most reactionary champions of the established lies' (64). Language, obviously, can't be trusted, and less so when translation is concerned. The shared terrain of linguistic equivalence opened up by the suggestion of continuity with Rimbaud is closed off by the book's rear cover, which warns the ingenuous reader that 'these poems have NOTHING TO DO WITH RIMBAUD. If you think they're translations you're an idiot' (Bonney 2011, rear cover).<sup>9</sup>

One reading of this denial might reveal an implicit critique of the recent tendency in British poetry to practise experimental modes of ‘creative translation’ in the modernist tradition of Zukofsky, Pound and Spicer.<sup>10</sup> Bonney’s refusal of translation might be taken to indicate that the Oulipo-inflected approach adopted by his contemporaries, while it playfully reinvents lyric traditions, lacks political teeth. Rather, as in so much of Bonney’s work, translation becomes a way of channelling the unruly languages of the dead and, in the case of Rimbaud and Baudelaire, countering those critics who would write them off as *poètes maudits* [cursed poets] dedicated to hedonistic formal excess – ‘that kinda gross conformity’ – which the poet had earlier toyed with in poems such as ‘pop stars on Holloway Road’ but then definitively rejected (Bonney 2011, 64). Instead, ‘content deranges form’: Rimbaud’s image of the long systematic derangement of the senses elaborated on in the ‘Letter on Poetics’ is key not only to Bonney’s theorisation of the riot’s capacity to flip individual into collective ‘when it all kicks off’, but also to his conception of anti-translation as one component of a militant poetics (64).

Several years after the ‘Letter on Poetics’, Bonney’s ‘Further Notes on Militant Poetics’ would trace this image of sensorial disorientation from Rimbaud back to Marx:

‘The forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present’. Marx describes the smooth transmutation of human love into stone, metal, money, information and power (the five senses of capital) [...] those senses were built from stolen materials [...] It is at this point that Marx and Rimbaud can be read together: the derangement of the senses, the derangement of ‘all’ the senses, is the derangement of the ‘labour of the entire history of the world down to the present’. Far from a merely poetic militancy, this is a negation of poetics forcing an active cognition. (Bonney 2022a [2013])

The negation that forces cognition is precisely the atmospheric derangement described in ‘What Teargas Is For’, a prose-poem from *Our Death* that becomes central to García Manríquez’s introduction above. Here, Bonney describes the routine deployment of CS gas by riot police as ‘the anti-Rimbaud. The absolute regulation and administration of all the senses’ (2019, 73). Taxonomised in the counterinsurgency manuals of the 1960s according to its five strategic effects — *distract*, *disrupt*, *disable*, *disorient*, and *disperse* — teargas is framed within Bonney’s cosmology of revolt as an inverse of Rimbaud’s insurrectionary disorganisation of the five senses. Nonetheless, in the hold of this sensory negation – this ‘small and silent point of absolute Unknowing’ – Bonney locates a kernel of abolitionist knowledge that knits the localised production of unbreathable atmospheres to transnational networks of colonial and carceral infrastructures, as well as their refusal through forms of insurgent assembly (2019, 73). Expanding outwards from the speaker’s encounter with Berlin’s *Bereitschaftspolizei* to reveal the transnational supply chains underpinning state control, the poem traces teargas canisters that enable the reproduction of police violence back to Westminster Group PLC, a corporation linked directly to the British head of state.

Ever indebted to Fanon, ‘What Teargas is For’ situates the ‘combat breathing’ (Fanon 1965 [1959], 65) of populations routinely subjected to CS gas as the foundation of a knowledge inaccessible to surveillance, interrogation, or control. In other words, a language and prosody of struggle that remains inextractable, untranslatable, or incommensurable with the lexicon of the police. Teasing out what we might come to think of as a latent militant ecology in the poem, Ted Rees (2020) relates this sensory unknowing or

negation back to Bonney's description of 'poetic militancy', following Rimbaud and Amiri Baraka, as the profusion of 'infinite senses' beyond those delimited by capital (Bonney, 2022a [2013]). This Rimbaudian deregulation of the senses reappears, in Rob Kiely's terms, as a 'communal surround' against the unbreathable atmospherics of the state and the poem itself as 'the aesthetic correlate to a riot' (Kiely 2022, 8, 12). Under such counter-insurgent atmospheric conditions, CS gas is, in Bonney's terms, the 'negation of poetics forcing an active cognition'. As an incommensurate inverse correlative of the state's efforts to translate or extract knowledge through the reproduction of its own suffocating climates, militant poetics appears for Bonney as the negation of a negation; what Alfredo M. Bonanno's account of insurrectionary joy invokes as a dialectical 'practice of liberation and destruction' (1977).

Other translations of Bonney's poetry into Spanish<sup>11</sup> include the Chilean Frank Ocean Collective's poster-poem treatment of 'ACAB: A Nursery Rhyme' (Figure 1), which, as Jèssica Pujol Duran and Richard Parker (2022) have argued, recontextualises Bonney's poetic theorisation of the riot in the streets of Santiago de Chile, convulsed by the Chilean *estallido*



**Figure 1.** Designed by Francisco Cardemil. Reproduced with the permission of the Frank Ocean Collective.

*social* [social explosion, 2019–22].<sup>12</sup> Curiously, García Manríquez does not translate this poem for *Lenguaje de las barricadas*, despite or perhaps owing to the ease of its eminent ‘translatability’ into situations of struggle in which, as in contemporary Chile or indeed Peru, uprisings against state power are met with incommensurate force.<sup>13</sup> Each iteration of the poem in the social and environmental setting of a different ‘riot form’ (Bonney 2015, 8) is marked with the linguistic specificities of that scenario, however. In their contribution to the recent conference ‘Poetry in Transatlantic Translation: Encounters Across Languages’ (2022), Pujol Duran and Parker remarked that the Frank Ocean Collective use the specifically Chilean word for police – *pacos* – in their rendering of the refrain that has made this poem perhaps the best known of Bonney’s oeuvre. In the Frank Ocean Collective translation, *pacos culiaos*, or ‘fuck the police’, is a call for racial justice targeted at the white supremacist violence of the state and security establishment.<sup>14</sup>

LE CYGNE :::  
 (( la ciudad es una farsa;;;;  
 la vieja ciudad se ha DISUELTO  
 ventriculo desplazada  
 xx&#x27; astillas de  
 espectros &  
 casas de la pandemia  
 Amarillo brillante  
 de un cisne :::: un anillo de  
 patas despeladas saliva sobre el empedrado:  
 limpio sus plumas el aceite y ojos::  
 canal seco de un ave, el pico caído  
 en vuelo destello de  
 -----  
 relámpago, destrózanos, lluvia  
 como un mito cautivo, forciendo su  
 hacia el cielo, necio de  
 tinta &&& engreído de  
 dios maldito // // // //  
 -----  
 londres nos hará cualquier modo // // //  
 otros la odiaremos de cualquier etc  
 apartamentos de yuppies & // // // etc  
 como un muro  
 de grafiti  
 me hace pensar // // //  
 recuerdas aquel cisne extraño  
 su locura mecánica // como  
 cualquier exiliado, grotesco & sublime""  
 aturdido // // // reventado  
 propiedad :::: bestial  
 tumbas & salarios  
 && pienso en todo lo que se ha perdido, los  
 enflaquecidos & quebrados, fatigados  
 ojerosos --- pienso en el PETROLEO  
 piense en BARRICADAS::: neblina en llamas  
 tinturas aburrimiento exigüos-----  
 huesos,-- dolor desgarrar  
 personas extraviadas  
 rehenes  
 lo destrazadas  
 todos ellos...

Figure 2. Reproduced with the permission of Hugo García Manríquez and Editorial Matadero.

García Manríquez's translations of Bonney are perhaps tidier, more controlled, less riotous, than this background might suggest. This is especially true of his magnificent typewriter translations of *Baudelaire in English* (Figure 2), which mirror Bonney's overwriting techniques so closely that their explosive force is also curiously contained by their affiliation to a textual process that is at once characterised by unruly transgression and meticulous care.

Instead, we must look to García Manríquez's own recent poetry (García Manríquez 2018) to piece together the way a militant ecopoetics emerges through translation which, as in the case of the Chilean *estallido social*, re-inflects Bonney's social thought with Latin American histories and scenarios of struggle. In particular, García Manríquez's work asks that we resituate Bonney's theorisation of the riot form in *Letters Against the Firmament* and *Our Death* in the context of a particularly Mesoamerican kind of anticolonial materialism. The principal linkage between the two is the book-length poem *Lo común* (2018), translated into English as *Commonplace* (2022) by NAFTA (The North American Free Translation Agreement), a playfully named translation collective that spans the three nations bound together since 1994 by the now-defunct North American Free Trade Agreement, comprising Gerónimo Sarmiento Cruz (Mexico), Whitney DeVos (U.S.A.), and Zane Koss (Canada). As Ricardo Pohlenz (2020) writes, García Manríquez's use of lists and catalogues in *Lo común* positions a series of incommensurable phenomena on a plane of false equivalence: the weaponry budget of the Mexican army in a heavily militarised society; the architectural details of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, a late-nineteenth-century product of dictatorial hubris; the 221 species on the brink of extinction, which enter and leave the language (*entra al lenguaje y sale del lenguaje*, García Manríquez 2018, 54), within the Mexican national territory. Given arbitrary coherence by the colonial framework of 'Mexico' as a nation-state with discrete boundaries, these indices come to operate as litanies at different levels and categories of abstraction and concretion.

Despite the grimness of these incantations, which narrate 'the collapse/of the lifeforms' (García Manríquez 2022, 93), the fourth and fifth sections at the heart of *Commonplace* present a militant materialism dramatically opposed to necropolitical (neo)colonial domination over humans and nonhumans in contemporary Mesoamerica. At the conclusion of the fourth section the poem makes a crucial distinction, which is also an injunction to take sides. The choice it presents is between the seventeenth-century intellectual and colonial administrator Carlos de Sigüenza y Gónogra, who comes to stand metonymically for the instantiation of cultural and economic power in the colonial library, and the manifold 'lifeforms' aligned instead with 'the forms of language/that sprout from the riot' (García Manríquez 2022, 57). The immediate source of this fatal choice between culture from above and language from below is Sigüenza y Gónogra's epistolary chronicle, *Alboroto y motín de los indios de México* [*Riot and Revolt of the Indians of Mexico*, 1692], which narrates the popular uprisings of that famine year in New Spain. In his long essay on the colonial 'invention' of Nahuatl literature, *La colonización de la voz* [*The Colonisation of the Voice*, 2018], Heriberto Yépez notes that in describing the food riots of 1692, Góngora's literary voice 'constitutes itself in relation to a characterisation of the popular Indigenous voice as disordered, subversive, offended, irrational, intoxicated and reprehensible', incarnated as the 'sonorous

phenomena' and 'rebellious action' of the multitude's voices (Yépez 2018, 47–48, trans. DE). Sigüenza y Gónogra puts these indecorous voicings down to bad government and lack of maize: twin causes at the level of governance and material conditions that together threaten the discursive coherence of settler reason with unruly speech-acts in the suppressed languages of New Spain.

The bread- or, in this case, maize-riot operates as an indicator of a fundamental failure of social reproduction at the base level of a society's material capacity. In a sense, it is the simplest articulation of a militant ecology of the stomach. 'The time has come now to forget all those books written by foolish bastards who tell you to stay in your home and not listen to your hunger', Bonney writes in the sequence 'Revolutionary Legends' (Bonney 2011, 59). In *Lo común*, however, the political ecology of 'empty belly environmentalism' (Guha and Alier 1997) is pushed further through contact with the trope of a revolt of the objects, a commonplace or shorthand for resistance to arbitrary power in the long tradition of Mayan writing and struggle. The version of this story we have today is found in the K'iche' Maya book of creation, the *Popol Vuh*. In this narrative, the age of the wood people is brought to a violent close when the domestic objects and animals they had abused without reciprocity or care rise up against their owners:

Their faces were crushed by things of wood and stone. Everything spoke: their water jars, their tortilla griddles, their plates, their cooking pots, their dogs, their grinding stones, each and every thing crushed their faces. Their dogs and turkeys told them:

'You caused us pain, you ate us, but it is you whom we shall eat.'

And this is the grinding stone:

'We were undone because of you.

Every day, every day,  
in the dark, in the dawn, forever,  
r-r-rip, r-r-rip,  
r-r-rub, r-r-rub,  
right in our faces, because of you.'

(Tedlock (trans.) 1996 [1986], 72).

In their metallic, lithic and mammalian vocalisations, the animals and objects accuse humans of breaking their domestic contract with the more-than-human world. Far from a vague idea of object-agency, these *things* are exercising their capacities in a world structured by a domination that they are able to end. García Manríquez's version of this episode gives 'the forms of language/that sprout from the riot' concretion in the riotous materiality of sound, taking and fusing the different orthographic representations of the *metate*, the grinding stone's gravelled voice, in K'iche' Maya, in the eighteenth-century Spanish transcription by the friar Ximénez, and in Tedlock's twentieth-century translation, into a block of sonorous discord (Figure 3). This moment of materialist militancy, in which the means of reproduction rebel against their use, also pushes against the phonic limits of translation into discrete languages rather than graphic scores—much as Bonney, under the influence of Bob Cobbing, sought to do with his typewriter translations of Baudelaire.

La piedra moledora del maíz:	Todo el tiempo con nuestras caras nos molian cada día y cada noche y al amanecer:
<i>jósól'i, jósól'i, juk'!, juk'?</i> <i>jósól'i, jósól'i, juk'!, juk'?</i>	<i>joli joli juqui juqui joli joli juqui juqui</i> <i>rrrip rrip, rrrub rrrub joli joli juqui juqui joli joli juqui juqui</i> <i>rrrip rrip, rrrub rrrub joli joli juqui juqui joli joli juqui juqui</i> <i>joli joli juqui juqui joli joli juqui juqui rrip rrip, rrrub rrrub</i> <i>joli joli juqui juqui joli joli juqui juqui rrip rrip, rrrub rrrub</i> <i>rrrip rrip, rrrub rrrub joli joli juqui jósól'i, jósól'i, juk'!, juk'!</i> <i>rrrip rrip, rrrub rrrub joli joli juqui juqui</i>
(en maya quiché)	<i>joli joli juqui juqui joli joli juqui juqui rrip rrip, rrrub rrrub</i> <i>rrrub joli joli juqui juqui jósól'i, jósól'i, juk'!, juk'!, joli joli</i> <i>juqui joli rrip rrip, rrrub rrrub joli joli juqui juqui juqui</i> <i>juqui joli joli juqui juqui rrip rrip, rrrub rrrub</i>
<i>holi, holi, huqui, huqui</i> <i>joli joli juqui juqui</i>	<i>rrrip rrip, rrrub rrrub</i> <i>rrrip rrip, rrrub rrrub</i>
(en la versión de Ximénez)	(en la versión de Tedlock)

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**Figure 3.** Reproduced with the permission of Hugo García Manríquez and Editorial Meldadora.

The deliberated re-emergence of this episode in *Commonplace* re-situates García Manríquez's contemporaneous translation of Bonney's militant poetics in the Mexican and Central American context of Indigenous revolt and state-sponsored counterinsurgency. Seen from the other side of a history that has been pushed to one side, as García Manríquez might say (*Empujamos a un lado la historia*, García Manríquez 2018, 9), insurrection is understood as repetition and transhistorical translation of 'the insurrection/of objects/the uprising/of matter' (García Manríquez 2022, 71). At the juncture of García Manríquez's translation and poetic practice, the too-easy translation of seductively iterative revolutionary legends that Bonney rejects in *Happiness* is infused with these other histories and senses of insurgent material ecologies.

## Notes

1. Hugo García Manríquez, introduction to a selection and translation of Sean Bonney's poetry, *El lenguaje de las barricadas* (Mexico City: Editorial Matadero, 2021), 7–10. This text was first published in Spanish and is reprinted here in Daniel Eltringham's translation.
2. Sean Bonney, *El lenguaje de las barricadas*, translated by Hugo García Manríquez, 109–113.
3. Sean Bonney, *Happiness: Poems After Rimbaud* (London: Unkant, 2011), 63–65.
4. Sean Bonney, *El lenguaje de las barricadas*, translated by Hugo García Manríquez, 38.
5. Sean Bonney, *Our Death* (Oakland, CA: Commune Editions, 2019), 73.
6. Sean Bonney, *El lenguaje de las barricadas*, translated by Hugo García Manríquez, 127–8.
7. Sean Bonney, 'Notes on Militant Poetics', *Journal of British and Irish Innovative Poetry* 14(1). doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/bip.9255>.
8. Critical postface by Daniel Eltringham and Fred Carter.

9. On Bonney's non-translations of Baudelaire and Rimbaud, see Edmond (2012), Nowell Smith (2013), Sheppard (2016), and Hampson (2022).
10. See in particular Tim Atkins, *Petrarch Collected Atkins* (Crater Press, 2014), and Peter Hughes, *Quite Frankly: After Petrarch's Sonnets* (Reality Street, 2015).
11. Jèssica Pujol Duran and Macarena Urzúa Opazo have recently published translations of a different selection of Bonney's work, *La revolución de las esferas celestes* [*The Revolution of the Heavenly Spheres*] (Santiago de Chile: Pez Espiral, 2022b). Pujol Duran also published her translation of Bonney's sequence 'Lamentations' (*Letters Against the Firmament*) in the Spanish journal *Revista Kokoro* (2020).
12. The *estallido social* [social outburst] is the name given to the mass uprisings that began in Santiago de Chile in October 2019. Their catalyst was a modest rise in public transport fares, which constellated broader dissatisfaction with Chile's authoritarian neoliberal settlement, spreading to all regions of Chile and leading to confrontation between protestors and the national police force.
13. Bonney's 'ACAB: A Nursery Rhyme' was also translated into a comparable context in Peru by Valeria Román, where it was included in *11/20*, a text-and-image response to the coup that removed president Martín Vizcarra in November 2020 and replaced him with Manuel Merino's short-lived far-right government. Mass protests against Merino were violently suppressed; Román writes that the translation was 'done following the events of the week of the 14 November. It is dedicated to the memory of Inti Sotelo and Bryan Pintado; to the people wounded, detained and tortured by Peruvian National Police and the *de facto* government of Manuel Merino; to the front line and the first aid brigades; to all those who resisted body and mind; to the urgency of changing things and the hope for the recuperation of the present and future' (Román 2020, 12, trans. DE).
14. *Paco* derives from the Quechua word *p'aqu* or *p'aku*, meaning light brown or white, although this is usually taken to be a reference to the chestnut colour of the ponchos historically worn by the Chilean police rather than a marker of relative whiteness identified with the state *per se*, as Pujol Duran and Parker persuasively suggest. See *Etimologías de Chile* (<http://etimologias.dechile.net/?paco>). Corominas's Spanish etymological dictionary includes an entry for *alpaca* that glosses the domesticated vicuña's wool as *p'aco*, that is, 'blonde, redish yellow' (*rubio, amarillo rojizo*) (Corominas 1987 [1961], 44). Given the Inca empire's organisation of pastoral biopower in the territory of *Tahuantinsuyu*, the Quechua-speaking Andean region, the notion that the present-day police might themselves discipline the populace as the Inca state had done its subjects is not altogether far-fetched. Brotherston (1992) notes that this American equivalent to the scriptural 'folk-flock equation' (199) allowed the consolidation of Inca power and perhaps the very possibility of a territorialised imperial state based on herding alpacas and llamas as at once the material basis of taxation and revenue, and the figurative ground of pastoral social relations in which 'territory becomes the pasture and the Inca its divine herder whom only "outlaws" disobey' (196–99). Brotherston acidly observes that the Mapuche peoples to the south of this territory – today regularly subject to racialised violence at the hands of the Chilean state – record paying tribute in flock and mounting raids into imperial territory to recover them (198).

## Acknowledgments

Our thanks to the Estate of Sean Bonney, Editorial Matadero, Editorial Meladora, and the Frank Ocean Collective for the permission to quote from Sean Bonney's poetry and reproduce images from *El lenguaje de las barricadas*, *Lo común* and 'ACAB: Una Canción de Cuna'. We are also grateful for the reviewer's useful recommendations.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

## Funding

The work was supported by the British Academy [British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship PF19\10001].

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