

# Haroldo Dilla

Translated by Alicia Barraqué Ellison

## **The Stable of Fine Horses**

As is known, a group of Cuban artists and writers launched into an unusual, semi-public debate, unenviably motivated by the reappearance on the (fully public) scene of a cadre of inquisitors, protagonists of what they call the “five-year grey period.” This has prompted the investigative magnifying glass of those of us who—as emigrants, exiles or whatever—reside outside the Island. I have read by the latter as many decent arguments as arrogant libels that distill all the grandiose misfortune of exiles when they start to see themselves as virtuous and unyielding warriors.

I dwell on this briefly only to fix a position. With their different levels of importance, the people involved in this debate are all deserving of the utmost respect, and in some cases also admiration, for their intellectual gifts and works. The fact of living in Cuba doesn’t count against anyone, and can even be a great plus without the person having to be a member of some opposition group—just as being in the opposition (although an ineffable indicator of personal courage) doesn’t in itself confer merit. Cuban writers and artists can be (and in many cases are) generators of innovative ideas, values and ethical proposals. And they can do this under very unfavorable conditions, ever treading the edge of what the system considers the border between virtue and sin.

Frankly, I envy the possibility of influencing Cuban society in this way, and I admire how it can be done from a theater, a painting exhibition, a conference, or a rap concert. Since I live in the Dominican Republic, I can no longer do it. Subjecting these people to the opposition test case is immoral, for various reasons.

One of them lies in the fact that most of the people I have seen expressing their opinion with such disdain and arrogance never, in truth, challenged the system in Cuba beyond a few private conversations that were a bit risky. Another, because some of the commentators seem to live in a different place from the “rude real world,” where we intellectuals are always figuring out what should be said and what should not be said (whether for political, ethical, or economic reasons) and with respect to the world we inhabit. Let’s be frank, all this business about “being careful” is an occupational disease.

And the thing is that the intellectual world is always like a stable of fine horses—although I will admit that the Cuban stable is very intricate and houses horses of a distinctive sensitivity.

The image of the stable does not imply any pejorative judgment, but rather a sociopolitical condition. A few years ago I visited a stable of fine horses owned by a Canadian friend. I was struck by how slowly the barn doors opened, which according to my friend was because if they opened suddenly, the gusts of cold air that could cause the animals to rear up. The doors had to be opened little by little. They are strange creatures, he told me, because when a real danger occurs—for example a carnivorous animal entering the stable—they become paralyzed with fear.

The precariousness of negotiated subordination. In Cuba, as it happened, they opened the stable doors suddenly. The stable is a pact that for decades has implied the negotiated subordination of writers and artists.

The agreement was very clear. The Cuban leadership promised to allow them certain freedoms and spaces for personal fulfillment, which ranged (to be graphic) from presenting “Marketing” at the Teatro Mella, or filming *Guantanamera*, to being able to travel almost freely and live outside the country. That is to say, from the most altruistic to the most prosaic, the writers and artists had a range of ready reasons to stay within the Revolution (as Fidel demanded in his “Words to the Intellectuals” \*) and of course, to become worried when they saw Pavón on boring Cuban TV.

As for the artists and writers, they had to submit to humiliating terms.

The first requirement was to delay any criticism of at least three issues—Fidel's leadership, the legitimacy of the single party, and the repudiation of U.S. policies—and to execute it always in an elliptical and cryptic manner. All of which was not too burdensome, if we take into account that, after all, artistic language is always cryptic and that ultimately art does not demonstrate but only indicates.

The second requirement was to enjoy their privileges without ambitions to universalize them—which, in fact, left a group of sectors such as social scientists outside the “intellectual” field. And incidentally, this castrated the UNEAC, turning it into a guild protected by the umbrella of liberal regulation (in the worst sense of the term) and backed by an international opinion much more sensitive to what could happen to a poet than to a historian.

In this sense, it's fair to point out that if writers and artists suffered a five-year gray period, social scientists have known nothing else. And the gang of its anodyne and mediocre inquisitors—Darío Machado, Isabel Monal, Fernández Bulté, Miguel Limia, Talía Fung, Valdés Vivó—led by the Ideological Department—are showing off\*\*\* on all

the TV channels, at all events, and even at the congresses of the Latin American Studies Association.

The meaning of the “Revolution” of which one had to be inside was severely rarefied by the policies in progress, such that if for a writer the Revolution was defined as a program of social changes, for a sociologist it was relegated to the causeways,\*\* the plantain microjet,\*\*\* and the Battle of Ideas. If the Cuban leaders knew anything, it is what Carpentier reminded us of on one occasion: the works that motivated revolutions were not *Don Quixote* or the *Mona Lisa*, but *The Social Contract* and *Capital*.

On the part of the UNEAC, its leaders, and the loquacious Minister of Culture (who in turn is a member of the political bureau), there has always been total silence when social scientists have been repressed, and writers and artists have been rendered mute with dread by the predatory action of the carnivores.

Redefining the system. Although the writers and artists debate had little impact on public opinion, it is very important because it has sent a signal to the political class. Although a television producer has affirmed that everything was an unimportant coincidence, as the young Baudolino said, the only chance thing is the love of innocents. And nobody here is one of those. The stupidity of this fact doesn't imply irrelevance. The Cuban political class knows that times of adjustment are coming and that it must face at least three challenges.

The first is the disappearance of Fidel Castro or at least his reduction to the stringy specter that appears on television, which means the loss of the system's center.

The second is the end of the blockade [embargo]— gradually, by exsanguination— but its end, nonetheless, following the stupid attempt (so as not to do something different) by George W. Bush to intensify it.

Third, it must open the economy to increased levels, a process that Chávez delayed with his subsidies, but only delayed. And it must do so by preserving its unity in the midst of the mess that the commander in chief has been leaving since the times when, like a spoiled grandfather, he began teaching housewives how to make black beans and filled the gas stations with social workers.

The regurgitation of the bile of the grey five-year period was a trial balloon orchestrated by the infamous ideological department, whose head—a prototypical case for Lombroso—knows very little about culture but a lot about active intelligence measures. And it did this by exposing to the public pillory three old men who served them faithfully for years. The carnivorous animals did not enter the stable, they only opened

the doors to see how the fine horses reacted. The UNEAC's declaration closed the doors again, and it was like this, with the doors closed, that the conferences on the five-year grey period have begun. This is the systemic limit of our writers and artists.

Haroldo Dilla, Santo Domingo  
February 12, 2007

Translator's Notes:

\* Refers to Fidel Castro's "Words to the Intellectuals" speech of June 30, 1961, in which he set limits to the free expression of artists and writers: "Within the Revolution, everything; outside the Revolution, nothing."

\*\* Likely refers to the *Pedraplén a Cayo Santa Maria*, a causeway—said to be the world's longest—constructed between 1989 and 1999.

\*\*\* "Pavón" is a Spanish word for peacock. Peacocks are known for their strutting behavior when showing off their colors. In the original text, the writer uses a verb, *pavonearse*, to describe the strutting behavior of the persons he mentions in this paragraph. "Pavón" is also the name of Luis Pavón Tamayo, one of the prime movers behind the 1970s censorship period that is the subject of the email debate that includes this text.

\*\*\*\*A 1990 speech by Fidel Castro refers to plantain plantations that will feature an "aerial microjet system."

Iskánder

Translated by Alicia Barraqué Ellison

**Message from Iskánder in reply to Ana Assenza**

Anna, dear;

You wanted me to comment on the fucking debate and you have succeeded... if you see sense in what I write in the mail I just sent you—by sense I mean that the ideas are understood and so on—THEN SEND IT TO EVERYBODY, AS IT IS SIGNED BY ME!! and if not..., then tell me whatever.

IS. [“Iskánder” is the *nom de plume* of Alejandro Moya.]

Dear Humans:

The affairs of “culture” are affairs of the people, and we all belong to the people and not only that but to “our people,” continually referenced in the mass media by the spokesmen of the many half-truths that are daily proclaimed to the daze and confusion of so many people in our country, about the “achievements and social conquests that only in Cuba do we Cubans have the privilege of enjoying, while the rest of the world is sinking into the deepest of shit;” and, simultaneously, all the social “crap” that we Cubans live daily that affects us so much is left out of the media, all the bureaucratic hurdles that fuck the lives of millions of people here in the “key to the Gulf” when carrying out the most basic tasks—even their jobs—, and of course the possibility of facing our “own problems” to solve them—to at least recognize them (first step to the solution of any difficulty: recognizing it), while history shows us that the realities we don’t face at the moment they present themselves will suddenly hit us in the face on any given day as we turn any given corner.

Every day I hear many times on Cuban radio and television—not without blushing—how things that have to do with the world of artistic manifestations are called “culture;” and in the best of cases with the arts, when it’s known that culture is the way in which people clearly lives in a specific space and time, and such culture ranges from the way people walk, what they eat, how they make gestures, and even the way they wipe their asses when they shit—the arts and artistic manifestations being two grains of sand perhaps lost and sometimes shining in the infinite beach of the historical intricacies of any people’s culture.

Every day I hear and see countless absurdities and stupidities and spelling mistakes in our mass media, while I hear and see people in those same media inordinately apologizing for what is simply a duty for the Cuban Revolutionary State—a duty for which many human beings in our country’s history have offered their lives; and we are “sold” or “given” an image of ourselves that doesn’t exist, full of demagoguery and fallacy and hypocrisy and fame and repudiation and applause.

I have always wondered why many things are not called by their names in the country where I was born and in which I live by my own free will.

I was born in 1969, and I certainly heard about that Pavón<sup>1</sup> at one time, and later as time went on here and there someone said his name, not without contempt, but I’m not aware of anything that is being talked about so much. I am an artist of my people—Cuba—and of humanity. I have directed and produced the film *Mañana* that is currently being shown in the cinemas of this country. I am a member of the UNEAC<sup>2</sup> and from the streets of Cuba, and I say: if this Pavón was such a bastard as they say, then they should fuck him, his image and his footprint on the earth, but I also tell myself: let all this talk about the Pavón and his shitty five-year period<sup>4</sup> come out in the emails, because most of Cuba’s inhabitants don’t have this tool, and they deserve to know about and have an opinion on what happens behind the curtains of their “culture.”

I wonder as a Cuban and a man of this planet what purpose the proposed actions have on the Pavón case while this country today is full of pavones<sup>3</sup> and petty bourgeois occupying offices where the immediate fate of millions of things that try to be brought forth cleanly is “decided.” We have enormous problems to solve and name, problems that birth a thousand pavones per second and thousands of other nameless and immoral beings who will execute the directives of pavones in the name of the revolution and its leaders when a million times these current pavones gouge the mere mention of the word “revolution” and openly live in capitalism while proclaiming a socialist Cuba.

I wonder why we are “hiding” and keeping this issue in Cuba, as if our problems weren’t part of the filthy and brutal and unjust and cruel global village in which we live and that we humans have built, allowing millions and millions of pavones to exist in the world. I am one of those who think that recognizing our mistakes and taking ownership of them is a sign of strength and courage and doesn’t weaken us in any way. I wonder why we should not clearly say—and I say it here—that our television is crap and that those who rule it act in the name of the same human being who issued the “words to the intellectuals<sup>5</sup>, and here there is a huge contradiction between the infinite image of Che Guevara, symbol of the social revolution of the world and of us, and those who today with their business suits—and almost all of them overweight—break their necks and disdain advocating a revolution that has nothing to do with that gentrified and narrow

image, and that makes such a dent in the altruism and purpose of those who really exercise power with respect for the people who placed them there.

I wonder why we Cubans allowed Pavón to carry out so much shit at that time, and if there was not an uncritical and indolent and permissive mass of people in our country, like there is right now, carrying out so much shit that has nothing to do with the open and free spirit, which is detached from those who founded our homeland with their blood. I ask myself if it's not time now to rip off the band-aid and not turn a blind eye to the true evil that is first of all economic—as we all know—and the distribution of national “wealth,” and if we're going to demand accounts for the appearance on TV of this Pavón and he who was head of the ICR<sup>6</sup> when they threw my father and Silvio Rodríguez out of that institute, and for the appearance of the other, Quesada.<sup>7</sup> Why then is it not better to take the bull by the horns and demand that so much shit be put aside and place in “positions” in the world of “culture” only those who think not only of their belly or their underpants or their bloomers and that only decent and capable people, which are also “at bat and in the fight,” occupy the positions of leadership at all levels and are not automatons that tell us all the time that they are fulfilling a task given from above while they shit on those of us who are the working people and put us off indefinitely, until one day many of them get their families and “riches” into the territory which they were so much against: the USA, the United States of America.

I wonder who will return to those who lost them the friends lost to the so-called five gray years, who will give back their youth to those who already lost it eating shit and shutting their mouths before people like Pavón, as if the pavones of this world were really important. I didn't even remember that Pavón when in reality we validate cretins like Pavón and those who are “shown” on TV, and we validate them through our silence, turning a blind eye, with our thoughts, only for our crusts of bread without realizing that others are wasting banquets that also belong to us, with our typical “now is not the right time” and so much hypocrisy and so much shit that I have painfully lived through in my country, not without there being others who with their lives and their arts and their jobs have been over here fighting fearlessly to bring an end to the pavones and the servile ones who, without a common name, produce so much shit and then turn to complain to their neighbor in hushed tones about so much crap that they themselves provoke!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Let's get off the couch!!!!!!

Let's not restrict our social ills—because without a doubt the Pavón event is very much a social ill of ours—to two or three centimeters of national space!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Let's go to the causes that breed so much shit and confront them so that they don't continue to afflict us in other forms and other disguises fucking up our lives so much!! and long live the real revolution, fuck!

!!

Iskánder.

And don't put me down now as one who wants to light the fire with everything or anything like that, and don't put words in my mouth. I haven't said here that all bosses are corrupt or any fucking such thing. or that all people are cowards, ok????????????????!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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**Open letter to Abel Prieto<sup>8</sup> on Enrique Colina<sup>9</sup> and the abuse of power, demanding justice**

Dear Abel;

Thanks to you, the film, *MAÑANA*, of which you know I'm the author, is the first Cuban cinematographic work that is made independently and that the Cuban state through the ICAIC<sup>10</sup> welcomes in its catalog to "distribute," "market," "exhibit" it and other similar "categories" whose meanings contain the will to achieve an openly public destiny for the work so that it can pull out words like the ones in quotation marks: I "quotation-mark" them—if Spanish allows one to say "quotation-mark" as a verb—because although *MAÑANA* has been shown throughout the Island of Cuba "commercially" without many people knowing it while it was exhibited, even the ICAIC and Yours Truly here writing to you (you also know that I'm a producer of the film) haven't signed any contract where the issues in quotes are legally concretized and all the synonyms of this type that accompany a film distributed by a "great production house" (the ICAIC in this case is the great house because of its national scope in the broadest sense of the word's territoriality)..... thanks to you, I tell you, regardless of how things may be right now, after the president of the ICRT (Ernesto López) transmitted to us that it was NOT APPROPRIATE FOR TELEVISION TO "GET INVOLVED WITH" *MAÑANA* BECAUSE HIS ADVISORS TOLD HIM THAT THIS FILM HAD NO MORAL [to its story, i.e. a lesson], after this opinion was rendered we went to you and you provided an immediate route for our script to the ICAIC, and the ICAIC almost immediately authorized us legally to shoot the film and, in turn, to have the nationality that I wanted for it: the Cuban one.

Thanks to you then and to those who decided on the part of the ICAIC that my film can exist legally in Cuba. setting the precedent of the legal legitimization—let's have these two words together—of a production with this characteristic: independence. Thanks to



you, I say, I have publicly applauded a decision like this because I consider it evolutionary, brave, necessary, human, respectful, inclusive, intelligent, mature and above all things REVOLUTIONARY in all senses of this word beyond what its letters can contain...

Because you behaved that way then regarding my movie, because my brother Rancaño and I have known you since we were kids in those meetings at my parents' house and have had affection for you since that time when you were not a minister; because you're an artist and a Cuban intellectual; because you are now the Minister of Culture; because you're a member of the Political Bureau of the PCC;<sup>12</sup> because so far you have proven to not be a coward, and especially because you are a *pinareño* [from Pinar del Río], and Pinar del Río is one of the most beautiful provinces of Cuba for me; and that an injustice in quotation marks has historically been committed against the people for being the subject of a thousand absurd tales and all the *pinareños* and *pinareñas* that I know are good people: for all these things I am writing to you to communicate my request that the article that I attach here be immediately removed from your site and that in that same place there be apologies to me and to the thousands of Cubans who are insulted there without the slightest sense of respect for the people from in this case a cultural institution of the state, directed by Fidel and Raúl, leaders about which neither friends nor enemies of Cuba and/or its revolution deny their certain leaderships; and to the date on which I write to you and since I was born I hear in my land that the state (we) exists because of the people and it is for the people that it works.

I will explain myself better: you don't have to go to the university to see clearly that the article I attach is not a criticism of the film that with so much effort I have made together with all the (hundreds) of colleagues who worked energetically on it, and I would say heroically, because INDEPENDENT means for this work, above all, that it was done without barely having money to produce it, and, therefore, there had to be a lot of hard work put into it—and this type of work is very hard even when it's done with money, as you know—because where money has been unavailable to solve problems of technology, food, transportation and a million other many things, there has had to be work, work, work, and work a hundred times over, and it's been more work than the work it usually takes to be able to work in Cuba. You don't have to go to university, as I was telling you, to see that the article in question is not a criticism but is an aggression against me and my film, and my friends, and my family, and my wife's family, and the neighbors of the Querejeta<sup>13</sup> neighborhood in Playa, and those of Vedado<sup>14</sup>, and the workers of the Joaquín Albarrán clinical surgical hospital, and the leaders of the ICAIC and its President Omar González, and the national Secretariat of the FEU<sup>15</sup> and its president, Carlitos Lage,<sup>16</sup> and to the thousands of Cubans who before my eyes applauded in the cinemas the film *MAÑANA* and the beloved artists of the Cuban people who appear in my film, such as Silvio Rodríguez, Juan Formell and Pedro Luis Ferrer,<sup>16</sup>

among others, and in the article in question the thousands of Cubans I have just mentioned—and there are many, many more—are called, I tell you, “troublemakers” and “ill-mannered people” and, I quote, “lovers of mischief and rudeness.”

Sincerely, as a Cuban I wonder:

What merit does it have for an institution of the Cuban state—in this case RADIO HAVANA—and for those who direct and work in it, to make available to millions of people in the world a writing where clearly, with a destructive and denigrating eagerness and with poison in the place where there should be common sense, I am “sentenced” as an artist and insulted, because I am one of the thousands of spectators who watched the film with pleasure?

What merit does that institution have to attack me publicly when I’m only an artist from my country, “young,” who doesn’t have material goods, money, any power, while hundreds of people in Cuba—hundreds—have expressed their joy and their taste because they have seen in my film a work that MOVES THEM TO THINK and with artistic values, aesthetic, human, ethical, and is REVOLUTIONARY (also in the broadest sense of the word), people who have nothing to do with the “world of culture” but also people of “our culture,” such as Fernando Pérez, Luis Alberto García, Jorge Perogurría, Silvio Rodríguez, Eduardo Moya, Humberto García Espinosa, Camilo Vives, Ernesto Rancaño, Alexis Leyva (Kcho), María Eugenia García, Frank Delgado, Tensy Krysmant, Mariela López, Angel Alderete, Abelardo Estorino, Luciano Castillo, the actors and actresses of MAÑANA, its technical team and a lot of other people?

Why does that institution attack me by publishing that article when all I have on EARTH is my ability to carry out my work and my talent that I have always put at the service of my homeland, and I’m insulted before the world and thousands of Cubans who have enjoyed and applauded my film and who don’t have direct and even indirect access to the world of the Internet and of course are insulted? Do you not know these insults while millions of people on our planet can read on the site whose address is this <http://www.habanaradio.cu/modules/mysections/singlefile.php?lid=2240>, the concentration of destructive and disrespectful words that have been published there against me and against my work?

I wonder what it means, how to interpret the fact that together with everything said against my name and the film that I’ve directed, and together with the insults thrown at me, how should I interpret—I repeat—that together with those words on the right are the images of the Cuban flag, our five heroes unjustly imprisoned by the empire, Eusebio Leal, José Martí, Alejo Carpentier: is there some suggested message in this containing the repudiation of my country towards me, of the state towards me???

Is this manifest fact part of the policy of the Cuban revolutionary state, part of its cultural policy, to blaspheme underhandedly and openly (these two words are not contradictory considering where the article is published, on the NET) against its artists before the world, when we all here know that I in this case, as an artist, cannot summon the “press” to respond publicly to whoever publishes something about me? In fact, I have asked journalists who have approached me, I have requested them to publish my opinions about the lies and nonsense that have been said in the media referring to MAÑANA and my work as a director, and nobody has given the “green light” to my request.

I’m not a man who fears what is whispered about him; those who know me know the case I make to those who speak ill of me behind my back: none. I’m not afraid of criticism; my opinions don’t change in the public presence of opinions that are opposed to mine. Those of us who belong to the world of “culture” know that a “critic” gives his “opinion,” and that this opinion can be honest, dishonest, educated, uneducated, savage, brilliant and a thousand other things, but it never goes beyond being THE OPINION EXPRESSED BY ANOTHER PERSON. We are all critics of everything, and it goes without saying that THE CRITIQUE doesn’t exist as a unanimous or homogeneous entity, and if you don’t read the articles published about my film where there are a ton of people, so to say, “opining” on things that are totally contrary and opposite in all the disciplines that are analyzed, I don’t understand why the critics are allowed to publish their criteria speaking in first person plural, thus implicating the reader (with the intention of implicating him, I say), without clarifying that what they say is what they mean and never, of course, THE TRUTH about the work. Those of us who belong to the “culture” know this—among other things because we know each other—and on the other hand, of course, many of the articles that are published by these critics often CONFUSE the reading public, above all because their analyzes almost always start from one point (the director, let’s say).

And it’s never analyzed how audiovisuals are officially produced in Cuba, under what conditions, and how the system, through its officials, compels so much crap to be carried out and finances and squanders state money. What is produced and shown to the people is because officials without a name or a face approve what is carried out. They support and then exhibit to people all the abomination that later the “critic” “criticizes,” without ever reaching the roots of the true cause of so much material waste in so much work without value: which is neither more nor less than what the state produces because it wants to. You can if you want to do it in another way; nobody forces you. This is never talked about in the “reviews,” and I put quotation marks in the words in which I put them because not all critics are critics nor are all reviews reviews.

Where do I want to go? Because the article for which I'm writing this email to you, Abel, of course "sets standards" and dictates sentence and condemns me and is the executioner of my film and my person without saying for one moment: the person who writes here has this opinion of that jerk Alejandro Moya, when you see the movie maybe you'll think like me..., maybe not... AND I REPEAT THAT I'M INSULTED AND THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE ENJOYED MAÑANA UP TO NOW ARE INSULTED.

Everyone is free to think as they want and write what they think. That is sacred for me, but it's the duty of an institution of the Cuban state to respect the people of Cuba and its artists, and never put themselves above them because they are the *raison d'être* for the institutions, and even less disrespect them by insulting them. This doesn't make them more powerful, and nobody here is going to be intimidated by reprisals of this type (not me, in this case, and less so by retracting a work of which I am humbly proud, joyful and even happy to have realized!!!!!!!!!!!!). Nor do I believe that people are afraid and retreat. THOSE ARE NOT METHODS.

I say that I'm addressing you, Abel, because many "efforts" and claims that I undertake never prosper and are lost in ten thousand offices and people who don't assume any responsibility, and I no longer know who to talk to about what, and right now I am only one and without resources before an enormous machinery of bureaucrats who talk a lot and solve nothing. (I'M NOT SAYING THAT THERE ARE NO PEOPLE PERFORMING THEIR DUTIES...AND SORRY FOR USING THE IMAGE OF THE ENORMOUS MACHINERY AND SUCH, IT'S AN IMAGE, OK?, BUT IT WEARS YOU OUT.)

I'm not asking that they shoot anyone, nor that they condemn, nor that they sanction, nor that they expel, nor that they admonish, nor that they look askance, nor that they criticize, nor that they "lead" them to make a self-criticism, nor that they "pay" me for personal damages or do anything to the person who wrote the article (he has the right to write whatever he wants). I only ask that this article be removed from that site HABANA RADIO, and that, instead, they publish an EXPLICIT apology to me and to the insulted people to which I belong, and that those who have allowed such an insult to be published sign the apology, BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT WHEN SOMETHING COMES TO PUBLIC LIGHT IN CUBA IN A MASSIVE DISSEMINATION MEDIA, A LOT OF EYES REVIEWED AND APPROVED IT, and that the names of the authors of such an affront who appeared on THE NETWORK be published, so it will be known on that same site who is in charge of that entity that is capable of attacking people and reviling them.

For my film to see the light of day in theaters in Cuba, a lot of people supposedly capable of deciding what has quality and what doesn't saw it and spoke wonders about it. Is that article trying to say that those people are useless? that the ICAIC is useless for having approved the screening of my film? Is that article trying to say that the selection committee of the film festival is a bunch of idiots because it accepted the "quality" of my film as optimal to participate in an international competition in which a lot of works are discarded or rejected because they're not "professional" and don't have artistic value? And if this is true, where then is the criterion about the other films that, under equal conditions, have been accepted by the same people who have accepted mine?

Should the Cuban state withdraw from including the film MAÑANA in the catalog of Cuban films, is that what this article is about?

I'm sorry for occupying your precious time, dear Abel, but these things are happening, and as a member of the people to which I belong I feel that I have my duties, and as an artist of my people and a natural person from Cuba it's my duty at this moment to address you.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THESE INSULTS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED. I sincerely hope for a prompt response.

Revolutionarily, and with affection, and with respect, and with a certain sorrow for witnessing how these things happen in the country that I love so much.

Iskánder (Alejandro Moya)

P.S. When I wrote a brief note on, I think, December 26, 2006, to communicate through this same channel that MAÑANA would be released on December 28 and that no mass media had said anything, a high-ranking ICAIC official against whom I have nothing and with whom I have a good personal relationship (I won't say his name here because it's not necessary; he told me not to write these notes because it would be suicide for me), the day before yesterday when I read the article that I'm attaching here, I couldn't avoid wondering, DID I REALLY COMMIT SUICIDE AND AM NOW IN THE HELL THAT AWAITS THE REVOLUTIONARIES?!!!!!!

Oh, and in the article in question it says that the novel "released at night" is mine to continue attacking me: THAT NOVEL IS NOT MINE.

And it also says three times, I think, that Enrique Colina is working on my film: I HAVE NEVER WORKED WITH ENRIQUE COLINA IN MY LIFE. ASK HIM.

Over and out.

No. One last note: I don't use the names of the personalities that I mention here as a shield or anything similar; I don't want them to do anything...

I ADD UP WHATEVER IT IS AND ALONE WHATEVER IT IS: BUT WHAT I SAY  
HERE IS NOT A SECRET TO ANYBODY.

January 31, 2007

Translator's Notes:

1. PAVÓN: Luis Pavón Tamayo, Armando Quesada, and Jorge Serguera were closely involved in designing and enforcing rigid cultural parameters that negatively affected many writers and artists in Cuba in the 1970s, a period that came to be called "The Five Gray Years," although it lasted longer than five years.

2. UNEAC: *Unión Nacional de Escritores y Artistas de Cuba* (National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba).

3. PAVONES: Likely a play on words combining Luis Pavón Tamayo's name (see note #1 above) with the meaning of the noun "pavón," which is peacock. So, these "pavones" are strutting peacocks like Pavón.

4. FIVE-YEAR PERIOD: The Five Gray Years; see note #1 above.

5. WORDS TO THE INTELLECTUALS: A speech by Fidel Castro, delivered on June 30, 1961, to artists and writers, in which he set limits to free expression, i.e. "Within the Revolution, everything; outside the Revolution, nothing."

6. ICR: Formerly *Instituto Cubano de Radiodifusión* (Cuban Institute of Radio Broadcasting); now ICRT - *Instituto Cubano de Radio y Televisión* (Cuban Institute of Radio and Television).

7. QUESADA: Armando Quesada; see note #1 above.

8. Abel Prieto: At the time of this correspondence, Prieto was Cuba's Minister of Culture.

9. Enrique Colina was a Cuban filmmaker.

10. ICAIC: *Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográficos* (Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry).

11. Ernesto Ranzaño was a Cuban plastic artist.

12. PCC: *Partido Comunista de Cuba* (Cuban Communist Party).

13. Querejeta is a neighborhood in Havana, situated northeast of the Romerillo neighborhood and the Havana municipality of Playa.

14. Vedado is a central business district and urban neighborhood in Havana.

15. FEU: *Federación Estudiantil Universitaria* (Federation of University Students).

16. Carlitos Lage, the son of Carlos Aurelio Lage Dávila who, at the time of this correspondence, was Vice President of the Council of State.

17. Silvio Rodríguez is a musician and leader of Cuba's *Nueva Trova* movement; Juan Formell was a bassist, composer, and arranger, best known as the director of the musical group Los Van; Pedro Luis Ferrer is a guitarist, composer and singer.