William Marling

What does the Gatekeeper do?

If you do a web search these days you will discover that the “gatekeeper” is currently conceived of as a formidable personality that needs to be gotten around; someone who, according to definition, “regulates access to” medical care, acts as the purchasing agent, or is a government official. But this negative connotation is not what the term meant originally. The term “gatekeeping” originally referred to a news process identified by Robert Park in *The Immigrant Press* (1922). Park wanted to know how “out of all of the events that happen and are recorded every day by correspondents, reporters, and the news agencies, the editor chooses certain items for publication which he regards as more important or more interesting than others” (Park 1922: 328). It was this same sense of propitious *selection* that psychologist Kurt Lewin had in mind when he used the word more formally in *Field Theory of Social Science* (1951). Lewin studied food and found that to get to the table it traversed *channels* regulated by gates: what does it cost? Is it fresh? How much do I need? Does it require cooking? The polymathic Lewin lifted the term into communications theory. There are at least four major models of gatekeeping that stress five levels of decision-making, but the broad 21st century outline is represented by Shoemaker/Vos in *Gatekeeping Theory* (2009). That’s the appreciative sense of the word that I used in *Gatekeepers: the Emergence of World Literature* (2016) and that I wish to further develop in this paper. Gatekeepers do a great amount of invisible, creative work, especially for world literature.

In the field of world literature, the gatekeepers are mostly editors, translators, and agents. Although they may present a Gorgon face to some, for most supplicants they are invisible and unknowable. Their decisions and actions may be presumed to be rote, or scripted, and devoid of *creativity*, but what I discovered writing *Gatekeepers* was that agents like Carmen Balcells (Gabriel García Márquez), translators like Christine Le Boeuf (Paul Auster), and editors like Elisabeth Burgos-Debray (Rigoberta Menchu) made crucial, creative, sometimes contested, choices on a field with multiple possibilities. How did they make those choices? How could they even conceive of the possibilities and choices across cultures?

World literature, as David Damrosch has argued, is literature that crosses cultures – it is translated. Sometimes it is translated out of simple love, but more often it is translated from a rebus of possibilities that are glimpsed across cultures.

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The literary gatekeeper needs knowledge or an imagining of how literature from one language, culture, or nation might find reception in another. One could invoke *Rezeptionstheorie* of Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser to give a theoretical grounding to this practice, but such re-imaginings are not readily traceable on the diachronic scale, to use a term from their school. And they are far less informed, historically speaking, than theory would imagine. I noticed this while researching the popularity of Charles Bukowski in Germany, where he was promoted by the entrepreneurial translator/agent Karl Weissner. The word that describes Weissner best is that of Shakespeare scholar Bertrand Evans: “discrepant awareness” (Evans 1960: 127). Evans originally used that phrase to describe the way Shakespeare, in his comedies, provided differing levels of knowledge for different characters, while the audience knew the most of all. Much of Shakespeare’s comic effect, Evans suggests, is due to the way in which the audience imagines possible outcomes, the way its glimpse across intersections creates new lives.

Aren’t translators, agents, and editors engaged in the same imagining of possible outcomes? But their discrepant awareness is active, not passive like an audience’s. They are not an audience, but players themselves, with possible economic gains from the outcomes they foresee. But most literary theory, and indeed economics itself, noted economist Wroe Alderson, studies markets as if they were not persistently fickle; and literature exists in a market.

A homogeneous market can be cleared by adjustments of price and quality. *A heterogeneous market is cleared by information matching two sets, one ranging over heterogeneous demand and the other over heterogeneous supply. A discrepant market can only be cleared by innovation . . .* If strongly motivated problem solvers face each other . . . it can never be cleared but only moves in the direction of that equilibrium state. Another state, representing new requirements and new opportunities, has arisen before the last is satisfied (Alderson 1965: 207).

What Alderson is saying, for our purposes, is that discrepancies between literary cultures provide great opportunities for motivated gatekeepers. All of those below, we will see, were *alert to discrepancies in literary markets*, but in different ways. Alert is a rare word that can be used as a noun, verb, or adjective. It comes from the French *a l’erte*, which translates to “on the watch,” and it is this adjectival meaning that I am concerned with. The gatekeeper, from Lewin onward, is *on the watch* and *speaks or acts in response*. Gatekeepers’ most important interlocutors are always themselves. The questions they are always asking themselves were first posed in 1992 by Andre Lefevre in *Translating Literature*. They ranged across four topics, which he explained in broad and brilliant clarity: ideology, poetics, universe of discourse, and language can all pose opportunities for discrepant responsiveness (Lefevre 1992: 87). A mix of these is found in each gatekeeper below.

Carmen Balcells – The Agent as Gatekeeper

When Spanish literary agent Carmen Balcells touched down in Mexico City having signed a contract with Roger Klein of Harper and Row for English translation rights to Gabriel García Márquez' four extant works that would pay him \$1,000, the author was still largely unknown on the world literature stage. She had not even met him yet and was only his "hypothetical agent", since he had no foreign sales yet. She probably thought it was a reasonable deal for an unknown author who was not even supporting himself with his fiction writing.

But who was Carmen Balcells? And what did she see in García Márquez? Having been born in 1930 in the rural village of Santa Fe de la Segarra in the province of Lerida in Spain, what could her discrepant awareness be? She attended the local *colegio*, then worked as a secretary at a textile machinery company until age 24. In 1955 she met the poet Jaume Ferran and, through him, writers such as Jaime Gil Biedma and Juan Goytisolo (Ayen 2006)¹. A friend recommended her, because of her office skills, to Vintilă Horia, a novelist himself, and the owner of a Barcelona literary agency called ACER. She began to do correspondence work for him while still living in her village. She was a good typist, but none of this sounds particularly propitious. However, one of her tasks was to superintend foreign rights, which involved a lot of correspondence. She learned the business well, and when Horia moved to Paris around 1960, she bought the agency from him. Though the company itself was valuable, its structure gave her alertness two advantages: 1) she knew there were many foreign markets for Spanish writing with different appetites, ranging from romance to colonial pride, and 2) she knew that contracts worked differently in different countries. The latter was the first area she explored. She began to win favor among authors for rejecting old-fashioned standard contracts, limiting the editing of her writers, and cutting the duration of contracts.

The first author she did this for was dead. Rudyard Kipling had sold his rights to several early books for 200 pounds. In 1899–1900 he sued Putnam's in the U.S. to try to recover them, to no avail. After his death, a society of English authors inherited the foreign language rights to 75 of his works, but they found that the Spanish rights rested in perpetuity with a Barcelona editor. They contacted Balcells, for whom this archaism was a suggestive discrepancy, and she got the contract thrown out in the early 1960s. "I changed the rules of the

¹ A large and informative collection of Spanish newspaper clippings on Balcells previously existed at <http://ferransala.com/carmen-balcells-segala/comment-page-1/#comment-616> (last visit 2010).

game, with the help of the attorney Molas,” she boasted. “I created for the first time two new elements in contracts: geographic limits and time limits. Before, novels were sold to an editor for a lifetime and worldwide. Today my standard is the practice everywhere” (*El Clarín*)².

In effect, Balcells’ awareness of differences in national copyright systems led her to see the possibility of language-specific, nationally segmented, fixed term contracts. She applied innovations from one market to another. This militancy on behalf of foreign rights was attractive to Spanish language authors, many of whom had extensive sales outside their home countries. The *contract revolution* could not have originated among English language authors as they had a large home market and proportionately lower foreign sales; it required an author and agent from a non-English market to challenge the copyright and contractual practices of anglophone publishing.

Within a few years Balcells represented Camilo Jose Cela, Mario Vargas Llosa, Julio Cortázar, and Carlos Fuentes. Some of these writers moved to Barcelona (Márquez was among the first), making it a center of the *Latin American Boom*, a migration that makes more sense when understood as a “de-localization of the political” struggle, as John Beverly explains in *Del Lazarillo al Sandinismo* (1987: 102). This can be traced as far back as the Baroque Era to Idelber Avelar’s argument in *Allegories of Defeat* (2000). However, de-localization was also a prod to greater alertness, summoning up at least two of Lefevre’s criteria above: differences in ideology and in universes of discourse.

Balcells was not only the supreme gatekeeper of the *Boom*’s revolution in contract rights, she was also extraordinarily aware of what Alderson had termed the difference between, “heterogeneous demand and heterogeneous supply” (Alderson 1965: 207). Her dealings with the Spanish firm and home of the *Boom*, Seix-Barral, give us a number of insights. Carlos Barral and Victor Seix, the heirs of the founders, had decided that the time was right to modernize their firm, especially in Latin America where it had been a major presence in the 1930s. They were in a hurry to acquire foreign rights because Spain’s domestic market was relatively small and filled with competing publishers. As Barral explained, “it was a matter of building up a backlist with recent and important authors or else those who were *exotic to the French and Italian channels of Argentinean publishers*” (Herrero-Olaizola 2007: 14, emphasis added). In other words, Barral was explicitly looking for writers outside the supply chain of his rivals, the Argentine publishers, whose translation rights he could resell in Argentine publishers’ traditional secondary markets of France and Italy. His

2 https://ebrary.net/59300/language_literature/revolution_literary_rights (last visit: 03/13/2020).

discrepant awareness focused on the “exotic”, by which he meant texts that, “parallel receiving cultures”, but not necessarily Spanish-speakers, would enjoy. He assayed them for translation and export potential. He was a gatekeeper himself. He imagined an Argentine text in Italy, a Colombian one in France – what would work? The moment a text is purchased, a publisher has to see the possible re-dimensionings of it into a new receiving culture. When a text is acquired for two or more readerships, the publisher has to understand both the initial cultural attractiveness through perceived commonality, and how the texts satisfy particular local needs, perhaps differently depending on location.

Seix Barral was expanding and asked Carmen Balcells to assume responsibility for negotiating its authors’ foreign contracts as a form of legal outsourcing on their part (*El Mundo* 2008)³. It is important to note that Márquez was still promoting his books by himself, although a buyer would have to negotiate with Balcells. Using his own discrepant awareness, Márquez went to Seix-Barral’s nemesis, Editorial Sudamericana of Argentina, with his unfinished book. He played the publishers against each other. Barral only understood the magnitude of his error in June 1967, when Sudamericana printed a first edition of 8,000 copies and sold 1,800 within the first week (Herrero-Olaizola 2007: 121).

One attraction of Sudamericana was its alliance with *Primera Planeta*, Argentina’s leading opinion magazine that sold 60,000 copies a week. Sudamericana also saved Márquez from Spanish censorship, as he was often profane. A first publication based in Argentina also made him a celebrated author in Latin America where he was better understood, thereby creating a clamor for his “exotic” books in Spain. Economically-speaking, his debut in world literature could not have been better planned. It’s an extraordinary example of an author who was alert to shifts in publishing ideology. Subsequently, cooperating with his agent, García Márquez’ *Cien Años* appeared in Spain in 1967 as an *import*, handled by the book club *Círculo de Lectores* and EDHASA, a Barcelona publisher with close ties to Sudamericana. Before this only 200 copies of all of Márquez’ books had been officially imported to Spain (Herrero-Olaizola 2007: 131–132). EDHASA’s petition to the government to print 10,000 copies was quickly approved, writes Olaizola, in order to curb the influence of Argentina’s Sudamericana. The Spanish censor’s review: “As a novel, very good . . . Morally speaking, it presents an environment in which immorality predominates as a daily occurrence and without any ulterior ethical preoccupation” (Herrero-Olaizola 2007: 131–132). Since the immoral behavior in the novel was enacted by

³ Universidad Autónoma Barcelona website, cited by <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2008/10/04/cultura/1223128568.html> (last visit 07/11/12).

Columbians, the censor was oblivious to the idea of *magic realism*, instead interpreting a version of social realism that gave, “the most exact idea possible of the low and middle-class Latin American society” (Herrero-Olaizola 2007: 135). This classist, nationalist, and blinkered perception of *Cien Años* is the antithesis of discrepant awareness, and it shows how easily the provincial is subsumed by the global view. If the whole process had been a game of chess, it would have become a match in which the player who schooled himself most quickly in market heterogeneity won in a rout.

Carl Weissner: The Literary Entrepreneur as Gatekeeper

The American Beat Generation author Charles Bukowski began a correspondence with a young German named Carl Weissner in the mid-1960s. Born in 1940 at Karlsruhe, Weissner was the literary kid at school. After reading about the avant-garde in the *Times Literary Supplement*, he started a magazine. He explained, “I thought if I had a magazine of my own I could exchange copies with some of these editors and just take it from there. So I started a magazine. I called it *Klactoveedsedsteeno*, after a Charley Parker tune” (Dougherty 2005). Having seen Bukowski’s poems in a little magazine, Weissner asked him for some. He was still corresponding with Bukowski when he studied English at Heidelberg and Bonn, then he received a Fulbright scholarship to study in the U.S. in 1968. Rather than settle down at New York University, he split his time between New York City and San Francisco, where he managed to meet many writers. Enthusiastic and enterprising, he was briefly a literary agent for Bukowski, Paul Bowles, and John Fante in Europe and South America. He would eventually translate 28 of Bukowski’s books. Initially, Karl Weissner’s personality involved simply saying “yes” to everyone. He was a great enthusiast. However, letters archived at Northwestern and U.C. Santa Barbara show how an initially naïve enthusiasm eventually came to generate an awareness of cultural discrepancies, and then, in turn, provide literary and commercial opportunities. By 1968 Bukowski was using Weissner as a sounding board for the new nihilistic tone he was experimenting with:

I’ve just decided to let people think I am a shit; it’s easier than answering all those letters. -on the London publisher Norse was talking about, I am afraid I gave him a wrong steer. The London publisher wanted to SEE some work in POSSIBILITY of doing a book. No promise made of publication. I had hoped to dedicate this book to Hal [Norse]. But you see what a loose thing it is . . . Months have gone by. I can’t seem to gather myself. Finally it was

suggested that I just send some books, to save the typing. Another month. Finally other night got drunk and wrapped up and IT CATCHES and CRUCIFIX in cardboard. Still haven't managed to get the package to post office. See how I am stuck in the mad mud? Inability to MOVE. Norse writes of the same thing and I understand it perfectly. He writes that even the ancients were aware of this same thing. God, I hope it lets up soon [sic] (Weissner 1968: s.p.).

Weissner, in his letters to Bukowski, appears to be a young man full of technical expertise about printing, contracts, and distribution. He advises on per-page typesetting costs in deutschmarks versus dollars. He knows which bookstores have how many copies of which books by which authors. He was also corresponding with Allen Ginsberg, and volunteered to unify all of the poet's translations into German under one publisher. Ginsberg was immensely grateful (Weissner 1969: Box 2, folder 15).

Weissner is a different kind of gatekeeper; one who works in what Damrosch calls the "de-localized mode" of world literature in which texts become a very, "elliptical refraction of national literature" (Damrosch 2008: 108, Damrosch 2003: 281). Weissner was constantly seeing congruencies, unlike Edward Seidensticker's imagined translator of Japanese whose alertness was a maze of objections to potential solutions (Weissner 1989: 142–153. Seidensticker 1989: 156). Weissner told Bukowski to save their letters because they would be worth money someday. He had a sense of the value of economic capital, and Bukowski was surprised, but ready to learn about success. Their exchange was much like García Márquez' interaction with Fuentes. "I am afraid I would make a *very* good rich man," he writes back, "and I am AFRAID I would keep my money" (Weissner 1967). One can see this dawning realization that cultural capital is financial capital in one of Bukowski's letters: "So here's the 2 and one half page submission for you. whether this goes or not, Hope you can get a contract from Meltzer from us for us, don't give up the fight. I've even got a fucking thing with PLAY BOY now so you know I've gone completely mad" [sic] (Weissner 1969).

Weissner recognized himself as being part of the commercial potential of the Beat movement. Soon after he arrived in the U.S., with few funds, he bought the German rights to Bukowski's two City Lights books from Lawrence Ferlinghetti. He returned to Germany in late 1969, working part-time for WDR radio and as an outside reader for the publisher J. Melzer Verlag. He proposed the translation of *Notes of a Dirty Old Man* to Melzer (Dougherty 2005). With all of its irregular spellings and punctuation, slang and local references, *Notes* would seem to be a challenge, but Weissner was not worried about tradition; he was an enthusiast, self-taught, much like some other translators with striking resemblance to him. He jumped right in, not worrying about theoretical issues: "He is easy to translate

when he is colorful and uses a lot of adjectives”, Weissner wrote later. “But he is difficult when his language becomes very bare, short sentences and stuff” (Sounes 1998: 174). Weissner left place names and some slang in original form, a tactic that Lawrence Venuti would call “foreignization”, but he standardized spelling and punctuation, “domesticating” the appearance of Bukowski’s prose for German expectations (Venuti 2002: 242).

When Weissner finished translating *Notes*, “he and Bukowski decided to invent a review quote by Henry Miller in a desperate attempt to boost sales” (Sounes 1998: 109). Sounes divides the blame evenly, but Weissner seems to have been the over-eager instigator, for Bukowski wrote back: “I’m not too happy with the fake H. Miller quote, and I would not tell [John] Martin about it or he’d flip – maybe. But if you think it will make the difference in selling 2000 or 5000, go ahead. It’s best that we survive” (Sounes 1998: 118). This first translation would only end up selling 1,200 copies. “It earned Bukowski next to nothing” (Sounes 1998: 110), he reports. Sounes attributes this sales failure to its release exclusively in hardcover.

The German publisher Melzer saw his mistake and told Weissner that Bukowski’s next book should be in paper. Weissner wrote an admiring letter about Melzer to Jan Hermann:

just back from melzer – this guy continues to amaze me – he threw a party about 10 days ago in the couse [sic] of which he got a tip that a leftist Frankfurt publishing house was about to fold because of financial difficulties and that a hot ms. was up for sale – he put through a call to their representative in the middle of the night and bought the manuscript on the spot (Weissner 1969: Weissner File, Northwestern University).

With similar aplomb, Weissner urged on Bukowski, who responded to the new Melzer contract, “tremendous terms! What did you do, get a hammerlock on Melzer?”. Now Bukowski reports that he actually, “read the ESSEX HOUSE contract – they get 25 percent of anything I make on a foreign [sic] translation – the bastards! . . . must phone in tomorrow and see what I can do with them.” (Weissner 1969). But that contract had already been transferred to Ferlinghetti and resold to Weissner. The rapidity of these moves resembles nothing compared to the trading of future contracts. Bukowski was not nearly as *aware* as García Márquez; he was not even cognizant that this was happening external to his exclusive contract with John Martin of Black Sparrow Press.

Chaos was a major tool in Weissner’s commercial repertoire. Although he seems to be the antithesis of Balcells’ cool mastery of technical and legal detail, there is a nonetheless important truth he discovered: scouting the originary market and recognizing exportable texts is important, but *it is necessary to be deeply and intimately knowledgeable about the secondary market as well.*

Weissner changed *Notes of a Dirty Old Man* extensively for the German publication. Here is the fourth section of the original text, as published in English:

it was hot in there. I went to the piano and played the piano. I didn't know how to play the piano. I just hit the keys. some people danced on the couch. then I looked under the piano and saw a girl stretched out under there, her dress up around her hips. I played with one hand, reached under and copped a feel with the other. either the bad music or copping that feel woke up the girl. she climbed out from under the piano. the people stopped dancing on the couch. I made it to the couch and slept for fifteen minutes. I hadn't slept for two nights and two days. it was hot in there, hot. when I awakened I vomited in a coffee cup. then that was full and I had to let go on the couch. somebody brought a large pot. just in time. I let it go. sour. everything was sour (Bukowski 1973: 23).

Weissner, first of all, used standard German capitalization for nouns and to begin sentences. He made the random upper and lower case *I*'s into uniform *Ich*'s.

Es war heiß in der Bude. Ich ging ans Klavier und fing an zu spielen. Hatte natürlich keine Ahnung vom Klavier spielen; ich hämmerte einfach auf die Tasten. Ein paar Leute tanzten auf der Couch. Irgendwann schaute ich zufällig mal unters Piano, und da hatte sich ein Mädchen langgelegt, ihr Kleid war bis über die Hüften hochgerutscht. Ich spielte mit einer Hand weiter und langte mit der anderen runter und fummelte ein bißchen. Entweder war es mein haarsträubendes Geklimper oder das Fummeln, jedenfalls die Dame wachte schlagartig auf. Sie kroch unterm Piano hervor. Die Leute auf der Couch hörten auf zu tanzen. Ich schleppte mich rüber zur Couch und haute mich für Viertelstunde hin. Ich hatte zwei Tage und Nächte nicht mehr gepeinnet. Es war heiß da drin, elend heiß. Ich wachte auf und kotzte in eine Kaffeetasse. Und dann war die Tasse voll und es fing an auf die Couch zu gehen. Jemand brachte einen großen Pott angeschleppt. Grad noch rechtzeitig. Und ich fing richtig an zu reihern. Sauer. Alles war sauer. Ich stand auf und ging ins Badezimmer. Da waren schon zwei nackte Jungs drin . . . (Bukowski, transl. Weissner 1974: 21).

Below is my denotative reverse translation of Weissner's German into English.

It was hot in the joint. I went to the piano and began to play. I of course had no idea how to play the piano, I just hammered on the keys. A few people were dancing on the couch. Eventually, I happened to look under the piano, and there was a girl laid out long, her dress hiked up over her hips. I played with one hand and reached further down and fumbled with her with the other a little. Either it was my hair-raising strumming or the fumbling, but the lady woke up abruptly. She crawled from under the piano. The people on the couch stopped dancing. I dragged myself over to the couch and knocked myself out for fifteen minutes. I had not slept for two days and nights. It was hot in there, miserably hot. I woke up and puked in a coffee cup. And then the cup was full and it started to go down on the couch. Someone brought a large pot. Just in time. And I began to really throw up. Sour. Everything was pissed. I got up and went to the bathroom. Since two naked guys were already there . . . (Marling 2016: 234).

We can see that Weissner removed the spatial and temporal vagueness of Bukowski's original, supplying some proper names (*Bude* – room or joint – for “there”) and making verbs specific (*hämmerte* for “hit,” *haarsträubendes Geklimper* for “bad music”), while retaining *Couch* (sometimes a French loan word in German). The sexual scene of “copping a feel” is almost completely effaced, and the girl becomes a “lady” as the scene ends. Weissner then proceeds right into the next paragraph without pause. “*Ich schleppte mich*” (I dragged myself) replaces the original “I made it to,” adding a Yiddish flavor, possibly picked up in Weissner's reading of Ginsberg. It might have bothered Bukowski if he had known. But Weissner knew exactly how much of Bukowski's candidness, and on what subjects, a German audience could tolerate. There had to be a touch of *schmaltz* and self-mockery mixed into the fatalism. His translations complemented his role as agent.

Christine Le Bœuf: French Translator as Gatekeeper

Of the three gatekeepers examined here, Christine Le Bœuf might seem the least aware of discrepancies in the comparative cultural fields. Wife and *co-équipier* of the Actes-Sud founder Hubert Niessen, who lived mostly in France, she is a self-effacing, non-academic translator who attempts, she says, “to follow the author's intent” (Marling 2016: 104). But her work on Paul Auster's *Book of Illusions* reveals a precise knowledge of her own cultural and commercial terrain. She appended a six-page *note sur la traduction*, explaining why she had left a bevy of proper names (cars, places, cities) and the catalogues of the pseudonymous of the translator and narrator, David Zimmer, in English. Why would she do this? Who would take note? Karl Weissner achieved the same thing without explaining anything to the reader, or to Bukowski.

Le Bœuf adhered rigorously to the *plus-que-parfait*, unlike some modernizing translators. The following passage is one that she discussed with me. The sexuality and slang posed translation difficulties. It is an account of how the disappeared filmmaker Hector Mann becomes a paid sexual performer:

The only time he had any trouble was the first time, or just before the first time, when he still didn't know if he would be up to the job. Fortunately, Sylvia booked their first performance for an audience of just one man. That made it bearable somehow – to go public in a private sort of way, with just one pair of eyes on him and not twenty or fifty or a hundred. In this case, the eyes belonged to Archibald Pierson, a seventy-year-old retired judge who lived alone in a three-story Tudor house in Highland Park. Sylvia had already

been there once with Al, and as she and Hector climbed into a taxi on the appointed night and headed toward their destination in the suburbs, she warned him that they would probably have to go through the act twice, perhaps even three times. The coot was stuck on her, she said. He'd been calling for weeks now, desperate to know when she'd be coming back, and little by little she'd bargained the price up to two and a half C's per shot, double what it had been at the last time. I ain't no slouch when it comes to talkin' bread, she announced proudly. If we play this goon right, Hermie boy, he could become our meal ticket (Auster: *Book of Illusions* 2002: 184–185).

Le Boëuf told me that she had a trans-Atlantic phone conversation with Auster, not about how to translate the sex, but about how to deal with the slang at the end (Marling 2016: 104). In particular, she worried about the sentences, “The coot was stuck on her,” and, “I ain't no slouch.” She felt she had good equivalents for “bread” and “goon”.

La seule fois où il éprouva de la difficulté, ce fut la première, ou plutôt juste avant la première, quand il ne savait pas encore s'il serait à la hauteur. Heureusement, Sylvia avait réservé cette première à une assistance réduite à un seul homme. Cela rendait la chose à peu près supportable : se montrer en public de manière privée, en quelque sorte, avec une seule paire d'yeux fixée sur lui et non vingt, cinquante ou cent. Dans ce cas-ci, les yeux appartenaient à Archibald Pierson, un juge à la retraite âgé de soixante-dix ans, qui vivait seul dans une maison de style Tudor à Highland Park. Sylvia y était déjà allée une fois avec Al et quand Hector et elle montèrent en taxi le jour dit et se dirigèrent vers leur destination dans les faubourgs, elle le prévint qu'ils devraient sans doute s'exécuter deux fois, peut-être même trois. Le vieux avait le béguin pour elle. Il y avait des semaines qu'il appelait, dit-elle, désespérément anxieux de savoir quand elle reviendrait, et elle avait marchandé, faisant petit à petit monter le tarif jusqu'à deux cents cinquante le coup, le double de ce que ç'avait été la fois précédente. Je suis pas empotée quand il s'agit de négociier, annonçait-elle avec fierté. Si on exploite bien cet imbécile, mon petit Hermie, il pourrait devenir notre ticket-repas (Auster: *Le Livre des illusions*, 2002: 218–219).

“*Le vieux avait le béguin pour elle*” (the old man had a crush on her), is very idiomatic French, but she, “felt it was just right”, and Paul Auster agreed. However, as my back translation below shows, some of the rhythmic repetitions, as in the first sentence of the original, are lost. The sexual “act” is only implied in “s'exécuter” and the money is anonymized:

The only time he had difficulty was the first, or rather just before the first, when he did not know if he would live up to it. Happily, Sylvia had booked this first show for an audience reduced to one man. This made the thing just about bearable: appearing in public in kind of a private way, with a single pair of eyes fixed on him and not twenty, fifty, or a hundred. In this case, the eyes belonged to Archibald Pierson, a retired judge of seventy, who lived alone in a Tudor-style house in Highland Park. Sylvia had already gone there once with Al, and when Hector and she got in a taxi on the appointed day and headed towards their destination in the suburbs, she advised him that they would probably have to comply twice, maybe even three times. The old man had a crush on her. There were

weeks when he called, she said, desperately anxious to know when she would return, and she had bargained, raising little by little the price up to 250 a shot, double what it had been the previous time. I'm not clumsy when it comes to negotiating, she announced with pride. If we work on this fool, my little Hermie, he could become our meal ticket (my reverse translation of *Le Bœuf*).

This French loses a bit of Sylvia's slangy greed and Hector's contrasting reticence, despite retaining "Tudor-style" and "Highland Park". "Coot" has disappeared, and "slouch" is rendered as "clumsy". In a language that has a quick-moving slang like French, these are conservative choices that will keep the text readable for a long time. *Le Bœuf* aimed, like Gregory Rabassa did with *García Márquez*, to keep Auster in-translation – in *her* translation.

Her dedication paid off; *Actes Sud* sold hundreds of thousands of copies when Auster's works were adopted for the CAPES exams. That was a feature of the second market that no one in the original market could have predicted. Here, in contrast to the foreignization of Lawrence Venuti, the concise and conservative phrasing positioned the text for greater circulation in the target culture. Some aspects of the text were ripe for import, other aspects had to be effaced. When gatekeeping for world literature, sometimes discrepant awareness means having an awareness of discrepancies.

Gender

At the outset of this essay, Wroe Alderson taught us that, even though we persist in thinking of them as homogeneous, markets are always heterogeneous. Foremost among the "information matching" errors that accompany this blindness are discrepancies in awareness of gender and gendered situations. In *Gatekeepers*, I devote a section to the remarkably poor marketing of Banana Yoshimoto's *Kitchen* (Japanese 1988, English 1993) in contrast to the overhyped works of Haruki Murakami. Appealing to millennial, LGBTQ, mosaic households, and post-fiction audiences, *Kitchen* was admittedly ahead of its time, but the translator, Megan Backus, captured this appeal. Grove Press (hardback) and Washington Square Press (paperback) failed to get reviewers to see beyond the literal kitchen setting. Even the *New York Times* review was studded with clichés about tofu, electrical gadgets, and the popularity of Kentucky Fried Chicken, with only one sentence devoted to the transsexual mother (Hanson 1993).

Discrepancies in gender awareness are extreme, yet potentially rewarding terrain for gatekeepers. Rigoberta Menchu's modest success in comparison to that of García Márquez, a topic I also took up in *Gatekeepers*, was due as much to genre dysphoria as to talent. The translation, editing, and agency of Elisabeth Burgos-Debray made an attempt to mediate between the claims of Latin American revolutionary parties, the genre of *testimonio*, and anthropological correctness. Had the marketers of *I, Rigoberta Menchu* (1983, Nobel Prize, 1992) anticipated the insights of John Beverly in *The Margin at the Center: on Testimonio (Testimonial Narrative)*, it would have been marketed and positioned towards the confluence of Latina realism (Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa) and early third-wave American feminism. The discrepant awareness of Burgos-Debray, however, lay neither in publishing nor in the U.S. or French literary markets. She was, as one learns upon reading the book's history, a harried gatekeeper, for whom simply getting the book in print was a victory. Had she been less constrained, with greater peripheral publishing vision, the book could have had vast impact.

Discrepancies in awareness of gender cultures remain one of the striking features of contemporary world literature. The *soon jung manhwa*, or genre called "comic girls" in South Korea, has recently received attention for its distinct hybridity, copying Japanese "*manga*" (comic) styles while reintroducing Western plots (Noh 2004: 281–298). In a hyper-masculine culture, female authors used components of traditionally masculine genres to write realistic female characters for female readers, achieving huge domestic success. Potential target audiences abroad would seem abound, but as economist Israel Kirzner wrote in 1973, the key quality of *alertness* is always in short supply. "At any given time, an enormous amount of ignorance stands in the way of the complete coordination of the actions and decisions of the many market participants. Innumerable opportunities for mutually beneficial exchange," he wrote, "are likely to exist unperceived" (Kirzner 1973: 217).

Thinking about gatekeepers and discrepancies in awareness, it is useful to recall the "horizon of reader expectations" concept popularized by Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss. The alert gatekeeper, in possession of two or more reading horizons, notes how a presence on one horizon could match the lack on another horizon. For example, the gatekeeper notices many Fiat 500s driven in the United States by thrifty, young Italophiles, but sees that a no repair manual for Fiat 500s in English. In literature, it's often the *salient qualities* of reading horizon A that are lacking in reading horizon B. Horizon B may not even have registered a need. Christine Le Boeuf saw that Paul Auster was writing fiction compatible with the salient hallmarks of her domestic market, and was publishing *on a regular basis*, which would make him an ideal candidate for BAC adoption. Karl Weissner guessed that Bukowski's *ethnicity* plus his *rebellious*

pessimisms would meet a thirst in 1960s Germany. Carmen Balcells sensed that García Márquez' *folkloric quality* would be exotic and *subtly anti-militaristic* in Franco's Spain. These were intuitions that paid dividends. These gatekeepers noticed, then spoke forcefully.

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