

# THE INTELLECTUAL DEBATE LETTER “O”

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## Octavio Miranda

Translated by Regina Anavy

### **The right of the “unhappiest entity”**

“... the supreme achievement of life lies in the exercise of free choice.” Thornton Wilder, *The Ides of March*.

José Martí—so often quoted by everyone, all the time—wrote many times about the right of the “other.”

The end of his letter to Máximo Gómez is memorable: “[A] town is not founded, general, like a camp is commanded.” And, also: “[R]espect for the freedom and thoughts of others, even of the most unhappy entity, is in me fanaticism: if I die, or they kill me, it will be for that.” (New York, May 12, 1894) A writer like him, aware of the weight and strength of words, chose, among many, the word “entity.” He did not write “person” or “individual” or “citizen.” He selected “entity” and added “most unhappy” to it, for clarity.

As a result of the debate provoked by the presence on Cuban television of three characters of sad memory for the culture—Pavón, Quesada and Serguera—many opinions have been published, from writers living in Cuba and abroad, of different ages, who left Cuba years ago, or very recently. I think it’s the first time that such a debate, thanks to the power of e-mail (which in Cuba is a privilege to have, not a right), has been made public and has transcended territorial limits (although nothing has been said in the national press; that is, the debate is public only for those who have access to e-mail, which are few). I want to make some reflections on this topic, as everyone has; I want to remember things from the past and the present because it seems to me, it could be a good time to define concepts and propose changes.

The Cuban Revolution, which has always proclaimed itself “of Martí,” is, in my modest opinion, the most anti-Martí thing that could be imagined, in relation, specifically, to the issue of individual freedoms (of expression, association, movement, etc. I’m not talking of the other human rights, as some “comrade” would surely remind me. It is true that social progress has been made in our country, but it is also a reality greater than Pico Turquino that public health and education are of poor quality, And they’re not totally free either. If you pay a doctor, for years, a salary equivalent to 25 dollars, you are charging him for health and education—with what he’s left as pay—at first world levels, not even mentioning the lack of respect for private property: If you don’t have the right to your house, for example, if you can’t sell or rent it, is it yours? But I don’t want to deviate from the initial topic).

The restrictions on freedom of expression began as early as 1959, simply because Fidel Castro—as evidenced by his actions and the testimonies of combatants and close collaborators throughout his life—is unable to support and respect any opinion other than his own. Martí’s letter to Gómez could have been written for him, cover to cover. Fidel has been in charge of changing, altering, mutilating and distorting history

according to his interests. It is said—they assure me that it's documented and published outside of Cuba—that the 20,000 dead during the fight against Batista was a typographical error (instead of "2,000" they put "20,000." And he loved the error).

His self-defense during the trial that was held after the failed attack on the Moncada Barracks didn't last more than ten minutes, according to eyewitnesses who have not dared to make this statement in public. The version of the death of Camilo Cienfuegos is questioned by many, since it's very strange that no trace of the plane was ever found. Ochoa and La Guardia were accused of being drug traffickers who acted "on their own account," when everyone knew (and knows) that in Cuba it was (and is) impossible for them to manage and carry out these types of activities without their being involved, authorized or, at least, known, by "the highest leadership of the country"—that is, by the Commander in Chief. "We enjoy a shining present; a future of success awaits us, but we have a past, without a doubt, uncertain" Gorbachev supposedly once said, and Fidel seems to be a master at adjusting history to his interests.

Since 1959, the most important newspapers in the country were closed down, and inflexible censorship began to be applied, always under the pretext of the right of the Revolution to defend itself. The famous "Words to the Intellectuals" (1961) that are presented by the government as proof of democracy and freedom could not be, without a doubt, clearer: "Everything within the Revolution; nothing against the Revolution." Who sets the limits, what are they? Why can't you be against the Revolution? Aren't those words equivalent to saying, "Either you're with me or you're against me"?

The cultural policy was set, then, from that speech (the political rigidity would be accentuated in the seventies with the celebration of the First National Congress of Education and Culture in 1971, the entry of Cuba into the Economic Aid Council, in 1972, and the celebration of the First Congress of the Communist Party, in 1975). Culture was "Stalinized," with its fatal copies of the worst of socialist realism (don't forget the UMAP, 1964-1969, sinister antecedent of what would be the witch-hunt for homosexual intellectuals and artists and, in general, for the "different people": free and non-repetitive thinking was severely punished). It was a difficult decade, not a "five-year gray period," as some define it. And a decade that has multiplied, with its ups and downs, until today. It's true that the forms have changed, attitudes that were previously persecuted are tolerated, but, as Neruda said, "We, those of that time, are no longer the same." "The times, they are a'changing," Bob Dylan would say: they had to adapt, they had to "change everything so that everything remains the same." (*El Gatopardo*)

Much has been remembered these days about the damage that Pavón, Quesada and Serguera did to the national culture. But it cannot be forgotten that in this case, as in everything else, they were not the ideologues of that policy but its executors. Politics has always been designed by Fidel Castro, from when and where coffee is planted, bananas watered, or study plans made or unmade, etc. Fidel and his loyal brother, Raúl. Pavón, Quesada and Serguera were "Raúl's men," who complied with what was established by the Party, that is, by the Castro brothers. They were, however, executors with initiatives, and ended "with the fifth and with the mangoes" when, perhaps, they only wanted one of the two things to end. You would have to ask them.

The scars left by the National Council of Culture, directed by those disastrous characters, were not closed; the wound was skin deep. Seeing those ghosts emerge from the past, “Raúl's men,” at this time, those who suffered their excesses firsthand and those who knew about them through stories (because very little, and badly, has been written about this time) were frightened. “Will the dark vultures come back?” they wondered. And the exchange of letters began.

I believe that the intellectuals who live in Cuba and who have criticized, without fear of reprisals, what happened have been honest and brave. I do not think they're doing it, as some say, to defend their privileges. I think they are people who were very hurt and do well to speak, remember and warn about the danger that a return to the past would mean. It's true that they haven't criticized other things, much more serious, such as the execution of three young people who had not killed anyone and who didn't even receive a decent trial. It's true that they have been silent and that they have tolerated the intolerable. But it's also true that in this country, no matter what is said, there is a very well-instrumented repressive system and, although “those of that time are no longer the same,” whoever decides to openly criticize the system or question the decisions of “the highest leadership of the country,” runs the risk of losing his job, going to prison or, in the best of cases, going into a kind of limbo; that is, his books will stop being published, his films will stop being made nor his music recorded; he will lose any opportunity to travel, to fulfill himself as an artist and as a human being. He won't physically disappear but simply cease to exist.

The official discourse has been determined, for a few years now, to show that they are tolerant, that there is no longer censorship, that there are new spaces open to debate and criticism. Yes and no. As always, half-truths are worse than lies. Writers who live abroad have been published, it's true, but they are not controversial writers for the government, little or not at all critical; their novels don't touch on or graze “delicate” issues. Another method is to publish a slightly uncomfortable book, make its presentation. and then it disappears from the bookstores and is never reviewed: total silence.

It's as if he never existed. With artists who live outside the country, other techniques are also applied. For example, the Cuban Eliseo Alberto won the first Alfaguara Prize for a novel, shared with the Nicaraguan Sergio Ramírez: in Cuba the news broke that Ramírez had won the prize but they never mentioned the author of *Informe contra mí mismo* [Report against Myself]. Why, if there's no censorship, wasn't the news given? The obituary vocation is one of the most refined: one of the unmentionable writers dies in exile and, in a few months, their works (not all...) are published in Cuba, unless, like Cabrera Infante or Reinaldo Arenas, they would have left in writing their wish not to be published in their country while the current government was in power.

The government has multiple ways of exercising blackmail and repression: it grants financial aid to writers and artists that fluctuates between 100 and 40 convertible pesos per month; baskets with turkey, cheeses, varied canned goods and wine are distributed at the end of the year and, also, for birthdays and other indicated dates; the insulting

mechanism of entry and exit permits to the country, something that many foreigners do not know or understand, is a card that the government holds to grant or not, depending on the person's behavior: "If you behave well, I'll let you travel; if not, you stay here." I would like to know what all those left-wing intellectuals, most of them excellent people, would say or do if something like this were applied to them in their countries.

But the little Cubans can put up with that; they are used to it and, ultimately, the final objective is so sublime, the confrontation with the United States is so necessary for the world, that it doesn't matter whether the islanders sacrifice themselves—half a century isn't so long—and meanwhile, we remain here, informed of everything. We read all the newspapers we want; we criticize whenever we feel like it; we travel the world explaining the wonders of Fidel's Cuba and how self-sacrificing and heroic Cubans are. Don't you think there's something rotten...somewhere?

Likewise, the position of some intellectuals residing outside of Cuba who ask for and demand a more daring level of criticism seems unfair to me, when they all know very well that criticism of the system or the government is absolutely impossible. Or possible, if you assume that long prison sentences await you, as happened to Raúl Rivero and to all the people who have had the courage to openly say what they think. I don't think Cubans are cowards, nor do I think the Russians, Bulgarians, Poles, or Hungarians were. Socialism has subtle and also barbaric ways to silence consciences. Fear enters the body and becomes part of oneself.

It's not possible to cover all aspects of this problem; it would be very long. I think, to conclude, several things:

1. that the debate that arose from the television presence of Pavón-Serguera-Quesada has revealed the need in this country to talk about things, to call them by their name, to question issues and decisions.
2. that it would be very important that, based on what happened, a serious and open discussion be convened on all the topics that are desired, and that everything could be criticized, without the fear of being accused of being traitors.
3. that all Cuban intellectuals, wherever they live and think what they think, and foreigners who so wish, could participate in this debate.
4. that the entry and exit permit to the country in which one was born be eliminated, since this measure is nothing more than blackmail and a violation of human rights, which limits the individual's capacity for freedom and free choice.
5. that economic aid and the granting of other privileges, crumbs granted in order to maintain a complicit silence, be eradicated; that "aid" be replaced by decent wages that allow everyone to live with dignity and without anguish. This would not be a claim only of artists and intellectuals since these mechanisms of "financial incentives" are applied in other productive spheres. (For many years we were told that "the economic base defines the superstructure." The government has always feared economic independence

because it knows full well that economic independence enables and facilitates freedom of thought.)

6. that there is true and free access to the Internet, to foreign television channels, to newspapers and magazines; that people can really draw their own conclusions and not through round tables, news and newspapers that filter and manipulate all the information and deliver the part that seems politically correct. It's true that in almost half a century of history tremendous progress has been made in the education of the people, illiteracy has been eliminated, schools and universities have been created: "I am not telling you to believe, but to read," said Fidel; everything can be read and it's the person himself and not an official who decides what is healthy or not, ideologically.

7. that censorship be eliminated on radio and television; that there is an alternative public medium where different, contrary, controversial criteria can be expressed.

8. that it is not a sin to question, not only the cultural policy, but also the policy in education, public health, etc.

9. that no one be accused of "working for the enemy," as affirmed in the "Declaration of the UNEAC Secretariat," of having an "annexationist agenda," or expressing points of view opposed to those of the government or, simply, that are different.

10. that everything, absolutely everything, can be reversible; that the "Words to the intellectuals" be read as a historical document and not as a sacred text.

11. that the current monologue, dense and old, be replaced by a true and constructive national dialogue.

12. that other voices be heard; that voting in the National Assembly be truly free, that there be votes for and against and not a suspicious unanimity.

13. that, finally, "the unhappiest entity" has all the rights and freedoms, that it can make mistakes without fear, that it questions dogmas, that it be heard and respected.

Perhaps I'm asking too much. Will the UNEAC want the writers who have expressed their opinions in this debate to have their emails approved? Will we have to sign new emails? The declaration that the UNEAC has just distributed uses stagnant and recognizable language: it's the same as always, the same as in the seventies. I hope I'm wrong.

Octavio Miranda  
Havana, January 17, 2007

## Omar Valiño

Translated by Regina Anavy

With the same astonishment and indignation as the others I have been following in detail the just and timely exchange of messages. Of course you can continue to count on me in the front row for anything.

Omar Valiño

## Orlando Hernández

Translated by Regina Anavy

Dear Desiderio:

I apologize for my delay in joining the debate, which has been enriching day by day. It has not been out of caution, nor out of fear, but out of a certain apathy or pessimism that I hope to get rid of. Unfortunately (or perhaps luckily), I did not see the program dedicated to Pavón's "imprint" on Cuban culture. I even thought that Pavón had died. I watch little TV, and that's the kind of show that usually prompts me to change the channel.

In any case, I have read your rigorous messages, those of Arturo Arango, Reynaldo González and others that have reached me, and in truth my stomach turn over to think that the true story of such a disastrous character has not only been able to remain discreetly silenced for so many years, but can now be unabashedly softened by presenting himself as a poet, surrounded by medals, photos of high-ranking figures, in the manner of an old work hero or something. Sounds like a joke in the worst taste. And it's not, far from it.

I can't imagine where such a grotesque and offensive decision could have come from, but it is alarming, I have no doubt. I don't think something like this can be unintentional, or the result of an enthusiastic programmer, especially on our TV. But, on the other hand, I think there are very young people, Desiderio, who have not even heard of Pavón or Papito Serguera, even though they have suffered the same dictatorial effects of other officials of the same kind, so the matter should not deviate both towards the already old and proven guilt of Pavón, or the cultural direction of those years, not even towards the possible "secret intentions" of the ICRT or of the instance that deliberately ordered the construction of that program. Instead, we should clearly break down all the components of that prehistoric model that Pavón represents and that, as Dr. Rodríguez Coronel says, is something that has always been there, that has not disappeared, and that continues to keep our cultural policy strained and strangled, our intellectual and artistic creativity and everything else.

I don't think the Pavón model can be cloned so easily if you start by explaining (as you and other intellectuals have already begun to do) the reasons for its decrepitude, its ineffectiveness, and its malevolence. And for this it's not enough to write a list of victims or bitter anecdotes of those years (although there is nothing better than concrete examples), but a discussion of the Pavón case and the "Five gray-year period" would be old Bohemia if it doesn't include the analysis of all its sequels and "updates" up to the most recent contemporaneity. After all, these are very persistent viruses that mutate with the context and often present themselves with many varied camouflages that should be located and reported. The fact that your magazine *Criteria* has given us multiple contemporary examples of analysis of similar issues and other collateral issues (racism, corruption, fear, sexism, etc.) constitutes a very optimistic advance towards understanding how to seriously address these phenomena.



I think that many of us (I speak for myself, of course) have gotten out of the habit of thinking and writing directly about these issues because they are outside our “specialties,” which frees us from commitments that we should all really assume, even if it is in an unprofessional way. Seen from the positive side, perhaps the appearance of that program and that absurd tribute should be interpreted—not so much as the counterrevolutionary gesture that Dr Rodríguez Coronel pointed out, which is very sensible—but as a very useful provocation to reflect more energy on censorship and self-censorship, bureaucratism, opportunism, silencing and the whole string of scourges of a new type that we already know and that keeps many educators, thinkers, creators, and artists in a state of discontent, anxiety, insecurity, and fear, and, of course, our population in general.

The fact that the platform of these debates is email and not the media themselves, publications, or public (or at least institutional) discussion could gradually turn it into a gossip of old, pitiful, and spiteful writers and artists. And these are issues that have infected everyone and not just intellectuals and artists. I think the worst thing is to discover in very young people or people belonging to popular sectors or linked to other supposedly non-intellectual or artistic activities (I am thinking of the religious environment of Ifá, for example, where there is currently a rich and heated intellectual debate on ethical issues, political, and even philosophical, aesthetic, etc.), the same symptoms of those illnesses of thought that we are talking about here.

The old syndrome of “that doesn’t fix anyone,” or “this is not the right time to discuss these matters,” or “that is up to the corresponding authorities to decide,” etc., has been prolonged beyond what is owed to a lot of things that we all suffer daily in our respective jobs. As you well know, what we call culture is not just a matter of the “cultured” nor of the theoreticians of culture. That’s why I don’t think it’s necessary to reduce the list of voices for fear that someone sneaks in and takes advantage of this circumstance. This—as it should be in any other sphere—is everyone’s business.

I even received a very interesting message that a friend sent me and that Doimeadios wrote, where mischief, double meanings work like good surgical instruments, which, as we know, is typical of good humor, now almost extinct. I believe that even the “accused” or those referred to should also give their points of view. I would not like this whole matter to end with an official opinion “from above” that would close this interesting and very useful debate. It would be very sad to see that the pessimistic thought that dogs can continue barking uselessly at the wheel of the car is true. Especially when we know that this car (call it revolution, Cuban culture, our country, the homeland, or whatever anyone wants to call it) is a common good, a collective property.

A hug  
Orlando Hernandez

## Message from Orlando Hernández to Arturo Arango

Dear Arthur,

I was very happy to receive your message. Some other day we will have to meet and talk. About this or something else. Now I prefer to get to the point. I learned yesterday from Desiderio that they (who?) had had a meeting with the Minister and that they were waiting for “some” decision. Which? Whose? I don’t know how things have continued to move in recent hours, but the truth is that, until now, none of the participants in said meeting has said anything concrete about what was discussed there. Was there some commitment to maintain secrecy?

I must confess that in the current circumstances and given the tone of sincerity and “transparency” that has prevailed in these public exchanges, any manifestation of “secrecy” seems out of place. Don’t you agree? If we are launching a style of virtual debate that has the grace—and the courage—of not being anonymous, why not show us all the cards? It’s bad enough that many stakeholders are excluded because they don’t have email or cellphones, or because they’re not on our mailing lists. It seems to me that we ALL should have the privilege of sharing ALL information.

No one knows what kind of “decision” is being expected, or was agreed to be expected. A simple apology from the ICRT for their blunders? Some proposed sanction perhaps? For one person or more? In my opinion, none of this seems really important. We’ve all seen those movies. Neither apologies (true or false), nor sanctions (where those sanctioned often “fall further up” or are even rewarded years later with programs on TV) are going to fix anything. At this point, most are hoping for more serious, more respectful decisions, and above all, ones that are broader, more comprehensive, that allow a glimpse of solutions to a whole range of discomforts and concerns that have been raised here (and many others that have not been raised) concerning the Pavón case.

You don’t have to be very intelligent to notice that they aren’t problems of a trade union or “union” nature; that is, that they affect only or mainly the workers of the “culture,” but rather that they are problems that interest everyone. Are we vainly defending our miniscule “freedom of expression, of creation” as writers and artists? Our right not to be censored and of course not to have to censor ourselves for fear of being censored?

This, it is true, has been catastrophic for our intellectual, literary and artistic production, but I am convinced that the other sectors of our population would like to claim these same rights to be able to express themselves without having to lie, whisper or live double lives, to be socially, ideologically, politically honest, without fear of censorship and reprimand from the many other institutions with which we are related as citizens. From which it follows then that it is not only a matter of “cultural policy.”

It seems that we continue to understand culture in its reduced, elitist format, as referring mainly to “art and literature,” or to intellectual creation of a single type, separated from all other intellectual, aesthetic and creative activities of social, economic or religious life. The fact that the corner winemaker, or the family doctor or the

*babalawo* on the block cannot accuse the excesses of a certain Pavón or a Serguera does not make them any less victims of those same factory defects that we have been discussing here. I like to insist on the idea of making this issue a social problem and not just a union problem. It would really be very sad if all this fell into the ridiculous mailbox of complaints and suggestions of the Ministry of Culture, or became the collective catharsis of a minority.

On the other hand, I have the impression that this matter is taking on too many sides, most of them more or less unproductive. Some have taken advantage of the occasion to air old grudges in public, others to show off their intelligence and eloquence, or to show off their very worthwhile scars. Perhaps all this is normal within our world. But we have to get out of this vicious circle and stop looking at our navel—which is exactly the same as everyone else’s—if we want something more than a new Band-Aid. I have just received an invitation from Desiderio for a conference in *Criterion* on “The Five Gray Year Period: Revisiting the Term,” by Ambrosio Fornet as part of the Cycle “The Cultural Policy of the Revolutionary Period: Memory and Reflection,” where you will also make an appearance. It seems very good, of course, but I am also concerned that this will turn into an academic, “terminological” debate, etc. Outside of this message from Desiderio, I have hardly received any new messages, only Amir’s text and the discussion between Rosa Ileana and Desiderio. And the article in *El País*, of course. Anyway, is there anything new to say or has everything been said? Hopefully it’s neither of the two.

A hug and let’s keep in contact,  
Orlando Hernandez

P.S. Of course, I have directed this message to everyone on the list, or the initial list, since there are many other parallel lists

### **Another message from Orlando Hernandez**

Did we want an answer? We already have one. The ICRT has responded. And now that? Does anyone know what the next step is? Besides feeling mocked again, outraged, we can do nothing concrete, but wait. Apparently, the “widespread indignation of magnitudes and unpredictable results” that Desiderio mentioned, is silenced. Or maybe I’ve been going deaf. Of that mambí bugle call from the beginning, which all Cubans listen to with so much pride, now we are only left with the Chinese trumpet of the oriental conga. Sitting in front of my PC, I also wait. Smoking, of course. I am disappointed to see how many responses to unsolicited requests enter Cubarte with impunity: Viagra, Rolex and university degrees at low prices. From time to time I startle with some message, but it’s private, for personal consumption.

I don’t know if we had really made some petition, if we had requested a response, nor from whom, nor for what. But one of our main sins has always been precisely that: waiting for answers, decisions, measures, conclusions, and not being able to take them. Indeed: it’s something that is not in our hands. It’s been a long time since we handed over the hands with the gloves. (But it seems that I am rushing to prejudice, as Desiderio

amicably reprimanded me, and I don't say this sarcastically: it's true that the response from the Minister is still missing, and from the UNEAC Presidency, and of course, the responses that will inevitably come after the conferences in *Criteria*.

Should I keep waiting? Some already only expect the generally slow, unpredictable responses (or reactions) of other even more elevated instances. The matter has been left in the hands of the experts. We wouldn't know what to do. We are too poetic, idealistic, romantic. Or we use too much common sense, emotions. Either way, we wouldn't know what to do with the answers because we didn't ask the right questions, make the right requests. Or maybe they weren't clear enough. Not even for ourselves. Did we want retrospective relief? Apologies? Was it a lynching? Or did we know that what we wanted was impossible; that is, a moon like the one that mom promised us? To have the moon you have to look for it and not just ask for it. And we were already all looking for it. As Francis Sánchez, from Ciego de Avila, said in a message: "The best is not yet to come, the best is already happening. Think hard and openly, dialogue boldly, exchange opinions..."

Twice our tribal chiefs have sat around the campfire and failed to light the peace pipe or declare any real war. And now our warriors don't know whether to keep brandishing their axes or retreat back to their tents and consult their oracles. There has been no debate, no controversy. We have all agreed. We have been shooting symbolic arrows to defend Honor, Freedom and other such abstractions. Some arrows (many of them poisoned) have wounded our own side. But the enemy remains invisible, especially since a part of it is still inside us. We have only pointed out some of its old disguises: Pavón, Quesada, Serguera, "the five gray year period"....

Thank God I had to interrupt this kind of metaphorical ethnography I was doing. I just received the text from Roberto Cobas. I don't know who he is, but I have found there many intelligent, direct, and sincere ideas, that is to say, revolutionary. Or at least it seems so to me. I haven't finished reading his text, but he has stuck many fingers in many wounds. You have to read it without suspicion. I have also read very interesting ideas by the historian Pedro Campos Santos on 21st century socialism, and I would very much like to invite him to share in this dialogue, as I mentioned to Desiderio last night by telephone.

Taking this whole issue out to the corresponding battlefield, which is much broader than the one in which we move, includes economic, social, and political analyzes for which I don't think we all have much competence. (I speak for myself, of course.) Looking for a little clarity would not hurt us at all. It's a good time to do it. While we wait for "answers," let's be prepared to ask (and ask ourselves) questions, lots of questions. There is no need to be discouraged. We can't be wrong. Hugs.

## **Message from Orlando Hernández to Pedro Campos**

Dear Pedro,

I thank you very much for your prompt and decisive letter. And I apologize for not responding to you right away, but I've been immersed in these pursuits, and now I've found the time. I knew in advance what your position was going to be. I have read almost all your essays and articles in *Kaosenlared*, and I'm very happy to know that we can count on someone like you. The presence of your ideas in our current debate is of great importance. Your positions are very clear and point to very urgent needs of our society. To a large extent, if I dared to circulate your name and email within my message, it was to precipitate your appearance among us.

To the extent of my limited knowledge, I have tried to divert this whole matter from the limited union tone (vengeful, etc.) with which it was presented at the beginning, and direct it towards the social, economic and political level that you know very well, but I lack the resources to structure the discourse that is now needed. And that's where you come in. If you need me to send you the messages that we have been passing around this week, I will do it immediately, so that you can have a broader perspective of all the aspects (even those that are emotional, not very coherent, and of course, the opposite ones). Yes, we really have to do things together; we have to know who we are and how we think, so that too abstract theoretical models don't go to our heads. I'll give you my phone number in case you want to call me at any time: 41 40 18. I repeat, your letter has given me great joy. I look forward to speaking with you as soon as possible. As you may know, Desiderio Navarro has organized conferences on these issues on the 30th in *Cristerios*, which will be held in one of the halls of the Casa de las Américas. Your participation there seems essential to me.

Tell me if I can send your letter and my response to the rest of the interested parties.

A hug,  
Orlando Hernández

## **Message from Orlando Hernández to Carlos Sotomayor**

Dear Carlos Sotomayor,

Thank you for your message. I have little time to respond individually to all the letters. Those that are addressed only to my address I keep private until the author authorizes me to make them public. Unfortunately, many still remain on the sidelines of this forum for fear of future reprisals (sometimes in the small circuit of their workplace, for example, or from their base committee of the UJC, etc.), a feeling of mistrust that I consider very logical(?). But we must gradually lose that fear and begin to circulate all the ideas on these issues, in an open and sincere way, if we want to solve all (or at least some) problems.

I don't know what you mean when you say you are a "simple cultural worker," because one of the things we are discussing refers precisely to that: to stop thinking that cultural workers (and this concept of culture should be understood in the broadest way) have more right than others to assert their opinion (and even to establish it as law) because they consider that they have greater competence, or greater intellectual hierarchy, or greater political, administrative power, etc., within the management apparatus, etc.; when what it is about is that we all understand that the leaders, the "cadres," the institutions, at all levels, are only our "delegates," the spokespersons and defenders of our needs, and not just our bosses, or our employers, or our overseers.

The idea is very simple. If we don't decide things together, someone is going to want to decide them for themselves, which is what has been leading our country to the generalized discontent in which it finds itself. Remember that the revolution was made above all so that the "simple workers" would have all the rights that only a few possessed. With regard to the fact that the "firemen" have already gone to put out this fire, I have a very different opinion. Remember that it's a fire to burn old and useless things, and there are many people interested in that fire not going out. Quite the contrary. If it goes out, it will not be the fault of the "firefighters," but rather ours, the "simple" and "complex" workers.

Tell me if you allow me to circulate your message and my response. Your concern (which I suppose is based on a concrete fact and not on an assumption) introduces an element that should be stated.

A hug,  
Orlando  
January 18, 2007

### **Message from Orlando Hernández to Francis Sánchez**

Dear Francis, I apologize for not having responded to you personally from the beginning, especially considering that you have been one of those who has always been very aware of everything and very concerned and active during the development of this forum, debate or whatever it's called. I haven't done it with anyone. Sometimes due to lack of time, or for other considerations (respect for requested privacy, etc.), which I stand by. Most of them (with the exception of Desiderio, Arturo Arango, etc.) I don't have the pleasure of knowing personally, and it seems enough to me to invade their privacy through the use of their addresses. All my messages—with very few exception—have been sent to everyone who appeared in the letters I received from Arturo and Desiderio, and I'm not very good at those email matters.

From what I have read of your messages, I think we agree on the essential things, which is more than enough. And that makes me happy. I perfectly understand your feeling—which I hope has been disappearing—of being "belittled" for being or living "inside," as you say, but, as you well know, those from the "outside" have at some point felt equally dismissed from the "center" of the debate. The presence of a large group of

prominent intellectuals and artists has also inhibited (or auto-dismissed) many other cultural workers who would have the same right (and the same desire) to express themselves. I believe that the widest participation of all is important, since the variety of points of view is what can enrich a possible solution. But I myself have never been in that “center,” nor have I wanted such a thing. And I apologize if my messages have given that impression.

I’m an “independent” writer; that is, I have not received a salary from any institution since 1989, and I am simply a “rank and file” member of UNEAC. Therefore I have not participated in the meetings that have been held there, nor have I been able to be part of any of the institutional decisions that have been made. Like you, and many others, I have expressed my opinions freely, with the utmost sincerity. I appreciate the mentions you make about me in one of your messages, which now I don’t know if you addressed only to me or to everyone. I have also quoted your words in one of my messages, I think number 3. Have you received it?

I never sent you the *El País* thing that you asked me for, nor the one of Rosa Ileana, since I considered that especially the second could divert the matter towards internal conflicts between intellectuals, an issue that seemed very dangerous to me from the beginning, and still seems so to me. In short, I have sent you others that I have received and I am ready to continue these dialogues and increase friendship, good understanding, and get rid of so much suspicion and fear that keeps each of us separated in his cave. I am convinced, Francis, that together we are going to solve something; I don’t know how much, or when, but it’s inevitable. I look forward to meeting you. Until then, a hug.

Orlando Hernández  
January 21, 2007

### **Message from Orlando Hernández to Yoani Sánchez**

Yoani, of course. From the beginning I was bothered by the conversion of this problem into a simple “terminological” academic agenda “topic” (Five-year gray period: revisiting a term), which cost me a public reprimand from Desiderio, which I preferred not to answer to avoid “disunion in the ranks.” His argument was that this would allow in some way to establish debates towards other aspects of the problem and incorporate opinions from other areas of our society. By now closing the margin of admission (for reasons of physical “space”), many people will be left out and of course many opinions!!!

Well, let them move it now to the Karl Marx or a ball field or a pasture, as Macho said!!! I am very pessimistic, and I don’t even have the slightest enthusiasm for this conference anymore. I would rather have received a message from some of the speakers than go and listen to their long-drawn-out reasoning now. We have all done it spontaneously, risking making mistakes, inconsistencies, etc. Why has none of them publicly participated in the debate so far? Can we now hope that their texts will finally give us “the key” we are looking for? It doesn’t seem to me that it’s a key to open, but to close. I hope I’m wrong.

Cheers,  
Orlando  
January 22, 2007

### **Message from Orlando Hernández to Pedro Campos**

Dear Pedro,

I sent you the message about the Conference that apparently was only sent to the “users” of the Cubarte mail, and I was afraid that you wouldn’t receive it. As you may remember, from the beginning it bothered me that they tried to turn this issue into a “topic” on the academic, terminological agenda (Ambrosio Fornet’s conference was entitled “Five-year gray period: revisiting a term,” for which I suffered a public reprimand from Desiderio, who has been its organizer as the director of *Cristerios*).

I refrained from answering him so as not to create divisions, and I resignedly accepted his arguments, which foresaw the appearance of a broader debate than the “five-year gray” issue, since it included the participation of other sectors of society and not just the “intellectuals and artists.” Admission has now been reserved for members of these institutions of intellectuals, writers and artists for reasons of “physical space.” I don’t see why then it couldn’t be moved to a ballpark or a pasture, as the journalist Reynaldo Escobar said. The truth is that none of the intellectuals invited to give conferences (with the possible exception of Arturo Arango) has expressed himself through any email, which has been the medium accepted by all, preserving the privilege of not making mistakes as citizens, although they can do it later only as lecturers. All this has me very upset. It seems to me that the idea of holding these conferences has great value, but it’s far below the value that the call for a broader and more participatory debate could have. Unfortunately, that other call has never been made, because perhaps only the Government itself, or the Party could do it. This is not a movie prohibited for minors.

A hug,  
Orlando  
January 22, 2007

### **Message from Orlando Hernández to Desiderio Navarro**

Dear Desiderio:

I’m sorry. I have accumulated many doubts and grievances. I confess that I had already returned to my shop to consult the oracles, to ruminate on discontents, to avoid, to take precautions. I had slammed Sun Tzú’s book shut and continued with my readings of the *Odus of Ifá* and the *Tao Te Ching*. A painful inflammation of the trigeminal (a nerve that I only knew thanks to the Matamoros Trio), a tooth extraction (the 33rd), an *osorde ni Ifá* [secret act that the Awo must not disclose](where Baba Eyiogbe, Oddí Takofeño, Ogbe Ate saw me, although with Iré Ashegún Otá lese Orúnmila), the advice of my wife



and many friends, the crash of my PC, etc., combined harmoniously for me to abruptly walk away from the debate.

The serious thing for me is that I am disobeying the precise warnings of Orula who advised me to stay away. And I'm not kidding. Living in a country like ours, I am fortunate to enjoy multiple identities, to use a large number of traditions that many times—like now—come into conflict. Ifá, Tao, Kimbisa, Martí, el Ché, etc. But I am not Chinese. The trigeminal can be removed (if a “mystical man” tells me so, as the song says). And I'm sure that neither Orula nor Sambiampongo have wanted to censor me, but to warn me, take care of me.

But the many messages and events of these last days have fired my spirits again. I must admit that the Inbox has become one of the books that has been offering me the most “cultural” knowledge lately. I suffered in silence the UNEAC Declaration, that of Alfredo Guevara, which have already become too old, and also the announcement (the third) of the conference organized by *Criterion*, and which luckily I had the opportunity to discuss with you by telephone. Upon receiving, after our conversation, the fourth invitation (!) already arranged by you, (with its corresponding gray background) and discovering that my disenchantment continued, it seemed to me that it was better to leave my opinions where they were, because they could be misunderstood.

Pedro Campos, who visited me the day before yesterday, recommended that I let the events unfold, that it was inevitable that the discussions would reach everyone and that—contrary to what I thought—things were going even faster than usual, after decades of lethargy. If he sent you a message with all my doubts, it could create “disunity in the ranks,” or it could seem that he was sabotaging an activity that can be very productive. Unfortunately I couldn't hear you at the Round Table, so I can't comment on that.

Now I have just received the news of the new space “Words to intellectuals” in the Library that Dr. Hart has proposed “to organize meetings and a line of debate, of serene analysis, on the most difficult problems that affect the intellectual field and the Cuban culture.” Then I read the letters from Gustavo Arcos and “Betty,” the letter from Enrique Colina, and many other previous ones, from Reynaldo Escobar, from Yoani, Felix Sánchez, etc., etc., and I haven't been able to stop recovering the message that at that time I was going to send you. Or parts of it. I put the rest in the Recycle Bin. Maybe I should have given this one the same fate.

I am sending you these disorganized fragments privately, with the hope that you will know my opinions and send me yours, but deep down I believe that your answer should be known by all those who have been interested in this matter and especially in the positions of *Criterion*. I apologize for the fragmentary state of the writing. They are text ruins, patches, which is what I can do now. I'm in a lot of pain and not able to give much shape to my ideas. So please don't pay attention to verb forms. My message is the expression of sincere concern, without internal folds, and in no way an accusation or anything like that against you or *Criterion*. Take it as an unequivocal sign of respect and friendship. We already talked about it a few days ago.

Right now I read your message to “Betty,” and it seemed disproportionate. I don’t think, Desiderio, that everyone who writes to you with concerns, doubts, or discomfort (and I’ll do it in a while) is trying to question you or accuse you, or involve you in compromises. But *Criteria*s has taken center stage in this debate, and people are writing to you what they think. I don’t know who Betty is, really, or if she deserves everything you’ve told her. Maybe not. I also had an exchange with her and urged her to publicly express her opinions. I seem to remember that she is a friend of Magali Espinosa.

But we are in a very complex “revolutionary situation,” my brother. Don’t lose your temper. People respect you and try to take care of you, and *Criteria*s, for being the space for reflection that it is been for many years, so don’t be suspicious. Sometimes that’s the price that must be paid for having visibility in the “public thing.” Words play tricks right now. And you have to take care of yourself like a fine rooster when using certain words or ideas, since semiotics do not abound. But they can be fair for sinners, don’t forget that.

I think that by now most of the issues that concern us all have come to light. At least the fundamentals. Luckily, we have heard few personal complaints, very brief accounts of losses, and much less “annexationist” proclamations financed by any enemy, but quite the opposite. It has also become very clear that it is not—as the UNEAC Declaration stated—about “the just indignation of a group of our most important writers and artists,” since this matter goes far beyond those important figures, even beyond those of us who belong to the UNEAC, or those who were specific victims of that historical period called—perhaps provisionally—the “five-year gray period.”

What has been seen has also been the righteous indignation of many common and current writers, intellectuals and artists, not important, almost unknown, some perhaps too young to have published something, or who have done so in “the provinces,” etc. But it was also clear that it was an issue that interested many others who do not even write or make art, but are part of our educated and creative society. At least for a few days, everyone has felt they have the same rights to publicly express their concerns, their disagreements, their fears, and those who have not been able to do so, or have not wanted to, will have their reasons, and their decisions will have to be respected.

The other concern, whether the discussion was taking place from “revolutionary” positions, has also become clear: practically all of them are. Even those positions that in appearance can be too exalted, ironic, explosive, scathing, incendiary, etc. At least, that’s my impression. Many Cubans who considered themselves intimately rebellious, hypercritical, and even dissidents, or who fell into the category (always imprecise) of “counterrevolutionaries” because they didn’t agree with many things that have been happening in our country, have discovered with surprise that they were profoundly revolutionary. And this is a very positive sign .and we must understand it and prevent it from deteriorating, because the important thing is to fix our society. and the more people who are interested in doing it, the better. Inclusion has to give better results than exclusion.

The Declaration of the UNEAC Secretariat has been timid, insubstantial, bloodless, as many of the participants have already expressed directly. The other “declaration,” that of Alfredo Guevara, is aimed exclusively at energetically denouncing the “belligerent mediocrity and ignorance” of the ICRT, and it is placed—energetically it’s true—only in the initial stage of this debate, already much more advanced.

Armando Hart’s proposal—in my humble opinion too orthodox—attempts to mechanically transfer our current concerns to a historical moment and to a pronouncement (*Words to the Intellectuals*, 1961) whose problems of interpretation, and above all of application, we have all already verified during these years, and still we continue suffering. Seen in the current context, I don’t believe it’s a proposal that satisfies the broader needs that this debate has generated, which should go beyond the “intellectual field” and “Cuban culture,” as it continues to be conceived, to become a matter for the entire people. Reducing it to our “sector” will again be pernicious. It’s true that—as you told me—there are other spaces to discuss other issues (economic, political, etc.); that is, the Assemblies of People’s Power, The Rendering of Accounts, the CDR Meetings, etc., but you already know how they have been working.

So, dear Desiderio, the only thing we were all waiting for was the announced Conference by Ambrosio Fornet (and those that would follow later), because it promised to provide that space for public debate that was being denied or postponed. The changes of venue, seeking to give more space to those interested, were proof that *Criterion* and other institutions (Casa de las Américas, UNEAC, the Ministry of Culture) were trying. But now they have frustrated him, and they have let everyone down. That is a reality that cannot be covered with a finger.

And although the conferences are generally, as in any other literary genre, a matter of authorship, we listen to them and then applaud them. And of course, in the end we will hear: “Does anyone want to say something, ask something, etc.?” That second part—without tarnishing the speakers, of course—was seen by all as the main course. I think that the authors could even make a mistake as authors, as speakers, or fall short of the expectations or needs of their audience, but the interventions of the public would allow it to be enriched. Now the audience has shrunk extraordinarily.

I was wondering, however, and so I told you, why I would have to wait until the 30th to know—not just the ideas—but the opinions of the invited speakers? They would have the privilege of having several weeks to string together and explain many issues that those of us who participated in the emails didn’t have. It’s okay. Perhaps Fornet will give us a “key” to get into the heart of so many problems. I would have preferred a preview of his views. We can all have been wrong about something (Francis Sánchez himself recognized it with respect to Ambrosio), but we have done it as citizens, with our passions, our ironies, etc., and not only as authors or producers of knowledge or lecturers. It is something quite different.

I think *Criterion* is assuming a very delicate responsibility. Very brave in the sense that—as you have said—it has been the only academic institution that has organized an event on this subject in record time. And you have also made it clear in your personal

messages. But your new decision (or acceptance) to limit entry to one of your events adds a meaning to *Criterion's* policy that needs to be explained more clearly, to prevent people from getting confused and jumping to conclusions.

Some remain hopeful that the issue will be narrowed down to “intellectuals and artists” (because they find it too ambitious or frightening to consider the obvious fact that this perspective has already proven to be too narrow and sectarian in the face of making the debate a matter of the people of Cuba). Then, I believe, at least a declaration by the Minister of Culture is necessary. No? Is it imprudent in these circumstances to summon a Minister or admonish him to give his opinions? Or to other instances of the State, the Party etc.? Can only Ministers make final decisions, concluding statements, etc.? I don't see why we haven't received any of those opinions yet.

Well, here's another piece of letter that I'm not going to rewrite.

Dear Desiderio:

If I decide to write you this message—a few days before the conference is held—it's because it would be a dishonest act, even treacherous, to keep quiet about what I think, or to comment on it behind your back (or publicly, without first discussing it with you). I already did it a few days ago, by phone, but I still have almost the same doubts. I've gone around and around trying to convince myself that I'm wrong, but I don't manage to do it. If they are “unfounded” thoughts, it's best to unfound them. The thing is that I have (or still have) reservations, misgivings, or objections to these conferences, which, on the other hand, I'm sure can be very successful. My objections have nothing to do with the intellectual quality of the speakers, and much less with yours, nor with the demonstrated public utility of *Criterion's*. They are reservations and misgivings not because of the conferences themselves, nor because of their analytical, clarifying function, but because of what these conferences represent at this time. For what they avoid more than for what they propose. Let's call them strategic or tactical misgivings.

Perhaps I'm being too suspicious or distrustful, but I believe that the conference has become a meeting, an unscheduled meeting, but one where the Minister will attend and probably speak, together with the presidents of the UNEAC sections, and some selected colleagues from various institutions, etc. Isn't this true? The conference could go beyond the academic, the analysis of the damned five-year period, of Pavón, etc., or so it seems, but only obliquely. It will be a meeting (with the Minister) masquerading as a conference. And that is what worries me, or bothers me: that the conference (and incidentally *Criterion's*) becomes a fire extinguisher or an escape valve that avoids or postpones a broader call. Do not misunderstand. It is not comfortable for me to attend the Fornet Conference. At least with these concerns in mind. Am I going to exercise my right to participate in an event where I have privileges over others?

Waiting for the conference, many people—including myself—have stopped the exchange of messages.

The problem is not that I don't believe—as you might have thought—in the importance of theoretical, historical, terminological analyses, etc. (because after all, *Criteria*s, as you yourself have said, is an “academic cultural institution,” and that is the main product it offers), but in the current circumstances, its performance has acquired a character that goes beyond its usual function.

In short, I don't understand how *Criteria*s decided (or accepted) that the “free entry” with which its invitation began on the 13th became this restricted and controlled entry “by invitation,” aimed at certain members of certain institutions and associations and distributed by them. Really, I didn't recognize the language, nor the style of *Criteria*s in that bureaucratic and exclusive message sent from *Cubarte*, and I told you so. And *Criteria*s—as you already know—is you, yourself.

Under the argument of reserving space for intellectuals and artists, they are segregating, excluding, discriminating against too large a number of those interested in a subject that, as you yourself said, would not be just the “five-year gray period.” It is as if only musicians, musicologists, composers and conductors were invited to listen to the symphony, and the public was left outside. If the space offered by La Casa was still too small, couldn't a larger space be managed, like the Karl Marx Theatre, for example? Many have said this.

On the other hand, why invite many of those institutions of the “cultural sector” that haven't expressed (and there has been an opportunity and space to do so) their real interest in the problems that the theme of these conferences has caused, and that go beyond that topic? In my opinion, if a sector should have been prioritized in these selective invitations, it would be the one made up of those who have participated with interest in this public debate by email. Perhaps we should start from those. Whether or not they belong to those institutions.

You say: “numerous people and institutions in the cultural sector”... I am lucky, as I have told you, to actively participate in many cultural “sectors” that are not included within that “cultural sector” that this message speaks about. As I told you (to give just one example) the Yoruba Cultural Society of Cuba is not among the guests, and it brings together a vast mass of *babalawos*, *paleros* and *abakuás* who together constitute a considerable mass of the Havana population and the Cuban, without counting all those who do not belong to that Society, or who belong to other societies and fraternities that are also cultural, producers of culture, even if they're not institutionalized.

I mentioned this to you, but in the fourth invitation, this time sent by you, neither this institution nor many others is included, probably because the order to distribute the “credentials” from that first list was already given. Continuing to handle that restricted concept of culture, of “cultural sector” in which we are privileged, let's say, to reserve space for the participants in a conference (because it's just a conference, isn't it?) implies a position with which *Criteria*s could not have agreed, bureaucratic and elitist. And you know that. Especially in these moments and with so many things that have been said. All this worries people, Desiderio, and they tell you, because you are at the center of this matter. Not for anything else.

Every so often I read these sentences again, and I'm ashamed to be privileged to have an invitation: "To guarantee that our writers, artists and intellectuals in general can be present, we have decided to reserve the entrance, through invitations. The invitations will be distributed next week by the respective associations and institutions."

There are some who even want to write memoirs of this matter. You have already planned a book with the lectures. This is all very well, of course. But I think it's too early. They are trying to bury a dead person who is completely alive, who has not even shown fainting symptoms, quite the opposite. And what it is about, I think, is that we don't have to continue digging up corpses who, like this one, have still continued to turn over in their graves. Memoirs and books will come later.

Well, this is not a letter or a message—it's very incoherent—but I think you are capable of knowing where things are going. I repeat, do not take badly what many people are writing to you, or thinking. If I could, I would talk to you better on the phone about all these things.

A hug,  
Orlando  
January 28, 2007

### **Message from Orlando Hernández to Roberto Cobas**

Dear Roberto,

First of all let me thank you for having participated in this debate with your magnificent texts. I had already read some of them in *Kaosenlared*, as well as those of Pedro Campos, and in one of my messages I took the liberty of provoking a greater intervention from you in this matter, which was taking a path that was too small and unionized. It is possible that some have since begun to think more broadly, but still I believe that many have decided, or have been content, to keep the discussion within the confines of that tiny "cultural sector" that was the main guest at the "conference." In my opinion, the very "conferences" organized by *Criteria*s have helped to restrict it, which is why I resisted them from the beginning.

I don't dispute the partial usefulness of the historical, "archaeological," etc. analyzes of that period, but at that juncture (which I like to remember as a "revolutionary situation"), it would have been much more profitable to cancel or postpone it in order to provoke the State, the Party, etc., to have to take on larger discussions with a much broader audience. It ended up being, to my disappointment, a semi-informal (and even humorous) "meeting" with the Minister of Culture, which was masked as a "conference" on the "five-year gray period."

The "academic" (and then the bureaucratic) gargled and then swallowed all that effervescence that was timidly taking on a popular and therefore "dangerous" character. I had the opportunity to discuss by telephone with Desiderio, and I sent him a private

letter about my reservations and disagreements, as well as about the position that the *Criterion*s Theoretical-Cultural Center was assuming (or accepting) with respect to selective “invitations,” etc., but it was an unproductive management. I probably made a serious mistake. If I had made my disagreements public, perhaps I would have achieved better results. A new confrontation with Desiderio (which would have been the second) could have been seen as a kind of “split in the ranks,” and at that time it didn’t seem prudent to me, but the truth is that having been the *Criterion*s center that had organized the conference, he was the only one who could call it off. And Desiderio didn’t want to do it, of course. But it’s no use complaining now.

Unfortunately (or perhaps luckily) I have had to momentarily distance myself from this whole matter, although I keep myself informed. The stress of those first days damaged a maxillo-facial muscle that I’m still treating with painkillers and laser-puncture. Which, by the way, is somewhat more benign than facial paralysis or cerebral ischemia.

Sorry for all this unloading. I will now answer your questions. Nothing has been published about the statements that night except Fernet’s text, which Desiderio also sent by email to those who requested it. I don’t think anything will be published about what was said there that night unless they have recorded the statements and decide to make them public 30 years from now. The Minister’s statement was not read, but improvised, and only Desiderio Navarro read an introductory text before Fernet that you may be able to request.

I attended the conference (quite embarrassed to enjoy that privilege), and after the Minister spoke, I left. The conclusive tone of his words (“this is not the moment,” “we’re in line after Iraq,” “we must not break our institutions,” etc., as well as his meticulous defense of the timorous declaration of the UNEAC, etc.) were enough for me. According to what I have been told, at the end there was a rather strong and interesting exchange between the Minister and Enrique Colina, and also with Zenaida Romeu, but I don’t know anything about its content. The next conference will be read by the architect Mario Coyula at the end of this month, although the “right” place has not yet been determined, so I don’t know if it will be in the Che Guevara room, in *Criterion*s or in the National Library. And then there will be another one by Arturo Arango, etc.

Those are the ones that they will send to those who request them and will then be published in book form. It would be much more instructive—as someone has proposed— if all emails are published as well, which I highly doubt will ever happen. With this it is assumed that the corpse (still alive and kicking) of this brief and hopeful rampage will be buried. Until new notice. And in relation to the socialism of the 21st century—as I jokingly told Pedro Campos—perhaps we should leave it for the 22nd century... Excuse so much pessimism. Keep in touch.

A hug,  
Orlando Hernández  
February 8, 2007

## Oswaldo Doimeadiós

Translated by Regina Anavy

Message of Oswaldo Doimeadiós to Xiomara Palacio

Dear friend,

I have been amazed by all the ideas that move around these days in the intellectual field. It seems that TV, to entertain Cuban artists in the new year and the intellectual gossip, instead of a turkey, offered them a “Pavón.” At this time, I imagine that those media leaders go through the corridors—and faced with so many burning letters—running like rats, with the faith that characterizes them (rat faith), and justifying that Pavon was an “error of *Impronta*.”

It seems that in their eagerness to rebroadcast old stuff, they are rebroadcasting old mistakes as well. The Papito Serguera thing the other day was only a preview, and if it was about progress I would have put it in a science and health program, like a preview of the League Against “Cerguera.” And the wonders of operating with lasers ...with laser-pointer in hand....

As a result of all this that is happening, I have made the commitment to become a voracious (I should hope so) viewer this year and not lose for a second anything that our TV officials are proud to show on the small screen. because... look, I missed the *Impronta*, and it was something imprinting, and I missed the open dialogue with Quesada, which luckily I did not suffer in person, but we still suffer from his disciples. He clouded the dreams of many artists who saw their dreams reduced to true “quesadillas” (mixture of a Mexican dish where the cheese melts and you sleep badly). In both cases you end up melted.

For now I see that a great reality show is coming, and why not, at any time we can see a program with the most requested enemies of the week. Just in case, I’m already making my list and not to waste time tomorrow, I’ll send my first letter to “Against Oblivion.” It’s time to put the cards on the table. Who know? The program might become a success, and the best enemies will go to a monthly, annual or five-year competition, like the enemies that are still remembered from the “five-year gray period.”

As you can see, the meteorologists were not wrong in forecasting a very, very hot year.

A hug and please don’t circulate this message and if you do, try to reach as many people as possible.

A kiss,  
Doime

January 8, 2007